

St. John Bosco High School  
SUMMER READING 2024  
SOPHOMORE ENGLISH READING

**Assignment 1: *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho**

During the first week of school, fall 2024, ***all incoming sophomores are required*** to read the novel *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho. The assignment includes note taking as you read, the submission of your completed notes, along with your work on the questions below. Summer reading assignments will be submitted during the first week of school. Your teacher will designate a turnitin port for your submission of these documents. The assignments and reading represented in this packet will be the foundation for the majority of your first quarter grade.

On the first day of regular class in the fall, each student is responsible for the assigned readings, including characters, setting, content, and theme in the novel. Further, each student will work to comprehend the provided reading on The Hero Journey. Your goal is to understand Santiago's Hero Journey, both in the novel and its relevance to the Hero Journey paradigm which is discussed in the next section.

**The Alchemist: address and elaborate on all prompts below. Clearly label your work and must be handwritten.**

I. Identify the main characters, setting and theme and give information about each.

II. Answer the following questions, all questions in each section A - G

A. The delightful short novel is about a journey, a young man learning to follow his dream. The character Santiago is guided by his dreams and by omens which appear to him throughout his journey. He is told: "When you really want something to happen, the whole universe conspires so that your wish comes true." Do you agree?

B. The old man states that society's or the "world's greatest lie . . . is that at a certain point in our lives, we lose control of what's happening to us, and our lives become controlled by fate." Do you agree? Why or why not?

C. Santiago is told that people are afraid to follow or go after their dreams . . . often feeling as though the dream is not deserved or that the dream is unattainable. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your response.

D. In this fable format, Coelho is telling a story. What is he trying to illustrate about life or human nature?

E. How does Santiago's father react when his son tells him of his plans to travel?

F. Note the various lessons along the way and who teaches these lessons. Give an example of one of the lessons.

G. What is your opinion of this novel? What do you think is the purpose of our reading it in

## **Assignment 2: THE HERO JOURNEY**

**Read and understand the following information.**

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO JOSEPH CAMPBELL'S HERO JOURNEY**

According to Joseph Campbell the human rite of passage is characterized by the hero journey archetype, which he refers to as the “monomyth,” a term Campbell credits to author James Joyce.<sup>1</sup> Though the stages of the monomyth vary with the individual and the journey at hand, Campbell identifies the basic steps of the archetypal journey in The Hero with a Thousand Faces, beginning with “the call to adventure” where acceptance of the call places the hero at “the crossing of the first threshold” (245). Here Campbell identifies the presence of a “threshold guardian,” a protector who is a “shadow presence that guards the passage” of any journey (245). In Campbell’s monomyth, the threshold guardian(s) attempts to protect the hero from impending danger, blocking the entrance to the unknown, the world outside the accepted community, so that the hero must leave “the present sphere, or life horizon,” and move past the guardians in order to begin the journey (77).

Beyond accepting a call to adventure and the determination to pass through the threshold gate, there are several remaining stages of Campbell’s monomyth, and all of the stages comprise “The Keys,”<sup>2</sup> or the basic steps of the monomyth paradigm. When the hero crosses the “threshold of adventure” there awaits both trials and helpers, experiences that comprise the “tests” of the hero’s journey, followed by some sort of “atonement” before the hero moves from the danger or struggles incurred to begin a “return” to the known world with the acquisition of the prize or “elixir” that completes the hero’s journey (Hero 245). Within the tests and before the atonement are problems and temptations, the most severe of which Campbell describes as “the belly of the whale,” where the hero is “swallowed into the unknown,” facing a temporary submission to the darkest temptations of the quest (90). After varying degrees of struggle, and with the assistance of “helpers” along the journey, the archetypal hero experiences a “flight,” or exit from danger, and moves toward the return to the familiar world. In the final two steps of the monomyth paradigm, something is learned or attained so that the hero begins movement back into the known or familiar realm of society as a wiser individual (245). Therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Campbell credits James Joyce for the term monomyth, which Campbell acknowledges as “an archetypal story that springs from the collective subconscious” of humanity and is repeated in myth, literature, and life; from *Pathways to Bliss*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>2</sup>

The Keys are the essential steps of every journey, identified in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 245-246.

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the hero has acquired “some kind of symbolically rendered realization,” a psychological exploration that brings understanding for the hero (Campbell, *Pathways* 113).

Campbell contends that the journey “motifs can appear not only in myth and literature,” but will surface in the movement from one stage of life to another (113). He proposes the hero journey as a universal human experience for “the working out of the plot of your own life,” specifically those important “unrealized, unutilized potentials of yourself” (113). When emphasizing the universality of a rite of passage, “a series of standard metamorphoses as men and women have undergone in every quarter of the world, in all recorded centuries,” the archetype is claimed and remains a current standard for literary analysis (Campbell, *Hero* 13). Understanding the monomyth assists in understanding literature; moreover, it raises awareness for what is common amongst the dwellers of the world which, in turn, assists in the understanding aspect of each person’s individual journey. For Campbell, the story is metaphorical, sharing wisdom across the ages, helping “to live life with the experience, and therefore the knowledge, of its mystery and of your own mystery” (*Power* 206). Campbell stresses that in this way literature connects our human commonality.

Given that Campbell considers the human rite of passage a universal experience, he acknowledges the varied norms or customs of an individual society without straying from his archetype. In his co-authored endeavor, *The Power of Myth*, a series of conversations with Joseph Campbell and journalist Bill Moyers, Campbell addresses a variety of ideas and myths, including rite of passage, which he aligns with the hero journey. Campbell focuses on the human experience, for the “human psyche is essentially the same all over the world . . . the inward experience of the human body which is essentially the same in all human beings” (60). Consequently, each individual matures and eventually exchanges a place of childhood dependency for adult independence, the “killing of the infantile ego and bringing forth an adult, whether it is a girl or a boy,” which places this journey in a universal context regardless of gender (168). With the physical or psychological journey, there is something attained or learned, an idea or a way of life left behind, thus a rite of passage. Furthermore, Campbell stresses that there may be several journeys or passages in a lifetime.

**The Hero's Journey: edited excerpts from "A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*" by Christopher Vogler**

The Hero's Journey is a pattern or paradigm identified by the American scholar Joseph Campbell that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual, and the psychological development of mankind. It describes the typical adventure of a literary archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization. According to Campbell, The Hero Journey is also a journey of personal growth; a rite of passage for every individual, and an experience repeated several times throughout a person's lifetime. The steps of the journey:

1. **THE ORDINARY WORLD.** The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced to a situation or dilemma. In literature, the hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress. It is the same with humans across the world.
2. **THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.** Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.
3. **REFUSAL OF THE CALL.** The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another individual may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.
4. **MEETING WITH THE MENTOR.** The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the world who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom. This could be spiritual, as well.
5. **CROSSING THE THRESHOLD.** The hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.
6. **TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES.** The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.
7. **APPROACH.** The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.
8. **THE ORDEAL.** The hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.
9. **THE REWARD.** The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.
10. **THE ROAD BACK.** The hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.
11. **THE RESURRECTION.** Often, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of

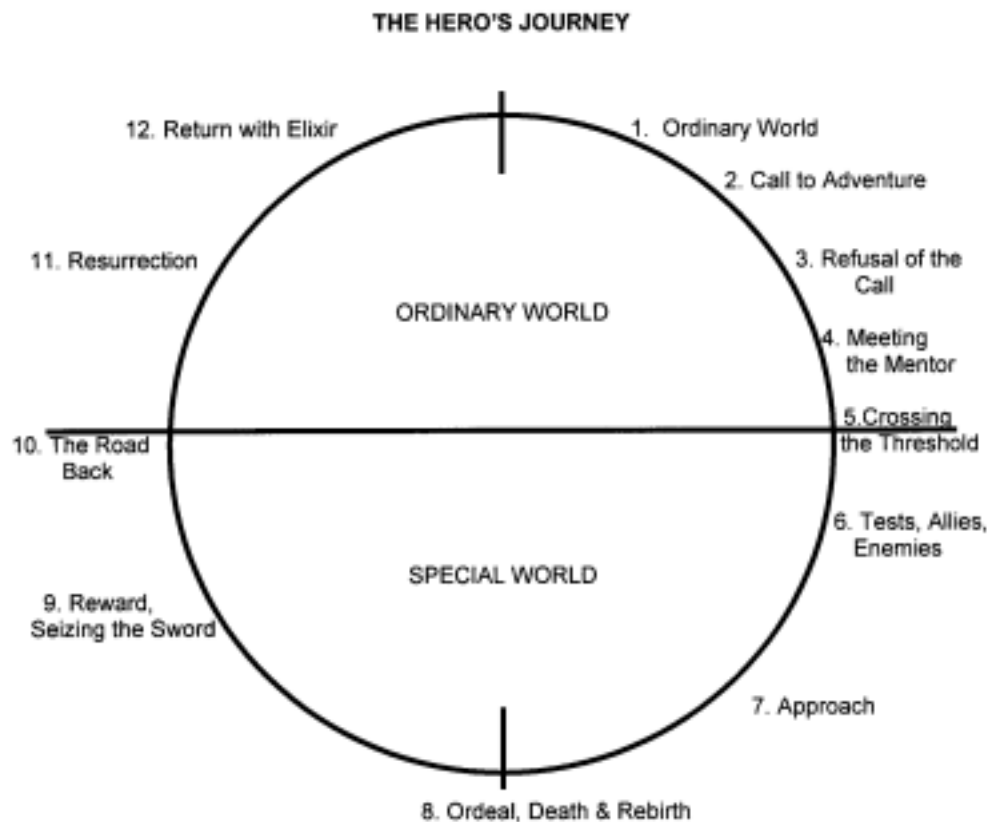
home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

12. RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR. The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

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### Assignment 3 Continued

**On a separate sheet of paper, identify stages 1-12 of the hero journey for Santiago and apply each stage to the novel. Give it your best effort!! Bring this work to class on the first block day of class.**



Make a list of all 12 stages and provide concrete evidence from the novel to support each stage.