The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho Summer Reading Assignment for English I Pre-IB

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Rickards High School 2015-2016

This summer, all incoming English I Pre-IB students will read The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho in addition to the school-wide summer reading assignment. As you carefully and analytically read the novel you will complete the reflection journal outlined below to explore the various literary and technical elements it contains. This exercise will also help to introduce some of the major concepts and practices we will study in our course. The directions for the reflection assignments and corresponding curriculum standards can be found below. Students should be prepared to turn this assignment in no later than the first Friday of the school year. Assignments may be typed or hand-written, but should be clearly labeled and neatly arranged when they are submitted.

Reflection Journal Assignments

Reflection #1: Characterization (To be completed after reading the first 2 sections of the novel.)

In this reflection, you should write 200 to 400 words (or about 1 page typed, double-spaced) in which you discuss one of the characters that has been introduced in the novel so far. In your analysis, you should discuss specific details regarding how the author directly and indirectly shows the personality of your chosen character. You should also discuss how you think this character plays into important themes or ideas that you have seen so far in the novel, and make predictions regarding how they will continue to influence the rest of the story.

(Matching Curricular Standard - LAFS.910.RL.1.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.)

Reflection #2: Quotations and Central Ideas (To be completed after reading sections 3 through 7 of the novel.)

For this reflection, you should choose one or two quotations from this section that you feel explain or demonstrate a central idea in the novel. Explain the quotation(s) and their meanings, and discuss how they develop a theme or central idea in approximately 400 to 600 words (or about 1 page typed, double-spaced).

(Matching Curricular Standard - LAFS.910.RL.1.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.; LAFS.910.RL.1.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.)

Reflection #3: Vocabulary and Connotation (To be completed after reading sections 8 through 10 of the novel.)

For this reflection, you should choose the FIVE words from this section that you feel represent its key ideas. For each word, give A.) The quoted sentence where the word can be found and the page number where it can be found, B.) A definition for the word, C.) An explanation of why the word is important in this portion of the novel.

(Matching Curricular Standard - LAFS.910.RL.2.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices
Reflection #4: Author’s Purpose and Style (To be completed after reading the final sections (11 through 13) of the novel.)

Now that you have reached the end of the novel, you will write an argumentative reflection in which you state and defend your interpretation of the author’s overall purpose for writing the novel. In your reflection you should be sure to include specific textual evidence and thorough reasoning and logic to defend your argument. This reflection should be between 500 and 800 words (1 to 2 typed, double-spaced pages) in total.

(Matching Curricular Standard - LAFS.910.RL.1.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.; LAFS.910.RL.1.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.)

Grading Rubric – How We Determine Success

“A” 90-100% - This grade will be awarded to students who follow the directions as outlined above with great care. Their writing will reflect organization, structure, and depth of thought and analysis. Students receiving this grade will also turn in work that is neat and organized in its presentation and that is free of excessive and distracting errors in its technical merit.

“B” 80-89% - This grade will be awarded to students who follow the directions as given above, but may include students who have difficulty producing writing that reflection reflects the organization, structure, and depth of thought found in the “A” grading range. Responses at this level may have slight, but not distracting problems in the area of technical merit.

“C” 70-79% - This grade will be awarded to students who have minor issues in following the directions as outlined above, but who still manage to give attention to and respond to all required reflection prompts. These students may show more significant issues in organization, structure, or analytical depth than those receiving the “B” grade, or may have frequent and repeated problems with the technical merit of their assignment.

“D” 60-69% - This grade will be given to students who fail to complete all required responses or who do not produce focused or coherent responses to the required prompts. Students receiving this grade may also have major and distracting errors in organization, structure, depth of thought, command of language, or technical merit.

“F” 59% or below – This grade will be given to students who submit responses that are mostly incomplete, completely unfocused or incoherent in relation to the required prompts, or that display little to no skill in organization, depth of analysis, command of language, or technical merit.

If you have any questions regarding this assignment or the English I Pre IB course, please feel free to contact me via school email. I hope you all have an enjoyable summer!

-Ms. Walden