



## OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

### LOCATION

**Building(s):** Shanahan

**Classes/Grade Level(s):** ELA 6-8

### ABOUT THE BOOK

**Selection Title/Author:** The Alchemist by Paul Coelho

**Genre:** Parable/Fantasy

**Lexile Reading Level:** 910L

**Total number of pages:** 192

| <b>Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)</b>   | <b>Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)</b>  |
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| <p>A shepherd sells his flock and travels to Africa to see the pyramids after a recurring dream tells him he will find treasure there.</p> | <p>Magical occurrences and omens occur throughout the text. For example, on pg. 14 the main character has his dream interpreted.</p> <p>Religious references and imagery throughout such as swearing on the heart of Jesus (pg. 14) and a character reciting the five obligations from the Koran (pg. 69).</p> <p>Prejudiced opinions about gypsies stealing and tricking people are stated on pg. 14 and the main character calls Arabs "infidels", says they have "evil looks" on pg. 37, and describes their prayers and clothes as strange.</p> <p>The main character drinks wine a few times (see pg. 10 for example) and characters smoke pipes and a hookah (pg. 58).</p> <p>The main character thinks about "beautiful women" he has known throughout the text and experiences love at first sight on pg. 96.</p> <p>War violence towards the end of the novel</p> |



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|  | when there is a war between desert tribes that involves a “massacre” (no graphic descriptions given) and the hanging of a man on pg. 117. Characters carry guns and swords as they travel. |
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**Book Reviews (2-3 links)** *Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links*

From School Library Journal: This simple, yet eloquent parable celebrates the richness of human spirit. A young Spanish shepherd seeking his destiny travels to Egypt where he learns many lessons, particularly from a wise old alchemist. The real alchemy here, however, is the transmuting of youthful idealism into mature wisdom. The blending of conventional ideas with an exotic setting makes old truths seem new again. This shepherd takes the advice Hamlet did not heed, learning to trust his heart and commune with it as a treasured friend. Enjoyable and easy to read, this timeless fantasy validates the aspirations of dreams of youth

From the Library Journal: “In order to find the treasure, you will have to follow the omens. God has prepared a path for everyone to follow. You just have to read the omens that he left for you.” Before the boy could reply, a butterfly appeared and fluttered between him and the old man. He remembered something his grandfather had once told him: that butterflies were a good omen. Like crickets, and like expectations; like lizards and four-leaf clovers.” The boy is Santiago, a Spanish shepherd who wants to fulfill his dream of seeing the world. When he meets some people who tell him that he will find his treasure near the Pyramids, he decides to take the risk and sheds his old life like a snake shedding skin. The boy’s journey and metamorphosis are subjects of the tale. The book is peopled with gypsies, old men, kings, warriors, desert-dwellers, and an alchemist, who describes Santiago’s fate if he decides to settle for less than his dream. Destiny conspires with ambition to move him to realize his potential. A familiar theme in a new age package.

## **ABOUT THE CLASS**

**Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards):** (To be completed by the teacher or team)

Students will read the novel as a whole class. This novel exposes students to narrative writing that also uses a fable in its storytelling technique. In addition, it exposes students to many literary elements and craft strategies writers use including imagery, irony, similes, metaphors, etc.

**The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only and* abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards)** [Link to Ohio's ELA Standards](#)



1. RL.7.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. b. Incorporate the development of a theme and other story details into an objective summary of the text.
2. RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific language choices, such as sensory words or phrases, on meaning and tone, including rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

## ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (Title/author)

1. Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom
2. Petey by Ben Mikaelson

**SIGNATURES** (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: Sarah Zittel Date: 3/24/22  
Department Chair: Valerie Boggom Date: 3/24/22  
Building Principal: C Zella Date: 4.5.22  
District Curriculum Administrator: [Signature] Date: 4/5/22