

Summer Reading 2026 for English 9

English 9 students are required to read **ONE** book over the summer **prior** to the start of the 9th grade school year: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. Students must complete the study guide for the novel in preparation for a formal writing assignment and reading assessment during the first week of the school year.

If you would like to check out a copy of the novel and pick up a copy of the study guide, please stop by the AHA lobby during summer hours. *Limited quantities are available.*

The AHA English department selects *The Alchemist* as the class of 2030's Freshman summer novel because it highlights the importance of personal transformation, understanding, and acceptance. By weaving together elements of magic and spiritual insight, *The Alchemist* has established itself as a timeless masterpiece. Written in a way that readers of all different levels can comprehend, this narrative has reached a global audience of millions, impacting many lives through its powerful message.

The novel follows Santiago, a shepherd boy, who dreams of traveling the world and discovering riches. His quest is far different than the one he originally envisioned for himself, but his transformation is far more fulfilling. Santiago's story teaches readers to listen to our hearts, accept challenges, seek opportunities, and most of all, follow our dreams.

<i>The Alchemist</i> Guided Reading Questions Summer Reading	Name: _____
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Please complete this guide by the first day of school.

(pg. 1-10)

1. Who is Santiago? How is he introduced at the beginning of the story?
2. What is strange or unusual about Santiago's dream?
4. Describe and use details about the setting of the novel?
5. What do Santiago's parents plan for him, and how does he change that plan?
6. What does Santiago plan to do in Tarifa?

(pg. 11-33)

7. Santiago stops in Tarifa to consult with an old woman about his recurring dream. What price does she charge him?
10. How does the old man convince Santiago of his power?
11. Explain the concept of a Personal Legend. Why does the old man believe that few people ever really attain their Personal Legends?
12. Why does the old man tell Santiago to follow "omens?" Do you believe that omens exist? Why or why not? (you may need to look up the meaning of this word to answer the question).
13. What does the old man take from the breastplate as a gift to Santiago?
14. The old man tells Santiago a story that concludes with the secret of happiness. According to the old man, what is the secret of happiness?

(pg. 33-47)

15. When Santiago decides to leave his home country of Spain in order to follow his personal legend, where does he go?
16. How are the two locations different in regards to food/drink, religion, customs, etc.?
17. What happens when Santiago follows his new friend into the marketplace?
18. Although Santiago does not speak Arabic, he has a conversation with the candy seller. Why is this important?
19. What comfort do the black and white stones provide to Santiago?
20. Describe the first interaction between Santiago and the crystal merchant.

(pg. 51-79)

21. What lessons does Santiago teach the crystal merchant (page 64)?
22. Who is the Englishman and what do we learn about him? What motivates the Englishman to befriend Santiago?
24. According to the Englishman, what is the Soul of the World?
25. What is an alchemist? (again, you may need to look this up)

(pg. 79-104)

27. Why was the alchemist watching people as they entered the oasis? Describe the Oasis.
30. What is the language of the world and how does Santiago learn it?
31. What agreement do Fatima and Santiago come to?

(pg. 104-123) Please note, this section of the reading discusses war.

32. Santiago sees two hawks as an omen. What do they signify?

33. What happens when Santiago visits the tribal chieftains to tell them about his vision?

36. Describe Santiago's first interaction with the alchemist.

37. Describe the battle at the oasis.

38. What was Santiago's reward for saving the oasis?

(pg. 123-143)

40. What advice does the alchemist give about listening to one's heart? Do you agree or disagree?

44. What happens when the alchemist and the boy are both taken into the military camp?

45. Why would the alchemist set up such a "test" for Santiago?

46. Who is at risk of death here? Why?

(pg. 143-163)

47. As Santiago is attempting to turn himself into the wind, who does he hold conversations with?

49. Two people were smiling after Santiago turned himself into the wind. Who were they and why was each smiling?

50. What did the alchemist do at the Coptic monastery?

51. How did the alchemist distribute the gold? Why did he think Santiago might need the gold later?

53. What advice did the boy's heart give him as he approached the Pyramids? What did he do when he saw the Pyramids?

54. Who approaches Santiago as he digs in the sand, and what did they do?

55. What story does one attacker tell Santiago?

56. After the attackers leave, Santiago gets up from the sand and begins to laugh. Why?

Epilogue (pg. 165-167)

57. What are Santiago's plans for the future?

Final question:

58. *The Alchemist* presents us with many important lessons learned by Santiago throughout his journey. Using three sentences, what ONE lesson do you think was the most important for him to learn? Why?