

## Summer Reading Assignment

This summer, you will complete two tasks with *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. You will

1. Read the book.
2. Analyze the plot in terms of the **Hero's Journey** by creating a comic strip, as outlined on the last page of this document.
3. Please remember the use of AI or digital resources is considered academic dishonesty.

**Read the following about the Hero's Journey and keep these ideas in mind as you read.**

### Overview of the Hero's Journey

Archetypes are patterns that exist in the literature and stories of all cultures and time periods. These patterns exist in our stories because they are tied to our deepest unconscious understanding of our world. For example, many myths about the beginning of the universe include a great flood that represents a cleansing and rebirth for mankind. One of the most common archetypes in literature is known as the **Monomyth**—the Hero's Journey. Click on the link below to watch a short video and review the characteristics of the Hero's Journey below.

Watch this first: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hhk4N9A0oCA>

### 12 Stages of the Hero's Journey

#### Stage 1: Ordinary World

*This is where the Hero's exists before his present story begins, oblivious of the adventures to come. It's his safe place. His everyday life where we learn crucial details about our Hero, his true nature, capabilities, and outlook on life. This anchors the Hero as a human, just like you and me, and makes it easier for us to identify with him and hence later, empathize with his plight.*

#### Stage 2: Call to Adventure

*The Hero's adventure begins when he receives a call to action, such as a direct threat to his safety, his family, his way of life or to the peace of the community in which he lives. It may not be as dramatic as a gunshot, but simply a phone call or conversation but whatever the call is, and however it manifests itself, it ultimately disrupts the comfort of the Hero's Ordinary World and presents a challenge or quest that must be undertaken.*

#### Stage 3: Refusal of The Call (Fears)

*Although the Hero may be eager to accept the quest, at this stage he will have fears that need overcoming. Second thoughts or even deep personal doubts as to whether or not he is up to the challenge. When this happens, the Hero will refuse the call and as a result may suffer somehow. The problem he faces may seem too much to handle and the comfort of home far more attractive than the perilous road ahead. This would also be our own response and once again helps us bond further with the reluctant Hero.*

#### Stage 4: Meeting the Mentor

*At this crucial turning point where the Hero desperately needs guidance, he meets a mentor figure who gives him something he needs. He could be given an object of great importance, insight into the dilemma he faces, wise advice, practical training or even self-confidence. Whatever the mentor provides the Hero with it serves to dispel his doubts and fears and give him the strength and courage to begin his quest.*

**Stage 5: Crossing the Threshold**

*The Hero is now ready to act upon his call to adventure and truly begin his quest, whether it be physical, spiritual, or emotional. He may go willingly, or he may be pushed, but either way he finally crosses the threshold between the world he is familiar with and that which he is not. It may be leaving home for the first time in his life or just doing something he has always been scared to do. However, the threshold presents itself, this action signifies the Hero's commitment to his journey and whatever it may have in store for him.*

**Stage 6: Tests, Allies, Enemies**

*Now finally out of his comfort zone the Hero is confronted with an ever more difficult series of challenges that test him in a variety of ways. Obstacles are thrown across his path; whether they be physical hurdles or people bent on thwarting his progress, the Hero must overcome each challenge he is presented with on the journey towards his ultimate goal.*

*The Hero needs to find out who can be trusted and who can't. He may earn allies and meet enemies who will, each in their own way, help prepare him for the greater ordeals yet to come. This is the stage where his skills and/or powers are tested and every obstacle that he faces helps us gain a deeper insight into his character and ultimately identify with him even more.*

**Stage 7: Approach to the Inmost Cave**

*The inmost cave may represent many things in the Hero's story such as an actual location in which lies a terrible danger or an inner conflict which up until now the Hero has not had to face. As the Hero approaches the cave, he must make final preparations before taking that final leap into the great unknown.*

NOTE: At the threshold to the inmost cave the Hero may once again face some of the doubts and fears that first surfaced upon his call to adventure. He may need some time to reflect upon his journey and the treacherous road ahead in order to find the courage to continue. This brief respite helps the audience understand the magnitude of the ordeal that awaits the Hero and escalates the tension in anticipation of his ultimate test.

**Stage 8: Ordeal**

*The Supreme Ordeal may be a dangerous physical test or a deep inner crisis that the Hero must face in order to survive or for the world in which the Hero lives to continue to exist. Whether it be facing his greatest fear or most deadly foe, the Hero must draw upon all of his skills and his experiences gathered upon the path to the inmost cave in order to overcome his most difficult challenge.*

NOTE: Only through some form of "death" can the Hero be reborn, experiencing a metaphorical resurrection that somehow grants him greater power or insight necessary in order to fulfill his destiny or reach his journey's end. This is the high-point of the Hero's story and where everything he holds dear is put on the line. If he fails, he will either die or live as he knows it will never be the same again.

**Stage 9: Reward (Seizing the Sword)**

*After defeating the enemy, surviving death and finally overcoming his greatest personal challenge, the Hero is ultimately transformed into a new state, emerging from battle as a stronger person and often with a prize. The Reward may come in many forms: an object of great importance or power, a secret, greater knowledge, or insight, or even reconciliation with a loved one or ally. Whatever the treasure, which may well facilitate his return to the Ordinary World, the Hero must quickly put celebrations aside and prepare for the last leg of his journey.*

**Stage 10: The Road Back**

*This stage in the Hero's journey represents a reverse echo of the Call to Adventure in which the Hero had to cross the first threshold. Now he must return home with his reward but this time the anticipation of danger is replaced with that of acclaim and perhaps vindication, absolution or even exoneration. But the Hero's journey is not yet over and he may still need one last push back into the Ordinary World. The moment before the Hero finally commits to the last stage of his journey may be a moment in which he must choose between his own personal objective and that of a Higher Cause.*

**Stage 11: Resurrection**

*This is the climax in which the Hero must have his final and most dangerous encounter with death. The final battle also represents something far greater than the Hero's own existence with its outcome having far-reaching consequences to his Ordinary World and the lives of those he left behind. If he fails, others will suffer and this not only places more weight upon his shoulders but in a movie, grips the audience so that they too feel part of the conflict and share the Hero's hopes, fears and trepidation. Ultimately the Hero will succeed, destroy his enemy and emerge from battle cleansed and reborn.*

**Stage 12: Return with The Elixir**

*This is the final stage of the Hero's journey in which he returns home to his Ordinary World a changed man. He will have grown as a person, learned many things, faced many terrible dangers and even death but now looks forward to the start of a new life. His return may bring fresh hope to those he left behind, a direct solution to their problems or perhaps a new perspective for everyone to consider.*

*The final reward that he obtains may be literal or metaphoric. It could be a cause for celebration, self-realization, or an end to strife, but whatever it is it represents three things: change, success and proof of his journey. The return home also signals the need for resolution for the story's other key players. The Hero's doubters will be ostracized, his enemies punished, and his allies rewarded. Ultimately the Hero will return to where he started but things will clearly never be the same again.*

**After reading *The Alchemist*, use this information about the Hero's Journey and your knowledge of the book to complete the assignment on the following page.**

## Santiago's Hero's Journey

Now that you have finished the book, analyze how Santiago's journey in *The Alchemist* fits within the archetypal model of the Hero's Journey.

### Your Assignment:

Create a comic strip depicting Santiago's journey throughout *The Alchemist*. Your comic will follow the 12 stages of the Hero's Journey as described above and will consist of a minimum of 12 panels.

### Requirements:

- Minimum of **12 panels** – each panel must correspond to one of the 12 stages listed above.  
*Note: You may break a stage into multiple panels, but all 12 stages must be represented at least once in your finished product.*
  - Each panel needs to include:
    - A label with the title (*not* number) of the Hero's Journey stage
    - A drawing that represents the stage in *The Alchemist*
    - Dialogue or thought bubbles within your drawing
    - A caption: a 3 sentence explanation of how the stage applies to Santiago's journey
- Your final product can be on computer paper, poster board, in book format, or on a PowerPoint (minimum of 12 slides with original artwork embedded – no clip art or online images)
- Your final product must be **neat** and **colorful** (fancy stick figures are fine; **effort** must be evident in drawings)

### Assignment due on the first day of school.

Summer reading assignments must be completed individually and without the use of online sources or study aides. Students who commit an infraction of the Honor Code will receive a grade of zero on the assignment, an N in conduct for this semester in 102 World Literature, and an administrative referral.