English I Summer Reading

_The Alchemist:
Vocabulary, Literary Devices, Characters, Key Ideas_

This document is a reference for students who will enter the 9th grade in Fall 2014 and will be enrolled in either English I or English I Pre-AP.

The purpose of this document is to provide pertinent background information and to present essential elements of Paulo Coelho’s _The Alchemist_.

This document or parts of this document may be used by the English I and English I Pre-AP teams during the first week of the semester for test review and preparation.

While it is not required that students complete the entire document over the summer, it is strongly recommended that they familiarize themselves with the themes, allusions, motifs, characters, symbols, and ideas set forth.

It is also recommended that students use the terms and concepts presented below to guide their annotations of the text.
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*Note: Students should annotate their texts for the terms and concepts presented in this document.

Part I: Vocabulary and Literary Terms

Directions: Read the notes given to you over *The Alchemist*. Then, fill in the remainder of the notes on your own. This will require some research!

Author Biography

- Paulo Coelho has led an extremely interesting life. Rebellion defined his youth. He was a hippie who wrote popular lyrics for some of Brazil's most famous pop music stars. Shortly after, he worked as a journalist.


Vocabulary

1. **Fable**: A literary genre that is marked by the following characteristics:
   - Is a succinct fictional story
   - Features animals, plants, mythical creatures, inanimate objects, or forces of nature which are anthropomorphized (given human qualities such as verbal communication).
     - Fables differ from parables in that parables DO NOT contain anthropomorphism.
   - Illustrates or leads to an interpretation of a moral lesson (a "moral"), which may at the end be added explicitly.

2. **Theme**: The central idea or message of a work. A theme is **universal**, meaning it can be applied to many situations.
   - A theme is often:
     - A moral lesson  Ex: Do not trust blindly.
     - Something that might be considered a cliché but is actually a universal truth about the human condition
   - All major elements of a work—its setting, plot, characterization, syntax, diction, motifs, and tone—help develop its theme.

3. **Allusion**: A reference to a historically or culturally significant event, person, place, literary work, or work of art.
4. **Motif:** A recurring image, word, object, phrase, or action that unifies a literary work.
   - Often helps develop and/or inform the major theme(s)
   - Motifs that appear repeatedly across texts and cultures become **archetypes**

5. **Alchemy:**

6. **Omniscient:**

7. **Omen:**

8. **Tithe:**
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Directions: Find 2 quotations that illustrate/explain each of the Themes, Motifs, and Allusions listed below. Be sure to use MLA citation for your quotes (see example)!

Themes in *Alchemist*

1. Fate vs. Free Will
   a. “It’s this: that at a certain point in our lives, we lose control of what’s happening to us, and our lives become controlled by fate. That’s the world’s greatest lie” (Coelho 18).

2. Love
   a.

3. Spiritual Enlightenment
   a.

   b.

Allusions in *Alchemist*

1. Melchizedek
   a.

   b.
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2. The Philosopher’s Stone
   a.
   b.

Motifs in *Alchemist*

1. Omens
   a.
   b.

2. A Personal Legend
   a.
   b.

3. Maktub
   a.
   b.
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Part II: Characters

Directions: Fill out the following character chart. Be descriptive and thorough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Defining Characteristics</th>
<th>Important Quote (Use MLA citation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melchizedek/King of Salem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Santiago’s father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Old Gypsy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Crystal Merchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatima</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Englishman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Alchemist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Camel Driver</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Part III: Key Ideas

Directions: Answer the following discussion questions thoroughly. Support each answer with text evidence, and use MLA citations.

1. The novel opens with Santiago thinking about his sheep. What does he observe about their existence? What might the sheep symbolize?

2. Describe the boy’s dream.

3. To what degree is his father’s observation about travelers (“They come in search of new things, but when they leave they are...the same people they were when they arrived.”) true about Santiago?

4. Describe the story the King of Salem (Melchizedek) tells Santiago about the “wisest man in the world.” What lesson does this teach?

5. How does the King of Salem (Melchizedek) assist Santiago in recognizing omens? When does Santiago use this help?

6. What is The Principal of Favorability? How is it important to the pursuit of a Personal Legend?

7. Describe Santiago’s time at the Crystal Merchant’s shop. How does he help the Crystal Merchant?
8. What is the “universal language”? Explain its importance.

9. Why must Santiago become the wind? How does he succeed? Explain?

10. Describe Santiago crossing the desert. What might the desert symbolize?

11. Describe Santiago’s time at the oasis. What might the oasis symbolize?


14. The Alchemist is a fable. Give one specific example from your reading of how the novel fits into the definition of a fable.

15. Think about the process of alchemy. How is it a metaphor for the events that occur in the tale?