

English I Pre-AP Summer Assignment 2018

Diana Adamson and Jennifer Wood, Instructors

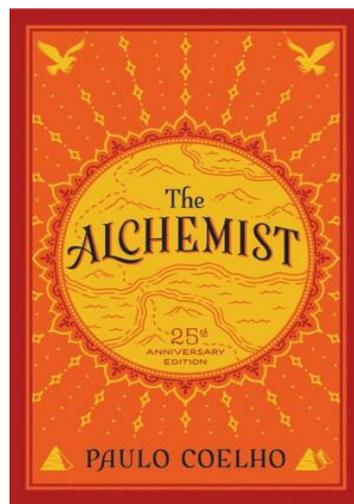
diana.adamson@austinisd.org

jennifer.a.wood@austinisd.org

This year we are asking incoming English 1 Pre-AP students to complete a summer reading assignment. In doing so, we establish the high expectations and rigor inherent to this course, and begin to engage students in the extensive reading required of them throughout the year. Students will research, read, and annotate *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, all to prepare themselves for assessment and enrichment over the novel on the very first days of school. Students should be prepared to take an assessment over the book on the second day of class.

Directions:

1. Obtain a copy of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho that ideally includes the Introduction and the Preface (if needed, you are welcome to check one out at the public library, or find a reasonably priced one at Half-Price Books)
2. Before you read, research the following literary motifs that can be discovered in *The Alchemist*. A literary motif is a distinctive feature or dominant idea in a literary work; because the idea is distinctive and/or dominant, the idea will then repeat itself in the work. We've provided some links for most of the motifs, but you can find an abundance of information about them and the book online; just be careful that the sources you consult are credible and trustworthy.



Motifs to Research:

- Archetypal Hero Cycle/the Personal Legend [Joseph Campbell's Hero Cycle Research](http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/Workshop-stuff/Joseph-Campbell-Hero-Journey.htm): <http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/Workshop-stuff/Joseph-Campbell-Hero-Journey.htm>
- The mythology of Narcissus [The Mythology of Narcissus Research](https://www.cornellcollege.edu/classical_studies/CLA216-2-A/narcissus-echo/index.htm): https://www.cornellcollege.edu/classical_studies/CLA216-2-A/narcissus-echo/index.htm
- The Tree of Life/Unity of Nature [The Tree of Life Research](http://peabody.yale.edu/exhibits/tree-of-life/what-tree-life): <http://peabody.yale.edu/exhibits/tree-of-life/what-tree-life>
- Alchemy as a literal practice/Alchemy as figurative (metaphor/symbol) [Research on the General Concept of Alchemy](https://alchemy1alchemi.wordpress.com/) [Alchemy Research in Literature- Harry Potter connection](http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/literary-alchemy-via-harry-potter-an-introduction/): <https://alchemy1alchemi.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/literary-alchemy-via-harry-potter-an-introduction/>
- Omens/Prophecies/Dreams
- Magical Realism [Magical Realism Research](https://bookriot.com/2018/02/08/what-is-magical-realism/): <https://bookriot.com/2018/02/08/what-is-magical-realism/>

3. As you read, mark parts of the book that you find meaningful and/or think speak to the different literary motifs; be prepared to share, discuss, and analyze the passages based on their connections to the motifs on the first day or two of class.

4. When reading the book, make sure you read the Prologue (right before Part One) as well! Be prepared to discuss the connection of this myth to *The Alchemist* and why Coelho may have included it as part of the text. Just in case, we've included it below:

The Prologue

The Alchemist picked up a book that someone in the caravan had brought. Leafing through the pages, he found a story about Narcissus.

The alchemist knew the legend of Narcissus, a youth who daily knelt beside a lake to contemplate his own beauty. He was so fascinated by

himself that, one morning, he fell into the lake and drowned. At the spot where he fell, a flower was born, which was called the narcissus.

But this was not how the author of the book ended the story.

He said that when Narcissus died, the Goddesses of the Forest appeared and found the lake, which had been freshwater, transformed into a lake of salty tears.

"Why do you weep?" the Goddesses asked.

"I weep for Narcissus," the lake replied."

"Ah, it is no surprise that you weep for Narcissus," they said, "for though we always pursued him in the forest, you alone could contemplate his beauty close at hand."

"But..... was Narcissus beautiful?" the lake asked.

"Who better than you to know that?" the Goddesses said in wonder, "After all, it was by your banks that he knelt each day to contemplate himself!!"

The lake was silent for some time. Finally it said:

"I weep for Narcissus, but I never noticed that Narcissus was beautiful. I weep because, each time he knelt beside my banks, I could see, in the depths of his eyes, my own beauty reflected."

"What a lovely story," the alchemist thought.