

The Alchemist - A Personal Journey

WebQuest Description: An accompaniment to Paulo Coelho's novel, *The Alchemist*, this WebQuest will allow you to travel with Santiago as he searches for his Personal Legend. Perhaps you will find your Personal Legend along the way.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: English / Language Arts

Keywords: *The Alchemist*, Andalusia, Bedouin, Egypt, personal journey, alchemy, Paulo Coelho, purpose, personal goals

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Introduction

What is your purpose and how will you discover it? In the novel, *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho, Santiago begins a long and difficult journey to find his Personal Legend. We will travel with Santiago as he visits mysterious places and meets mysterious people. As we travel, we will investigate our own passions and attempt to unveil our Personal Legends. Will Santiago succeed in finding his Personal Legend? Will we?

Tasks

The Strait of Gibraltar, From Spain to Morocco After reading *The Alchemist* and completing tasks of research and reflection, you will create an audio/visual presentation demonstrating how your life journey is similar to that of Santiago's journey. Using Movie Maker, create a three-minute movie by compiling your research, your voice and your reflections to tell one cohesive story. Your final project will tell your story, highlighting your purpose, your goals for the future and your reflections on how your past experiences have shaped you. Your Project Must Include:

1. Pictures and or video captured during your WebQuest research
2. Your voice as narrator
3. Music that reflects the mood of your presentation, or the setting in the story
4. Your original writing (i.e. titles, captions, poetry, narration, etc.)
5. Reflections on your personal goals and purposes for your future
6. Reflections on Santiago's journey and how it relates to you

To view a sample project, go to the Johnson fold on the S: drive and open *The Alchemist Movie*. I can't wait to experience your story!

Process

Week One - pages 1-35 Welcome to *The Alchemist* WebQuest. Here, you will complete research assignments and reflective assignments in preparation for your final project. Follow all of the instructions carefully and save your work in your H: folder. To keep track of your progress, open Attachment I, found at the bottom of this page, and save it to your H: folder. This sheet will help you keep track of completed assignment and guide you as you create your final project. During this WebQuest, you will be gathering the information, pictures, video and journal reflections needed to complete your MovieMaker project. Some of your research will inform your understanding of the locations and cultures you will read about in the novel. Let's begin with Santiago's homeland, Andalusia. Andalusia is the southern most region of Spain. It is east of Portugal, and north of the Strait of Gibraltar, which separates Spain from Morocco. It also shares a border with the British territory, Gibraltar. Andalusia has had a tumultuous past. During the 5th century, Vandals and Visigoths moved through the region before settling in northern Africa. 711-718 AD marked the end of Visigoth rule and the beginning of the Moorish period. During this time, the Moors established universities in Andalusia. Moorish scholars contributed to the scholarly progress of astronomy, medicine, philosophy, and mathematics. In 1492, most of Andalusia came under the Spanish, Catholic control of the monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. Though Ferdinand and Isabella had great influence, Andalusia managed to retain much of its Moorish personality. Even today, Andalusia retains the largest Muslim population in Spain.

Task One Using Google Images, please find a map of Spain and a map of Andalusia. Save these images in your file.

Task Two Copy and paste the following link into your web browser: www.paradoxplace.com/PhotoPages/Spain/Andalucia/Andalucia.htm

1. Look at the pictures of the Andalusian landscape and architecture.

2. Click on SW Andalusia and view the pictures.

3. Using Google Images, capture pictures of Andalusia for your file.

Task Three Santiago, our protagonist, begins his adult life as a shepherd. The rocky hills and valleys of Andalusia are well suited for the care and feeding of livestock. Today, you will learn about the practical aspects of shepherding as well as the pervasive symbolism of sheep and shepherds. Scroll to the bottom of the page and open the attachment, *Shepherding*. Read the document and respond to the questions in a Word document. Save your responses in your file.

Week Two - pages 35-67

Task Four In this second section of the novel, Santiago must make a difficult journey to a foreign land. Santiago will travel, by boat, from Tarifa, Spain to Tangier, Morocco. The Strait of Gibraltar is a relatively narrow body of water, yet it separates two continents. Santiago will face new sights, smells, responsibilities and challenges. After receiving wise advice and tools from the king, Santiago bravely faces the unknown. Scroll to the bottom of this page and open the attachment, *Strait of Gibraltar*. Answer the questions on the document and save your work in your file.

Task Five Our experience reading *The Alchemist*, will greatly improve if we interact with the novel in a personal way. That is why some of your tasks will involve self-reflection. These self-reflective tasks will prepare your thinking for the MovieMaker project you will create at the end of the unit. In a Word document, please reflect on the most influential people in your life. Name three people who have influenced you, for better or worse. Describe their influence on you. What have you learned from them? Is their influence ongoing? In what way(s) are you different for having known

them? Take your time and answer thoughtfully. Save your writing in your file.

Task Six Today you will read about some of the ongoing border issues between Tarifa and Tangier. Click on the following link and read the article. When you have finished reading, answer the following questions in a Word document and save them in your file. www.pbs.org/pov/pov2008/9starhotel/special_hyper_04.html What are some of the effects of having countries/continents so close to one another? In what ways are you a combination of cultures?

Week Three - pages 67-93

Task Seven Today, you will research Alchemy, the medieval forerunner of chemistry. Click the link below to access the site. Type your answers in a Word document and save them in your file. www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/newton/1

1. Click on Newton's Alchemy. 2. Click on interview with Bill Newman and read the interview. 3. Check out some of the interactive boxes on the right of the page. 4. Define Alchemy. Give a literal and a figurative definition. 5. What is the modern day version of alchemy? Don't be afraid to think outside the box. There is not one correct, literal answer. 6. Why does Mr. Coehlo give the honor of the book's title to the alchemist, a supporting character?

Task Eight Click the following link. Then scroll to the bottom of the page and click, Take the Test! When you have finished, read all about yourself. Do you agree with your results? What do you find surprising? Copy and paste your results, and your answers to these questions into a Word document and save them in your file. www.personalitytest.net/types/index.htm

Task Nine Today you will listen to Paolo Coehlo talk about his novel, The Alchemist. Listen carefully, as Mr. Coehlo will talk about his book as a metaphor for life. You will finish today's assignment with a better understanding of The Alchemist as an allegory. To begin, click the following link. www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/133_wbc_archive_new/page2.shtml Scroll down to Paolo Coehlo - The Alchemist and click to listen. When you have finished, open your Task Four, Shepherding assignment and add to your thinking by responding to these questions:

- In your own life, are you merely seeking provision for your physical needs, or are you looking for something more?
- Are you content to follow a charismatic leader, or do you occasionally like to lead?
- What is the difference between happiness and contentment? Which is better?

Week Four - pages 94-134

Task Ten Today we will investigate another setting in the novel, the Sahara desert. You will read about, the Tuareg people, a specific clan of Bedouin people who live in the Sahara. Bedouin is a term used to describe the historically nomadic people groups living in the deserts of North Africa and portions of the Middle East. Click the following link. Then, explore the buttons The People, -traditions, -recipes, -folklore and -music. Click on "map it" to see where the Tuareg people live. In a Word document, take notes on the Sahara and the Tuareg People. Save these notes in your file. You may also want to capture and save pictures to use in your final project. www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/explore/sahara/sahara_overview_lo.html

Task Eleven Today, we will dig deeper into elements of Bedouin culture. As you research, remember that "Bedouin" is a general term used to describe many groups of people. Each Bedouin tribe, or clan, maintains unique qualities that set it apart from other Bedouin groups. Copy and paste the following link to your web browser. Read about the Bedouin people and how they survive the harsh desert conditions. Scroll to the bottom of the page to find links about water, food, shelter, clothing, transportation and navigation. Take notes on details pertinent to your reading. When deciding what notes to take, ask yourself:

1. In the desert, what is new and different for Santiago?
2. Which elements of life (water, food, shelter, clothing, transportation and navigation) most significantly impact Santiago?

Save these notes in your file. Remember to capture some pictures to use in your final project. www.pbs.org/lawrenceofarabia/revolt/survival.html

Week Five - pages 139-154

Task Twelve Egypt Day! Santiago is getting very close to the end of his journey. He has traveled a great distance to find his Personal Legend. His next discovery will take place at the foot of the Egyptian pyramids. Today will we gain a better understanding of what Santiago saw at the end of his journey. Copy and paste the following link to explore Egyptian geography, pyramids, and life. Make sure to investigate the story, explore and challenge links. You will want to capture notes and pictures for your file. www.ancientegypt.co.uk/menu.html

Task Thirteen In a Word document, respond to the following prompt: What are the three goals you are most inspired to accomplish? What are the three things for which your heart most longs? Save your responses in your project file. Important planning note: You will need pictures of yourself for your final project. Begin bringing/emailing pictures to school to save in your file. You might also need pictures of other important people in your life. Begin taking pictures of the important people, places and things in your life.

Week Six - pages 155-167

Task Fourteen Today is our last reflective assignment before we begin our MovieMaker project. As Santiago reaches his goal and finds his treasure you will have several options for how to reflect on the idea of treasure. In the JJohnson folder you will find four different documents asking questions about treasure:

- A Quote from The Bible
- A Jewish Story
- A Quote from The Koran
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Please choose one of these documents, read the quote about treasure and answer the questions. Don't forget to save your work in your file.

Task Fifteen This is it! Today you begin your final project. You have finished your reading. You have participated in class discussions. You have collected the notes, pictures, and journaling you will need to create a movie project. Remember, the purpose of this project is to join your personal experience with Santiago's experience. You will need to highlight the similarities between you and Santiago. Pull out the most significant ideas, symbols, settings, characters or lesson from the book and show how you relate to them. Go back to the Task section of this WebQuest in order to see the requirements for the final project. There is a sample project located in the JJohnson folder. Check with your teacher for a final due date.

Evaluation

| Category and Score | Exemplary 10 | Very Good 8 | Acceptable 7 | Does Not Meet Expectation 6 | Score |
|---|---|---|--|--|-------|
| Student will synthesize elements from their life with elements of Santiago's life to tell one cohesive story. | Student demonstrates a strong, original connection to the novel and insightful personal reflection including reflection on his or her past and how it connect to his or her personal goals and purposes | Student demonstrates strong connection to the novel and insightful personal reflection on their past and future | Student demonstrates connection to the novel and insightful personal reflection | Student fails to demonstrate a connection to the novel or reflect on their own life in a meaningful way | %25 |
| Student will use pictures or video, music, writing and narration to tell one cohesive story. | The student uses pictures, music, writing and their own voice to tell a personal, cohesive story. The music, pictures, writing and narration work together to create a mood supporting the message of the story | The student uses pictures, music, writing and their own voice to tell a personal, cohesive story. The pictures, music and writing are thoughtfully chosen and appropriate | The student uses pictures, music, writing and their own voice to tell a personal, cohesive story | The student fails to tie the music, pictures, writing and narration together to tell a cohesive story OR the message of the project is unclear | %25 |
| Student will turn in all background assignments including research and reflections. | Student has completed all background assignments AND work is thorough, thoughtful and demonstrates engagement in each task. | Student has completed 80% of all background assignments AND work demonstrates engagement | Student has completed 70% percent of all background assignments AND work demonstrates engagement | Student has not completed 70% of all assignments OR assignments lack thoughtful engagement | %25 |
| Student will submit a finished product that is well edited, including text, music, narration and video transitions. | Student submits a final project that is free of errors AND demonstrates well executed video editing details, which enhance the storytelling | Student submits a project that is nearly error free and includes well edited video effects | Student submits a project that is nearly error free including some video effects | Student submits a project with a substantial amount of errors in text and/or video editing | %25 |
| | | | | Total Score | %100 |

Conclusion

Final Thoughts Tarifa, Spain is known for its wind. In recent years, Tarifa has been able to capitalize on its windy weather by attracting wind surfers and by converting to wind power. In literature, wind is often a symbol for change. Santiago experienced a great change as he traveled across northern Africa. Through your reading and reflection, I hope you, too, have experienced something new. Final Project: Your final project will be a three-minute movie in which you combine your life story with that of Santiago's. Choose some elements from the novel, which are most meaningful to you and show the connection you have to that idea, symbol or topic. In a sense, this is an audiovisual essay. Ask yourself, what do I want to communicate? What is the purpose of my movie? What is my main point? For inspiration, consult your project folder and re-read your reflections - you may be struck with a great idea! Use music, pictures, words, art, video and narration to communicate something meaningful about yourself and how you relate to Santiago. To get started: 1. Consult the rubric, located on the "Evaluation" page of this WebQuest 2. Reread the "Task" page of this Webquest 3. Check out the sample movie, located in the Johnson folder 4. Use the Time and Task Plan to guide your movie making process; I can't wait to see your final project!

Teacher Page

This WebQuest is specifically designed to accompany the novel *The Alchemist*, by Paulo Coelho, taught in English 10A. It is designed to span six weeks, which is one half of a trimester. It would be best not to leave this WebQuest for the last six weeks of the trimester in case you experience technical difficulties necessitating more lab time for the students. I. Time Needed in Computer Lab: A. Six total weeks; B. Week One - two days; C. Week Two - two days; D. Week Three - two days; E. Week Four - two days; F. Week Five - two days; G. Week Six - five days; H. Fifteen days in the computer lab. II. Resources Needed: A. *The Alchemist*; B. Computer for every student with: 1. Internet; 2. Word processing; 3. File saving; 4. MovieMaker. III. Skills Required: A. Students must know how to take high quality notes; B. Students must know how to create a file folder; C. Students must know how to save documents; D. Students must know how to navigate the Web; E. Students must know how to respect intellectual property by citing their sources. IV. Recommended Implementation: A. Ninth or tenth grade students.

B. Seventy-five minute class periods; C. WebQuest used as a supplement to traditional novel study of The Alchemist; 1. Literary elements taught during regular class time; a. symbolism; b. theme; c. setting as a character; d. man vs. fate; e. allegory/fable; and many more... 2. There are fifteen days in the unit for direct novel study and class discussion;

Standards

Credits

Other

Reviews

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