



# WILLOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

*"Expectations for Excellence"*

1250 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE • VILLA PARK • ILLINOIS 60181

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District 88

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May 2023

Dear Student:

The English Department at Willowbrook High School would like to welcome you to English 9 Honors. We believe that the reading of challenging literature helps students become critical thinkers and proficient writers, so you will be required to read one allegorical novel during the summer. Please come to school in August ready to intelligently discuss the summer reading selection.

This year's summer reading selection is:

*The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (ISBN-13: 978-0062315007)

**\*The English Department has ordered the novel for you, and we are sending you the novel directly from Barnes and Noble. You should receive your copy by May 31. If you are added to the course AFTER May 14, 2022, then you will need to purchase it on your own.**

You must complete the following by the first Friday of the 2023-2024 school year:

1. A close reading of the text: This means that you will read the text with a pen in hand and circle unfamiliar words, underline important passages, and make notes or ask questions in the margins. You will need to have the text in class when school starts. \*It may be necessary to do some background research to understand unfamiliar references
2. Write a two-paragraph response explaining one of the main themes of this novel. What is Paulo Coelho's message to his readers?
3. Write ten thoughtful and open-ended discussion questions for the text. These questions will be used during our in-class Socratic Seminar discussion.

\*Please read the attached pages carefully for assignment details.

If you misplace your summer reading assignment, you can access this information on the District 88 website. Go to [www.dupage88.net](http://www.dupage88.net), then click on **WBHS** (top right), then **Academics** and **English** (top menu), then click the link to the **English 9 Honors summer letter** at the bottom of the page.

We hope you will find this novel interesting and challenging.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Leslie Allenspach

English 9 Honors Teacher  
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Ms. Tara Murphy

English 9 honors Teacher  
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## English 9 Honors Summer Reading Sample Close Reading of the Text

As a student in an honors-level class, you will need to learn how to annotate a text. Annotation means taking close reading notes right in the text by underlining, highlighting, and writing comments in the margins. These annotations will help to support your discussion remarks in class and enhance your written analysis of the literature. You will be expected to annotate most literature at the honors level; texts are often checked and graded for evidence of close reading.

On the following pages, you will find an explanation of annotation and a list of symbols to use while annotating. You will also find a few pages from Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* that you may use as a sample annotation model:

- You should have *at least* 1 annotation (the below symbols) on each page. However, we expect that some pages will have quite a few more than that.
- You must have written in the margins at least once every 2 pages.
- You must engage with the text through your annotations on a deep level.

	Moments where you have an emotional reaction, indicate it with a smiley face. Stories often evoke strong feelings in readers, and the feelings you have about a story can be important clues to its meaning.
	At any moment when you have a question about something or you want to revisit it later, use a question mark. Almost anything in the text might puzzle you: a word or a passage, an action, or a statement.
	At any moment that you feel something important is happening, use an exclamation point. What seems important? This is very much a gut-level kind of feeling. The more you read, the better you will become at identifying things that are significant. Generally speaking, <b>anything that an author repeats is worth noting!</b>
<b>morose</b>	Circle any words you might not know. <b>Please look them up</b> as you read and note definitions in the margin.
<u><b>Slowly, like a terrier,</b></u>	Underline any literary elements you see; write what the literary elements are: example: imagery, simile, metaphor, personification, etc.
<b>Respond to the above</b>	After indicating the above, write in the margins. Write the questions you have or react to the moments you feel are important. <b>Make connections to the text</b> within the margins.

This sounds  
important!

It was still dark when he awoke, and, looking up, he could see the stars through the half-destroyed roof.

I wanted to sleep a little longer, he thought. He had had the same dream that night as a week ago, and once again he had awakened before it ended.

theme?

He arose and, taking up his crook, began to awaken the sheep that still slept. He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of his animals also began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep, with whom he had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water. "They are so used to me that they know my schedule," he muttered. Thinking about that for a moment, he realized that it could be the other way around: that it was he who had become accustomed to their schedule.

But there were certain of them who took a bit longer to awaken. The boy prodded them, one by one, with his crook, calling each by name. He had always believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said. So there were times when he read them parts of his books that had made an impression on him, or when he would tell them of the loneliness or the happiness of a shepherd in the fields. Sometimes he would comment to them on the things he had seen in the villages they passed.

But for the past few days he had spoken to them about only one thing: the girl, the daughter of a merchant who



## The Alchemist

lived in the village they would reach in about four days. He had been to the village only once, the year before. The merchant was the proprietor of a dry goods shop, and he always demanded that the sheep be sheared in his presence, so that he would not be cheated. A friend had told the boy about the shop, and he had taken his sheep there.

\* the owner of a business

\*

"I NEED TO SELL SOME WOOL," THE BOY TOLD THE MERCHANT.

The shop was busy, and the man asked the shepherd to wait until the afternoon. So the boy sat on the steps of the shop and took a book from his bag.

"I didn't know shepherds knew how to read," said a girl's voice behind him.

! stereotype

The girl was typical of the region of Andalusia, with flowing black hair, and eyes that vaguely recalled the Moorish conquerors.

?

"Well, usually I learn more from my sheep than from books," he answered. During the two hours that they talked, she told him she was the merchant's daughter, and spoke of life in the village, where each day was like all the others. The shepherd told her of the Andalusian countryside, and related the news from the other towns where he had stopped. It was a pleasant change from talking to his sheep.

This reminds me of Belle from Beauty and the Beast

? Does he get lonely?

"How did you learn to read?" the girl asked at one point.

Student Name

Teacher Name

English 9 Honors

18 August 2023

English 9 Honors Summer Reading  
Theme Analysis Writing Assignment

This written assignment will require you to follow a theme in the text. You need to complete the reading of the text before you write this response. You will write a **two-paragraph response (in MLA format) analyzing a theme** present in the text.

Your written responses must be complete and ready to submit before class begins on the first Friday of the 2023-2024 school year. Be prepared to discuss your responses with your classmates.

Your written response must:

- Identity and analyze one theme present in the text
- Include quotations and paraphrased ideas from the text to support the theme you are following (with proper parenthetical citations)
  - Example of parenthetical citation: Santiago wondered if “some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep” (Coelho 4).
- Be two-full body paragraphs, typed and double-spaced (12 Times New Roman font), with an MLA header (See format modeled at the top of this page)
  - Each paragraph should have a strong topic sentence and detailed analysis
  - This is not a complete essay, so you do not need to have an introduction or conclusion paragraphs.
  - Each of your two paragraphs should offer a different perspective on one of the themes that you saw emerge and include at least one direct quote or paraphrased passage from the book.

Some possible themes from *The Alchemist* include:

- Dreams
- Fate
- Unity of spirit
- Self-Discovery

English 9 Honors Summer Reading  
Discussion Questions Assignment

You are required to write **ten open-ended discussion questions**. Developing discussion questions for the class will allow you to understand the complex text on a deeper level. By analyzing and evaluating ideas within the text and formulating questions, you are preparing yourself to engage in an active class discussion.

To receive full credit for this assignment, you must:

- Write questions from a variety of chapters and ideas found throughout the text.
- Vary the question format; do not begin each question with “Do you think...”
- Create “open-ended” (require more than a one-word answer) discussion questions that will foster class discussion.
- It is required that you **use Bloom’s Taxonomy question starters for at least 5 of your discussion questions**.
- It might also be helpful to refer to particular passages or quotes within the texts for some of your questions.

**Bloom’s Taxonomy Higher Level Question Starters:**

**Analyzing:** analyze, consider, compare, contrast, criticize, distinguish, examine, question, and explain.

**Evaluating:** assess, argue, defend, determine, judge, predict, rate, support, evaluate and debate.

- Type your questions and have them ready to submit before class on the first Friday of the 2023-2024 school year.
- Be original: Ask questions that you will truly enjoy discussing.
- You will not receive credit for questions that were copied from an online source, study guide, or another student.

