

Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Alchemist

by Paulo Coelho

written by Gerald Mood

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The Alchemist

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. Explore the use of allusion.
2. Identify the genre of the story.
3. Interpret the role of the supernatural in the story arc and in significant character arcs.
4. Examine the use of figurative and rhetorical devices like personification.
5. Analyze the development and motivation of the main character.

Introductory Lecture

I. RELIGION AND THE NATURAL WORLD

The Alchemist may seem to intertwine religion with the idea of Personal Legend, or one's purpose in life, but it actually acts to separate the two. In the story, the *individual* is stressed throughout Santiago's journey, not religion. Even though Coelho tries to draw authority and credibility from three major religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—there is no depth in his writing on any of them. Coelho suggests all three are valid because each one is used for Santiago to find his Personal Legend, and characters from each are successful in finding their own Personal Legends. However, Coelho chooses the natural world, not any religion, as the primary mechanism for drawing closer to God. Elements like Personal Legend, the Soul of the World, and the Universal Language are used in a spiritual, not religious, context.

The character of Melchizedek and the stones Urim and Thummim are drawn from Judaism. Originally from the Hebrew Bible, Melchizedek is the first to teach Santiago about Personal Legends and the Soul of the World. Coelho gives Melchizedek a great amount of credibility in the stories he shares, the advice he gives, the gift he brings, but especially in the dialog he has during his last appearance in the book. There, the reader hears Melchizedek directly speaking to God. This is significant because it is for the reader's sake, not Santiago's. Santiago never sees this exchange, but it reveals to the reader that Melchizedek has a very personal relationship with God. This creates a tremendous amount of credibility around everything we learn from Melchizedek. The stones Urim and Thummim are used later in the book, when Santiago has all but forgotten about his treasure. Coelho uses the stones to remind Santiago of his Personal Legend and renew his pursuit of his treasure.

Christianity makes its appearance almost immediately in *The Alchemist* when Santiago is introduced seeking shelter overnight in an abandoned church. The author also reveals very early that Santiago had attended seminary, but eventually dropped out because he was more interested in knowing the world than knowing God. These two examples could be interpreted as a rejection of Christianity. However, it is because of the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that allows Santiago to drop his guard enough for him to consult the gypsy woman about his dreams. It is through her that Santiago is first confronted about the validity of his dreams and is told that he must follow them. Eventually, the reader learns that Santiago is indeed still Christian, when he swears to Jesus Christ before the caravan heads out into the African desert.

Islam also plays an important role in *The Alchemist*. Coelho uses a number of characters who are devout Muslims to influence, guide, and teach Santiago during his journey. As was the case with Coelho's references to Christianity, the intent of Coelho's first mention of Islam is unclear. Santiago has just reached the shores of Africa where he is struck by the actions of Islam's priests and practitioners. "A practice of infidels," he calls it, and says, "The infidels had an evil look about them." But it is a Muslim who comes to Santiago's aid when he has nothing. This meeting then leads to a powerful friendship that continues to teach Santiago and strengthens him for his journey across the desert towards the Pyramids. It is during this journey that he meets more Muslims who guide him, including the camel driver who travels alongside him, and eventually the alchemist. The alchemist is Santiago's greatest teacher, who mentors him during arguably the most difficult part of Santiago's journey.

But it is the natural world that Coelho uses to draw his characters closer to God, regardless of their religion. He does this literally, as when Melchizedek helps the miner realize his Personal Legend by turning himself into a rock, or when the alchemist insists Santiago turn himself into the wind; and inspirationally, as when Santiago reflects upon learning from his sheep, the crystal, the caravan, and the desert. Coelho also waits until Santiago is out in nature to send him dreams and visions, as with the two hawks. Finally, the dialog is filled with references to the natural world as the primary example to knowing God, and may most clearly be captured in the alchemist's saying, "The wise men understood that this natural world is only an image and a copy of paradise. The existence of this world is simply a guarantee that there exists a world that is perfect. God created the world so that, through its visible objects, men could understand his spiritual teachings and the marvels of his wisdom."

II. PASTORAL STORY

Pastoral stories are set in the countryside and celebrate the simple life, often characterized by the lives of shepherds. They are frequently romanticized, and exhibit such themes as purity and tranquility.

The Alchemist begins rightly enough, in the Andalusian countryside with a boy and his sheep. It describes a setting that threatens little danger, where the biggest threat to Santiago is the fear that one of his sheep might wander away during the night. It describes how the boy travels around the fields, with plenty of time for reading books. When he meets the dark-haired girl, the novel depicts life in the village as boring, "where each day was like all the others," while Santiago, on the other hand, shares with her the news and gossip from the other towns that he has visited. He also tells her exciting stories about his travels. The story even ranks shepherds among the rich, because the reader discovers in Santiago's conversation with his father that only the wealthy and shepherds can travel.

Unfortunately, it is not long before the reader discovers that this will not be a tranquil story. The boy is disturbed by a recurring dream, and he seeks out a fortune teller to interpret it for him. What she tells him—that he must travel to the Pyramids—changes his life forever. Along his journey away from the pasture fields, he will sell his sheep, lose everything he has, work harder than he ever has before, experience almost crippling doubt and fear, find love in the barren and dangerous desert, understand himself and the world around him—not just read books or tell stories—and finally almost lose his life. Indeed, as the book nears its end, we learn that things were never as they seemed in the beginning. In the opening pages, the book reveals there were no wolves in the region, causing the reader to believe that there was little danger in the fields where Santiago shepherds his flock, but we eventually discover that Santiago was, at least on one occasion, the target of a murder plot in which criminals were planning to kill him and steal his flock. These revelations re-cast the opening pages in a new reality and completely shatter the illusion of a pastoral story.

III. FABLE VS. MYTH

Should *The Alchemist* be considered a fable, or a myth? An argument can be made for either, as the story contains characteristics of both literary forms but fails to include everything typically found in either category.

A key element when determining whether or not a story is a fable is length. Usually short and to the point, they are very similar in length to parables. This does not bode favorably for *The Alchemist* since the story is a book. Length, however, is not the sole criteria in determining a fable. Another key element is communicating a moral lesson. Here *The Alchemist* excels, providing several moral lessons that thread themselves throughout the story, such as true happiness can only be found when pursuing one's Personal Legend. Finally, the last key element of a fable is the attribution of human qualities to things not typically possessing them, the literary device personification. Such things usually include animals and forces of nature, and in *The Alchemist*, we see just that. Near the end of the book, Santiago actually carries on conversations with the desert, wind, and sun. It is during these conversations that we discover the gift of human speech is not the only anthropomorphic quality given to nature, but also such things as wisdom, anger, pride, curiosity, and excitement. Santiago also has literal conversations with his heart, which is also given human emotions—so much so that he and his heart actually become friends.

Myths, on the other hand, have their own sort of checklist that the reader must keep in mind. When determining whether a story is a myth, one of the first things to take into consideration is whether anyone once believed the story to be true. The myths of the Greeks and Romans are a perfect example of aspect. There was a time when people believed the stories of their gods and goddesses, and how the world came to be. *The Alchemist* does contain elements that give the reader a sense that the story is real. It contains many references to real religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, historical events such as the Moors' invasion of Spain, and actual places like Egypt and the Pyramids. However, these elements are historical. *The Alchemist* itself is not historical, nor does it explore the metaphysics of the world in a culturally mythic manner.

The story is replete with spiritual statements and discourses on belief that might approach the mythic—including the ideas of Personal Legends and the Soul of the World. Another factor, however, which argues against interpreting *The Alchemist* as myth is its main character. Myths are typically the stories of gods, demi-gods, and/or superhumans. Even seemingly common persons like shepherds are eventually revealed to be the disguised son of a god or of a great hero or ruler. Throughout the majority of *The Alchemist*, however, Santiago is unquestionably ordinary. He has an early encounter with the supernatural in the character of Melchizedek, but that seems to be an isolated incident. Near the end of the book, we do see him experience the metaphysical, literally conversing with his heart, elements of nature, and finally the hand that wrote all; but his are still the extraordinary experiences of an ordinary person, not the revelation of a "true and heroic" nature. Most myths also take place in an unspecified time in the earth's and humanity's infancy. Myths help explain why things look the way they do, or why things are the way they are. *The Alchemist* does not. The historical background of the allegory is fairly identifiable, not cloaked in the mystery of antiquity. Ultimately, however, the fact that we can confidently name the story's author—Paulo Coelho—and the time and place of its creation—Brazil, 1988—disqualifies the tale, however significant or meaningful, as a myth.

IV. THE SUPERNATURAL

The plot of *The Alchemist* is filled with the working of the supernatural. In order to understand why such elements exist, one must consider the book's message to follow one's personal calling. Natural Law is usually insufficient to explain the yearnings of the human heart. In fact, the novel explicitly states that there is more to life than Natural Law and simply looking for food, water, and shelter. Ideas like Personal Legends and the Soul of the World cannot be explained by any other means than the supernatural, and these ideas are central to the book.

The book's supernatural element also requires casting supernatural characters. In other words, it is supernatural characters who are knowledgeable about supernatural things. It is not enough to simply have an acknowledgement of the supernatural, as we see in the character of the Englishman, who has dedicated his life to the pursuit of understanding the supernatural, but is no closer to unraveling the mysteries of the Soul of the World than the baker who wants to travel but never does. These supernatural characters always show up when Santiago has doubts about following his Personal Legend. Whether it is the fortune teller, Melchizedek, the stones Urim and Thummim, or the alchemist, each make their appearance whenever Santiago has a choice to make about pursuing his treasure or staying where he is. This fact also reveals that it is these supernatural characters that maintain Santiago's momentum on his quest.

V. DESTINY VS. FREE WILL

The Alchemist suggests that everyone has a Personal Legend, which then raises the question of whether one's Personal Legend should be interpreted as a prescribed destiny. One has the choice to follow it as we see with many characters in the book, like the crystal merchant and the baker, who know what their Personal Legends are, but lack the courage to follow them. Even Santiago has the opportunity to walk away at any time. However, the choice not to fulfill their Personal Legends clearly leaves these characters unhappy. In fact, the alchemist tells Santiago while they are still in the oasis that he can become the counselor of the oasis, marry his love, and be happy for a short time, after which he will be very wealthy, but he will never be truly happy unless he follows his Personal Legend. It can be argued that this kind of scenario is not really a choice at all.

Practice Free Response Items

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 1

Read the passage from Chapter 1 of Pablo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, beginning with, "The sun began its departure, as well," and ending, "'I'm an adventurer, looking for treasure,' he said to himself. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the old king can be viewed as a character even though he never appears outright in the passage. What narrative significance does he play in this passage?"

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 2

Read the passage near the end of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, beginning with, "They crossed the desert for another two days in silence," and ending, "It said that the darkest hour of the night came just before the dawn." Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what Coelho accomplishes by presenting the intimate conversation Santiago has with his heart.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 3

Read the passage near the end of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, beginning with, "On the following day, the first clear sign of danger appeared," and ending, "They mounted their horses, and rode out in the direction of the Pyramids of Egypt." Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what Coelho accomplishes by showing the reader the different scenarios involving armed tribesmen within the same passage.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 4

Authors decide whether to grant or deny their characters credibility as a way to manipulate the amount of trust the reader gives each character. Write a well-organized essay in which you explain how Coelho establishes credibility for the alchemist.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE ITEM 5

Authors use various techniques in order to create drama in their stories, which raise the stakes of their characters and engage the reader. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the techniques Coelho uses to create drama through the course of *The Alchemist*. Avoid plot summary.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1 - 5

Carefully read the passage from very early in Part One of *The Alchemist*, beginning, “The boy’s name was Santiago,” and ending, “The boy could see in his father’s gaze a desire to be able, himself, to travel the world—a desire that was still alive, despite his father’s having had to bury it, over dozens of years, under the burden of struggling for water to drink, food to eat, and the same place to sleep every night of his life.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

1. Coelho works Santiago’s background into the story through Santiago’s
 - A. first conversation with the girl.
 - B. description of his relationship with his sheep.
 - C. plan to explain to the girl how he is able to read.
 - D. conversation with his father about being a shepherd.
 - E. thoughts of what he would do if he ever tired of Andalusia.
2. Coelho introduces Santiago with such detail, that within the first three paragraphs of the passage we know Santiago is many things, EXCEPT
 - A. poor and responsible.
 - B. familiar with the area.
 - C. alone for long periods.
 - D. smart and resourceful.
 - E. protective and cautious.
3. Coelho has Santiago believe that the church he slept in may be haunted because it caused him to have the same dream for a second time, in order to effectively establish that Santiago
 - A. believes in the supernatural.
 - B. is upset by what has happened.
 - C. has experienced something unusual.
 - D. is confused by what is going on.
 - E. uses the unknown to explain things.
4. Coelho’s purpose in setting Santiago apart from the merchant’s daughter, his sheep, and even his own father reveals Santiago’s
 - A. circumstance.
 - B. importance.
 - C. intelligence.
 - D. background.
 - E. wants.

5. Coelho reveals Santiago's ability to experience personal growth when Santiago
- A. leaves the seminary.
 - B. admits that he doesn't want to become a priest.
 - C. recognizes his desire to live in one place forever.
 - D. has the same dream for the second time in one week.
 - E. grows angry from his having had the same dream again.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 6 - 10

Carefully read the passage from the start of Part Two of *The Alchemist*, beginning, “The boy had been working for the crystal merchant for almost a month, and he could see that it wasn’t exactly the kind of job that would make him happy,” and ending, “Not everyone can see his dreams come true in the same way.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

6. Coelho primarily uses the conversation between Santiago and the crystal merchant as a way to
 - A. show that it is indeed possible for Santiago to cross the desert.
 - B. reveal that even the cantankerous crystal merchant can grow.
 - C. explain the idea found in the last line of the passage more deeply.
 - D. show that Santiago’s persistence about the display case pays off.
 - E. introduce more of the characters in a very straight-forward way.
7. Coelho uses the conversation to influence
 - A. the crystal merchant through Santiago.
 - B. Santiago through the crystal merchant.
 - C. Santiago through his own encouragement.
 - D. the merchant through his own story.
 - E. both sides equally, leaving neither moved.
8. Coelho reveals that the usually impatient and grouchy crystal merchant is tolerant of Santiago through the use of
 - A. their conversation.
 - B. the merchant’s tears.
 - C. Santiago’s decision to stay.
 - D. the merchant’s actions.
 - E. the different omens.
9. Coelho uses the crystal merchant’s story about the five obligations of Muslim law to
 - A. reveal the crystal merchant’s dream.
 - B. display how devout the crystal merchant is.
 - C. show the similarity between him and Santiago.
 - D. show how unfulfilled the crystal merchant is.
 - E. disregard the importance of Santiago’s dream.
10. Coelho uses the crystal merchant’s questions as a technique to primarily
 - A. reveal Santiago’s thoughts.
 - B. show the merchant’s attitude.
 - C. advance the storyline.
 - D. get to the merchant’s story.
 - E. discourage Santiago.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 11 - 15

Carefully read the passage from early in Part Two of *The Alchemist*, beginning, “The boy went to his room and packed his belongings,” and ending, “What could it cost to go over to the supplier’s warehouse and find out if the Pyramids were really that far away?” Then select the best answers to the questions that follow.

11. Coelho’s purpose for keeping Santiago in Tangier for a year is to reveal
 - A. adversity while searching for his Personal Legend.
 - B. that Santiago’s dream is not a whim but a calling.
 - C. his working hard so he may return to Spain with pride.
 - D. that it took that long for Santiago to decide what to do.
 - E. the fact that Santiago couldn’t bring himself to leave.
12. Initially, Santiago doesn’t want to pursue his Personal Legend to the Pyramids because he
 - A. is afraid of the world.
 - B. wants to stay in Tangier.
 - C. would be happier being a shepherd.
 - D. has become comfortable with what he knows.
 - E. is only two hours away from where he started.
13. Coelho uses Urim and Thummim as
 - A. idle props for Santiago to interact with.
 - B. characters for Santiago to interact with.
 - C. the only reminder of the king.
 - D. devices to transmit the strength of the king .
 - E. omens for Santiago to follow.
14. Coelho’s intent for continually referencing the old king during his description of other characters is to
 - A. remind the reader of the old king.
 - B. show that the old king is still present in Santiago’s life.
 - C. show how the old king is guiding the boy.
 - D. reveal that Santiago must follow his Personal Legend.
 - E. remind the boy of his Personal Legend.
15. Santiago ultimately decides to continue to follow his Personal Legend because he
 - A. feels happy about the decision.
 - B. decides to follow the omens.
 - C. is no longer happy being a shepherd.
 - D. draws strength from the old king.
 - E. is holding Urim and Thummim.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16 - 20

Carefully read the passage almost halfway through Part Two of *The Alchemist*, beginning, “The boy couldn’t believe what he was seeing,” and ending, “And, if I have to, I will accept the fact that he has become a part of the clouds, and the animals, and the water of the desert.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

16. Coelho uses all of the following tools to enrich the opening scene EXCEPT
 - A. dialogue.
 - B. imagery.
 - C. allusion.
 - D. emotion.
 - E. exposition.
17. Coelho specifically uses the war to
 - A. add a sense of danger.
 - B. stall Santiago at the oasis.
 - C. reveal the desert men.
 - D. evoke emotion in the reader.
 - E. make the story interesting.
18. The line, “The boy listened to the sound of her voice, and thought it to be more beautiful than the sound of the wind in the date palms,” is an example of
 - A. simile.
 - B. metaphor.
 - C. onomatopoeia.
 - D. hyperbole.
 - E. alliteration.
19. The character of Fatima serves all of the following narrative purposes EXCEPT
 - A. objective.
 - B. obstacle.
 - C. guide.
 - D. priority.
 - E. surprise.
20. Coelho culminates the passage’s rise in action when
 - A. the oasis is reached.
 - B. Fatima is introduced.
 - C. the alchemist is found.
 - D. the caravan cannot continue.
 - E. Santiago must choose.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 21 - 25

Carefully read the passage from very late in Part Two of *The Alchemist*, beginning, “The boy rode along through the desert for several hours,” and ending, “Because now he knew where his treasure was.” Then select the best answers to the questions that follow.

21. Coelho effectively communicates the relief Santiago feels as his long journey comes to a close by
 - A. listing those who he has met along the way.
 - B. revealing how long it had been since he set forth.
 - C. revealing to the reader the boy’s emotions.
 - D. having Santiago’s heart recount his story.
 - E. revealing Santiago could now return to the oasis.
22. In the passage, Coelho creates a sense of ambivalence through the use of
 - A. positive emotions and painful hardships.
 - B. a journey that ends without treasure.
 - C. omens that do not end at his treasure.
 - D. characters that exist but are not present.
 - E. Santiago’s desire to live simply despite his knowledge.
23. The narrative purpose of the terrible assault of Santiago is to
 - A. show how difficult his journey has been.
 - B. break the spirit of Santiago.
 - C. emotionally connect with the reader.
 - D. reveal the treasure’s location.
 - E. facilitate Santiago’s growth.
24. Coelho sets this passage at the Pyramids in order to
 - A. communicate the intensity of having arrived at Santiago’s destination.
 - B. symbolize Santiago’s Personal Legend as being bigger than himself.
 - C. overwhelm Santiago by intimidating him with the Pyramids’ presence.
 - D. foreshadow Santiago’s death by the robbers in the shadow of the giant tombs.
 - E. show how far Santiago has had to travel to reach his treasure.
25. In the passage, Coelho uses dreams as
 - A. a device to reveal to Santiago his treasure.
 - B. a tool to teach Santiago about his Personal Legend.
 - C. a way to show Santiago what his future holds.
 - D. an omen to show Santiago that he is on the right track.
 - E. the only technique to infuse a sense of the supernatural.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

1. Coelho works Santiago's background into the story, but Santiago's conversation with the girl is filled with news from the other towns. So, it is not through his conversation with the girl the first time he meets her (A). Similarly, Coelho reveals what Santiago is like now through his description of Santiago's relationship with his sheep (B). **The passage reveals that Santiago used to be in the seminary, what his family is like, and his desires since he was a child, when Santiago plans to explain to the girl how he is able to read (C).** The reader learns, through the conversation Santiago has with his father, that it is Santiago's desire to travel which motivates him as a shepherd (D), while his thoughts about his future are revealed when Santiago describes what he would do if he ever tired of Andalusia (E).
2. Coelho introduces Santiago with such detail, that within the first three paragraphs of the passage we know Santiago is poor by the way he swept the floor with his jacket and is comfortable lying down on the ground. We also know he is responsible since he saw to it that all the sheep entered through the ruined gate (A). We know Santiago is also familiar with the area, since he knew there were no wolves in the region (B), and that he is alone for long periods of time since he told himself he would have to start reading thicker books because they lasted longer (C). We know he is smart since he can read, and is resourceful since he uses the book as a pillow and lays planks across the ruined gate to prevent the flock from wandering away during the night (D). **He wants to keep the flock from straying during the night, but only because it has strayed before, and he had to spend the entire next day searching for it. As a result, we discover Santiago is neither protective nor cautious (E).**
3. Coelho has Santiago believe that the church he slept in may be haunted because it caused him to have the same dream for a second time. By doing this, Coelho hints that Santiago believes in the supernatural, but it is not until he explains that Santiago left the seminary that he effectively establishes it (A). It is not until Coelho describes that the dream was causing Santiago to feel anger towards his sheep that the reader realizes that Santiago is upset by what has happened (B). **Instead, Coelho's emphasis that the church may be haunted communicates to the reader how unusual the situation is, since those kinds of scenarios are meant to be rare indeed (C).** While Santiago may not know exactly what his dream means, he knows that having the same dream for a second time is unusual. It's this fact that is the source of his anger with his sheep and why he is annoyed; not that he is confused (D). Finally, Coelho reveals that Santiago is much more interested in knowing the world than knowing God and learning about man's sins, so Coelho establishes that Santiago is actually interested in the known to explain things (E).

4. Coelho sets Santiago apart from the merchant's daughter, his sheep, and even his own father by allowing Santiago to think beyond his basic need for food and water, and to pursue the things that make him happy. In doing this, Coelho reveals **Santiago's disposition compared to the other characters, how he is different, and what he is capable of. In other words, his circumstance (A)**. Santiago wants to marry the merchant's daughter, but it is out of his control, as Santiago does not even know whether she remembers him; Coelho tells us that the sheep may know Santiago's schedule, but it is just as likely that it's Santiago who had become accustomed to *their* schedule; and Santiago tries very hard to receive his father's blessing. So, it does not reveal Santiago's importance (B). The girl knows there is more to life than the town, but that's where she is stuck; his father has a desire to travel, but not the courage; and his sheep are pursuing the exact things that make them happy, even though they are the least intelligent characters in the passage. As a result, it is not an issue of intelligence (C). What Coelho does serves to show what Santiago is like in the present, by explaining what his life is like as a shepherd. Thus, it is not to reveal his background (D). Finally, Coelho could have just as easily revealed Santiago's wants by setting him alongside the other characters. After all, their wants are revealed too. The sheep only want food and water; while Santiago's father has the desire, but not the courage to travel; and we can tell from how the girl reacts to Santiago's stories about his travels, that the girl wants to see what life is like outside of town. So, it is not to reveal Santiago's wants (E).
5. Coelho reveals Santiago's ability to experience personal growth. However, Santiago has always wanted to know the world and to travel. So, while he accomplishes his goal, he does not gain any new realizations or understandings (A). Likewise, Santiago finally summons the courage to tell his father that he doesn't want to become a priest, but it does not result in any additional realizations beyond what he already knows (B). **It is only when Santiago experiences something he has never felt before, namely, his desire to live in one place forever, that Coelho reveals Santiago's ability to experience personal growth (C)**. Having the same dream affects Santiago's mood, but does not cause him to grow in a way that, up until this point, would be completely new. Thus, it is not when Santiago has the same dream for the second time in one week (D). Finally, Santiago's anger is a reaction to the dreams, not a consequence of growing, so it is not revealed when Santiago grows angry from his having had the same dream again (E).

6. Coelho primarily uses the conversation between Santiago and the crystal merchant as a way to develop an idea. But Santiago doesn't need help understanding it is possible to cross the desert. In fact, he doesn't understand why the merchant does not go to Mecca now; alluding to the fact that he indeed understands and accepts the fact that it is possible to cross the desert (A). The crystal merchant merely acquiesces to Santiago's idea. He does not grow since the passage doesn't say anything about him traveling to Mecca in order to realize his dream (B). **Instead, the conversation lays out the context of the idea found in the last line of the passage for the reader, so they may immediately understand its meaning more deeply (C).** Santiago mentions the display case only once, so it cannot be argued that he is persistent about it (D). Finally, the characters are revealed in a very subtle way during the conversation, as when Santiago's eagerness to be successful is shown in his desire to build the display case; or when the merchant is revealed as being settled in his ways, by his explaining that he's never had a display case before. Instead, it is the narrative that reveals the character's personalities in a very straight-forward way, by describing their actions (E).
7. Coelho uses the conversation to influence a character. The crystal merchant acquiesces, but he is not influenced to follow his dreams. Santiago tells him about omens, but he knows about omens already, so Coelho does not use Santiago to influence the crystal merchant (A). Likewise, Santiago does not change his mind from the beginning of the passage to the end, so the crystal merchant is not used to influence Santiago (B). Santiago has given up on the Pyramids and plans to return home and buy some sheep. He is even pained at the memory of his treasure and tries to avoid thinking about it, so he is not used to encourage himself (C). **Instead, it is the crystal merchant's own words that make him emotional about the Prophet and the five obligations of Muslim law, as well as his own reflection on his inability to do anything about his dream, that motivates him to help Santiago accomplish his. Thus, the merchant's own story is used to influence himself (D).** The crystal merchant eventually decides to help Santiago, and gives him permission to build the display case, so Coelho does not use both sides equally, leaving neither moved (E).
8. Coelho reveals that the usually impatient and grouchy crystal merchant is tolerant of Santiago, but not through their conversation. In fact, the crystal merchant becomes unhappy when the boy tries to promote change through the display case, and the crystal merchant switches the subject on Santiago because he doesn't like the direction the conversation is headed in. So, it is not through the use of their conversation (A). When the crystal merchant cries, it's because he is talking about the Prophet, so it is not through the use of the merchant's tears (B). Santiago decides to stay because he is treated fairly and receives a good commission, but the crystal merchant didn't mean to do that on purpose; he only thought that sales wouldn't amount to much, and had assumed Santiago would return soon to his sheep. Thus Coelho does not reveal the crystal merchant's tolerance of Santiago through Santiago's decision to stay (C). The merchant spent the entire day mumbling behind the counter, telling the boy to be careful with the pieces and not to break anything, so the merchant's tolerance is not shown through his actions (D). **But when the money began to flow, and the crystal merchant started selling better with the arrival of Santiago, he saw the boy's very presence in the shop as an omen (E).**

9. Coelho uses the crystal merchant's story about the five obligations of Muslim law to **reveal the context of the crystal merchant's dream, so the reader may know why the crystal merchant just wants to dream about realizing his dream (A)**. The crystal merchant's tears for the Prophet display how devout the crystal merchant is (B). Both the crystal merchant and Santiago are passionate about their dreams, but they have more differences than similarities. One of the biggest differences is that Santiago wants to pursue his dream while the crystal merchant does not, so it is not used to show the similarity between the crystal merchant and Santiago (C). Coelho shows how grouchy and negative the crystal merchant is through the narrative, thus the story is not used to reveal how unfulfilled the crystal merchant is (D). Finally, the crystal merchant uses his conversation with Santiago—not his story—to tell him that he does not know anyone who would want to cross the desert just to see the Pyramids. "They're just a pile of stones. You could build one in your backyard," he says. So, the crystal merchant's story is not used to disregard the importance of Santiago's dream (E).
10. Coelho uses the crystal merchant's questions as a technique to primarily **reveal Santiago's thoughts. This is not done in the narrative and is the only way Coelho reveals what Santiago is thinking (A)**. The narrative describes the merchant's attitude in a more straight-forward way, so the crystal merchant's questions are not used primarily to show his attitude (B); while it's described in the narrative that Santiago needs more money, so the crystal merchant's questions are not used primarily to advance the storyline (C). Santiago's statement about the crystal merchant having never wanted to travel is the trigger that causes the crystal merchant to share his story (D), and Santiago doesn't get discouraged. Instead, the crystal merchant eventually agrees to what Santiago is asking (E).
11. Coelho's purpose for keeping Santiago in Tangier for a year is not to reveal adversity while searching for his Personal Legend. Santiago's past challenges, like the thief, and his future challenges, like the endless desert, can be revealed immediately (A). **Instead, when Santiago recalls the king's words, "Never stop dreaming," after nearly a year of not thinking about his Personal Legend, it shows that Santiago's dream is not a whim, but a calling (B)**. Santiago does work hard over the year, but he decides not to return to Spain even though he earns the means to (C), and Santiago has not come to a decision about his future as he is still deciding what he is going to do at the end of the passage (D). Finally, Santiago does leave, even though he is going to miss the place, and all the good things he had learned (E).
12. Santiago feels he has conquered Tangier and is confident he can conquer the world, so he is not afraid of it (A). He has read the omens and knows it's time to move on, so he no longer wants to stay in Tangier (B). He makes up his mind to return to his flock, but realizes he is no longer happy with that decision, so he would not be happier being a shepherd (C). **Instead, he doesn't know if the desert can be a friend, and it's in the desert that he has to search for his treasure. In this way, he has become comfortable with what he knows (D)**. Santiago comes to see himself as two hours closer to his treasure than when he started, so it's not because he is only two hours away from where he started (E).

13. Coelho has Urim and Thummim play an active role, so they are not idle props, like Santiago's shepherd's pouch (A). Nor are they characters, as they do not interact, or speak with anyone (B). Santiago has more than enough reminders of the king, like the hair of the crystal merchant or the smile of the candy seller, so they are not the only reminder of the king (C). **However, Santiago is still considering returning home until he holds Urim and Thummim in his hand, and they transmit the strength and will of the old king to Santiago (D).** Before Santiago even rediscovers Urim and Thummim, he has already seen the omens and knows it is time to go because the passage begins with him packing his belongings, so they are not omens for Santiago to follow (E).
14. Coelho's intent for continually referencing the old king during his description of other characters is not to remind the reader of the old king, since Coelho already did that with Urim and Thummim (A). **With Santiago contemplating his Personal Legend again, he remembers the old king's words that he is always nearby when someone wants to realize his or her Personal Legend, so it is to show that the old king is close and still present in Santiago's life (B).** Despite seeing the old king in the candy seller's smile, the candy seller did not guide Santiago, so it is not to show how the old king is guiding the boy through those other characters (C). Santiago always has a choice, and very nearly decides to give up throughout the passage, so it is not to reveal that Santiago doesn't have a choice but to follow his Personal Legend (D). Finally, Urim and Thummim remind the boy of the old king and his Personal Legend when he rediscovers them at the opening of the passage (E).
15. Santiago ultimately decides to continue to follow his Personal Legend, and *then* he feels tremendously happy about the decision (A). The omens tell him it is time to go, but do not tell him where to go, so it can't be because he decides to follow the omens (B). Santiago's dream isn't to be a shepherd, but his sheep have been good friends and they have taught him much, so he is happy being a shepherd (C). **Instead, when Santiago held Urim and Thummim, they had transmitted to him the strength of the old king (D).** Urim and Thummim are extensions of the king, so even though Santiago held them, without the power of the old king, they are just stones (E).
16. Coelho uses all of the following tools to enrich the opening scene except **dialogue**. The Englishman's line, "It looks like *A Thousand and One Nights*," is a quotation, not an exchange of words between characters. Likewise, the caravan leader's instructions are written in the narrative. As a result, dialogue is not used (A). Images of three hundred wells, fifty thousand date trees, and innumerable colored tents help Coelho to describe the scene (B), as does the reference to *A Thousand and One Nights* (C). Coelho describes the travelers as relieved and happy, incessantly talking, laughing, and shouting. The first two are emotions, while the last three are not in themselves, but they are used to portray emotions. (D). Finally, explanations are spread throughout the narrative, such as when the camel driver explains the nature of the oases as neutral territory, and how, "With some difficulty, the leader of the caravan brought all his people together and gave them his instructions... Since they were visitors, they would have to share living space with those who lived there, and would be given the best accommodations... Then he asked that everyone, including his own sentinels, hand over their arms to the men appointed by the tribal chieftains." (E).

17. Coelho specifically uses the war, but he describes oases as safe havens and refuges. He even describes how everyone turns in their guns in the beginning of the passage. So, the war is not used as a tool to add a sense of danger (B). Instead, **Santiago is surprised to find the woman he loves at the oasis. In order for Santiago to get to know her, and for them to share their stories, Coelho specifically uses the war to stall Santiago at the oasis (B).** Fatima describes what the men of the desert are like in her conversation with Santiago, so the war does not specifically serve as a tool to reveal the desert men (C), while Santiago's falling for Fatima is meant to evoke emotion in the reader (D). Finally, there is more than enough going on in the passage, such as the search of the alchemist, meeting Fatima, and Santiago possibly deserting his Personal Legend to stay with her, to make the story interesting (E).
18. (A) and (B) are both tempting because the voice is compared to the sound of the wind, but the comparison is neither strictly simile or metaphor, so these choices are not fully satisfactory. Coelho does not attempt to recreate the sound of either the voice or the wind, so onomatopoeia (C) is excluded. However, **the description of the voice as "more beautiful than the wind moving through the date palms" is clearly a poetic exaggeration. Thus, (D) is the best answer.** Coelho does not repeat consonant sounds within the line, so it is not an example of alliteration (E).
19. Since Santiago wants to pursue Fatima, she becomes a new objective (A) for him. Santiago's desire is such that he is willing to sacrifice his Personal Legend as soon as he meets Fatima, so she becomes an obstacle (B) and a new priority as well (D). Since the woman he loves was the last thing Santiago expected to find this close to the alchemist, Fatima is a surprise (E). **She teaches him about the women of the desert, but she does not teach him anything new about his Personal Legend, so she cannot serve as a guide (C).**
20. As the oasis is reached at the beginning of the passage, when Coelho introduces the scene, (A) is eliminated. Fatima is definitely a surprise, and her introduction may be considered a rise in action, but not the passage's culmination because she and Santiago continue to interact meaningfully throughout the passage (B). As Santiago is not the one to find the alchemist, it cannot be the climax of his tale, thus eliminating (C). The fact that the caravan cannot continue would seem to slow the rise in action. However, this device keeps Santiago at the oasis where he may continue to develop his relationship with Fatima. Thus it is not a culmination (D). Finally, the passage ends with Santiago's decision to either stay with Fatima or continue along his journey. The stakes have been raised, and the unanswered question piques the interest of the reader. **Thus, Coelho culminates the passage's rise in action when Santiago must make his choice (E).**

21. Coelho effectively communicates the relief Santiago feels as his long journey comes to a close, but not by listing those who he has met along the way. Though Santiago has met many characters indeed, there is no context for the reader to account for place or time. There is no way to know he has been on a long journey (A). Coelho reveals how long it had been since he set forth, but there is no context for what Santiago has experienced or endured during that time (B). **Instead, the pure excitement of Santiago's heart leaping, and his tears of joy communicate hardship, struggle, and a long journey. So it is revealed through the boy's emotions (C).** The story of the shepherd who left his flock to follow his dream is a story of a long journey, but it is told with pride, and does not communicate relief (D). Revealing Santiago could now return to the oasis speaks of time, but not a long journey (E).
22. In the passage, Coelho creates a sense of ambivalence through the use of **positive emotions and painful hardships. It is the fact that Santiago expresses for example, his joy, despite being nearly beaten to death (A).** Santiago's journey hasn't ended. In fact, he knows where his treasure is, so to say his journey has ended without treasure is incorrect (B). The omens lead Santiago to where he is supposed to be, so to call them ironic is incorrect (C). The use of characters that exist but are not present is not ironic (D), and while Santiago's desire to live simply as a shepherd despite his knowledge is ironic, it does nothing to create a mood for the passage (E).
23. Coelho uses the terrible assault of Santiago, but he has already established the difficulty of Santiago's journey. This has been accomplished in the narrative, when Coelho has the boy's heart tell of Personal Legend. Santiago also thanks God, which is not something done lightly, and as Santiago digs for his treasure, he is weighted down in the face of the Pyramids, and struggles against nature. He reaches his physical limits. Thus, it is not to show how difficult his journey has been (A). After Santiago is beaten and left for dead, when the true location is revealed to him, he laughs, his heart bursting with joy. So, his spirit is not broken (B). There is a range of emotions throughout the passage, from Santiago falling to his knees weeping, to his heart leaping, which already establishes an emotional connection with the reader. Thus, it is not to emotionally connect with the reader (C). **Instead, Santiago thinks he's found his treasure, but Coelho uses the leader of those who assaulted him to reveal to Santiago the true location of his treasure. Only the leader is able to reveal this to him. Thus, it is used as a tool to reveal the treasure's location (D).** Earlier in the passage, it is revealed that on Santiago's way toward realizing his own Personal Legend, he had learned all he needed to know, so it is not an opportunity for Santiago to grow (E).

24. By setting the passage at the Pyramids, Coelho makes a dramatic statement, but he uses Santiago's emotions of weeping and laughing to communicate the intensity of having arrived at his destination (A). **Instead, just as the text states that the boy could not build a Pyramid on his own, he has just as much control over his own Personal Legend.** Coelho uses the Pyramids to symbolize Santiago's Personal Legend **as being bigger than himself** (B). After Santiago is beaten down, and the true location of his treasure is revealed to him, the Pyramids laugh at him. However, he laughs right back, so Coelho does not overwhelm Santiago by intimidating him with the Pyramids' presence (C). Even though Santiago is severely beaten by the robbers until the point where he thinks he is close to death, he does not die, so Coelho does not mean to foreshadow Santiago's death by the robbers in the shadow of the giant tombs (D). Finally, the passage never tells when or where Santiago started his journey, nor does Santiago's journey end at the conclusion of the passage, so Coelho does not show how far Santiago has had to travel to reach his treasure (E).
25. In the passage, it would have been impossible for Santiago to have known about his treasure if not for his first two dreams, as well as the robber's dream. Thus, Coelho uses dreams as **a device to reveal to Santiago his treasure** (A). The passage reveals that it was on his way toward realizing his own Personal Legend that Santiago had learned all he needed to know, so dreams are not used as a tool to teach Santiago about his Personal Legend (B). Coelho shows that it is up to individuals whether or not to follow their destiny. In the passage, Santiago thanks God for making him believe in his Personal Legend, while the robber decided not to follow his Personal Legend. So Coelho does not use them as a way to show Santiago what his future holds (C). Coelho uses Santiago's body and the environment to guide the boy, as when his heart speaks to him, or the scarab beetle appears. Thus, dreams are not used as omens, to show Santiago that he is on the right track (D). Finally, Coelho outright mentions God, when Santiago gives thanks for making him believe in his Personal Legend, and it is revealed that scarab beetles are a symbol of God, so Coelho does not use dreams as the only technique to infuse a sense of the supernatural (E).

The Alchemist

PART ONE

Beginning, “The boy’s name was Santiago,” and ending, “The boy could see in his father’s gaze a desire to be able, himself, to travel the world—a desire that was still alive, despite his father’s having had to bury it, over dozens of years, under the burden of struggling for water to drink, food to eat, and the same place to sleep every night of his life.”

1. Why is Santiago sleeping on the ground and using a book as a pillow?

Santiago is a shepherd who travels from pasture to pasture in order to feed his sheep. He must travel lightly and use what he carries creatively.

2. How does Coelho set the tone of the book within the first couple of pages?

Coelho describes Santiago as wandering, introduces the disturbing dream, and mentions the mysterious energy that binds Santiago to his sheep.

3. What do Santiago’s sheep, his father, and the merchant’s daughter all have in common?

They have forgotten how to follow their hearts, and instead spend their lives just looking for food and water. Their days never change.

4. Coelho has Santiago believe that the church he slept in may be haunted because it caused him to have the same dream for a second time. By doing this, Coelho effectively establishes what?

It establishes for the reader how unusual the situation is, since those kinds of scenarios are meant to be rare indeed.

5. How does Coelho suggest Santiago’s ability to experience personal growth?

It is only when Santiago experiences something he has never felt before, namely, his desire to live in one place forever, that Coelho reveals Santiago’s ability to experience personal growth.

6. What does Santiago’s jacket reveal about him?

Like his jacket, Santiago has a purpose. And while it’s hard to see its value during the day, the benefit of his jacket becomes very obvious come nightfall. Santiago’s true purpose, like his jacket, is not presently demonstrated, but is foreshadowed.

7. How does Coelho work Santiago's background into the story?

Through Santiago's plan to explain to the girl how he is able to read. That he used to be in a seminary, what his family is like, and his desires since he was a child.

8. What makes Santiago happy as a shepherd?

He gets to travel, to know other cities and people, to explore new roads, and to discover interesting things.

Beginning, "The horizon was tinged with red, and suddenly the sun appeared," and ending, "He looked to the skies, feeling a bit abashed, and said, 'I know it's the vanity of vanities, as you said, my Lord. But an old king sometimes has to take some pride in himself.'"

1. Why is Santiago afraid of gypsies?

People say gypsies have a pact with the devil, are tricksters, and kidnappers. Santiago had always been frightened of them as a child and even now he continues to be.

2. How does Coelho reassure the reader that the gypsy isn't going to harm Santiago?

Coelho mentions several times the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and has the gypsy interpret Santiago's dream for him without charging a fee. She also takes Santiago's promise at his word, which means she puts her trust in him.

3. If Santiago enjoys meeting new people, why is he annoyed when the old man tries to spark up a conversation with him?

Santiago is disturbed by how much his dream is upsetting him. All he really wants to do is get to the merchant's town and marry his daughter, but his dream continues to distract him, even to the point where he thinks the old man is actually a relative of the gypsy he consulted.

4. What does Coelho accomplish in describing Santiago's errands after his consultation with the gypsy?

Coelho communicates the idea of life as usual for Santiago. Though he is on the verge of a great quest, Santiago doesn't even realize it.

5. How does Coelho give credibility to Melchizedek?

Melchizedek writes the names of Santiago's parents, the seminary he attended, and the merchant's daughter, along with other things that the boy had never told anyone, in the sand.

6. How does Coelho introduce the themes of The Soul of the World and Personal Legends to the reader and communicate the weight of these ideas?

Coelho uses his most narrative character, Melchizedek. Melchizedek is a king, has lived much longer than an ordinary person, can change shape or even become an idea, and has a direct and personal relationship with God. Melchizedek speaks factually, leaving less room for his words to be interpreted by the reader.

7. What does Coelho do to change Santiago's mind about not believing in dreams and marrying the merchant's daughter, thus saving the story?

Coelho introduces a trusted character who can give insight to Santiago and act as a mentor for him.

8. If everyone knows what their Personal Legend is when they are young, why do people give up?

People become discouraged by the challenge; eventually the opinions of others become more important to them.

9. Why does Santiago curse the moment he met Melchizedek?

Melchizedek is telling Santiago that he needs to make a very difficult decision about his future, but Santiago has become very accustomed to his way of life. The thought of change causes him much anxiety.

10. What is the narrative purpose for Melchizedek to insist that Santiago give him one-tenth of his flock?

According to Melchizedek, "everything in life has its price." The old man has offered to help the boy. Coelho is keeping his character consistent and illustrating one of the first lessons Santiago is to learn.

11. What does the introduction of the stones, Urim and Thummim, do for the character of Santiago?

Coelho gives Santiago the stones as tools to use when Santiago's abilities fail him. In this way, Santiago can be left with room to grow, while still continuing the story.

12. What is the point of telling a story within a story?

The purpose of Melchizedek's telling Santiago the story is to teach something directly to the reader. Since many of Santiago's encounters will be open to interpretation, the story-within-a-story technique will allow Coelho to convey a specific point to the reader.

13. Why does Coelho include the short passage beginning, "At the highest point in Tarifa there is an old fort, built by the Moors," and ending, "But an old king sometimes has to take some pride in himself"?

This passage is for the sake of the reader. The reference to Abraham suggests that Santiago is part of a long line of people whom Melchizedek has helped through the ages. This contributes a sense of timelessness to the story.

Beginning, "How strange Africa is, thought the boy," and ending, "And after another long silence, he added, 'I need money to buy some sheep.'"

1. How does Coelho choose to transport the reader to Africa?

Coelho focuses primarily on its culture: men smoking hookahs, women with covered faces, priests that climb to the tops of towers and chant, Arabic as the primary language, bitter tea, and the prohibition of alcohol.

2. Why does Coelho mention the beautiful sword in the market?

The sword is a form of misdirection used to increase the drama of the scene by distracting both the reader and Santiago from his new companion. It places the reader in Santiago's shoes by forcing the reader to imagine the beautiful item, instead of simply saying, "Santiago became distracted."

3. What is the narrative purpose for Santiago's being robbed of all his money?

Santiago's loss leaves him with nothing and strands him in Tangier. This provides Coelho a method in which to have Santiago interact with various other characters in the city, instead of moving on directly to the Pyramids. It also creates a challenge for Santiago, thereby increasing the drama. Coelho even goes so far as to increase the emotional loss of his money by having Santiago remember everything that was going for him when the day started. The effect of which begins to harden Santiago, thus adding to his adversity.

4. After Santiago gets robbed in Tangier, what does Coelho accomplish by revealing how happy the candy merchant is or by revealing how unhappy the crystal merchant is?

The candy merchant is happy because he is doing what he loves. On the other hand, the crystal merchant is unhappy but believes it is “too late” for him to change his circumstances. These opposing views provide another illustration of the consequences of life decisions. Coelho demonstrates to the reader again that Santiago’s quest for his Personal Legend is not something unique to him, but it’s a choice everyone faces. Even though the author has already explained this, Coelho brings it to the reader’s attention many times since it is one of the major themes for his book.

5. Why does Coelho end Part One with the line, “I need money to buy some sheep?”

This closing adds suspense to the story by alluding to the fact that Santiago is giving up. This early in the story, it is doubtful Santiago will really abandon the quest that is the focus of the novel, but it remains to be seen what will occur to convince Santiago to resume his quest.

PART TWO

Beginning: “The boy had been working for the crystal merchant for almost a month, and he could see that it wasn’t exactly the kind of job that would make him happy,” and ending, “Not everyone can see his dreams come true in the same way.”

1. How has Santiago’s role changed in the beginning of Part Two?

Santiago becomes the teacher to the crystal merchant instead of being the one learning the lessons.

2. What does Santiago’s change of roles say about his development as a character?

Santiago has digested and absorbed the lessons presented to him so far and he is putting them into practice. It also reveals that he is ready for the next lessons to be presented to him.

3. What theme is advanced by Santiago’s success in this section?

Coelho uses Santiago’s success to illustrate the value of the lessons Santiago has learned. According to the story, when the lessons are followed, good things happen.

4. What is the point of the conversation between Santiago and the crystal merchant?

Dialogue is almost always a way for the author to explore an idea or examine multiple sides of an issue without intruding himself or herself into the narration. This conversation lays out the context of the idea, “Not everyone can see his dreams come true in the same way.”

5. What is the primary effect of the crystal merchant’s words?

It is the crystal merchant’s own words that make him emotional about the Prophet and the five obligations of Muslim law. He provides the impetus for his own reflection on his inability to do anything about his dream, and it is this reflection that motivates him to help Santiago accomplish this.

6. How does Coelho reveal that the usually impatient and curmudgeonly crystal merchant is tolerant of Santiago?

The unsociable merchant notices that his sales and his profits increase after Santiago’s arrival, and he concludes that Santiago is lucky.

7. What is the narrative purpose of the crystal merchant’s story about the five obligations of Muslim law?

The merchant’s story provides the context of his dream, thus allowing the reader to learn why the crystal merchant just wants to dream about realizing his dreams.

8. Coelho uses the crystal merchant's questions as a technique to do primarily what?

The crystal merchant's questions reveal Santiago's thoughts. This is not done in the narrative and is the only way Coelho reveals what Santiago is thinking.

Beginning, "The boy went to his room and packed his belongings," and ending, "What could it cost to go over to the supplier's warehouse and find out if the Pyramids were really that far away?"

1. What is Coelho's purpose for keeping Santiago in Tangier for a year?

Santiago's recalling the king's words: "Never stop dreaming," even after nearly a year suggests that Santiago's dream is not a whim, but a calling.

2. Why doesn't Santiago initially want to pursue his Personal Legend to the Pyramids?

Santiago doesn't know whether the desert can be a friend, and it's in the desert that he has to search for his treasure. He has become comfortable with what he knows.

3. What purpose do Urim and Thummim serve?

The stones serve as devices to connect Santiago to forces and ideas beyond himself in time and space. Santiago is still considering returning home until he holds the stones in his hand, and they transmit to him the strength and will of the old king. It is after he has been strengthened by this connection that Santiago does commit himself to continuing to follow his Personal Legend.

4. What is Coelho's intent for continually referencing the old king during his description of other characters?

With Santiago contemplating his Personal Legend again, he remembers the old king's words that he is always nearby when someone wants to realize his or her Personal Legend, so it is to show that the old king is close and still present in Santiago's life.

Beginning, “The Englishman was sitting on a bench in a structure that smelled of animals, sweat, and dust: it was part warehouse, part corral,” and ending, “And I better read your books,” said the boy.

1. Coelho’s main purpose for introducing the character of the Englishman is to what?

To introduce new information and ideas to the reader from a reliable source.

2. How does Coelho create a sense of danger before Santiago heads out into the desert?

The leader of the caravan, one who knows about such things because he has crossed the desert many times before, warns his passengers just how dangerous a trip it is. That even though he’s made the trip countless times before, even he has no guarantee. He asks them to swear to their God, that they obey his orders and the people pray for protection.

3. What is Santiago talking about when he describes “the mysterious chain that links one thing to another, the same chain that had caused him to become a shepherd, that had caused his recurring dream, that had brought him to a city near Africa, to find a king, and to be robbed in order to meet a crystal merchant, and...?”

He is talking about the Soul of the World. It is one of Coelho’s major themes. According to his book, all things conspire to help someone in search of their Personal Legend.

4. How is journeying across the desert analogous to Santiago’s search for his Personal Legend?

Just as obstacles occur in the desert—such as fine sand or boulders—obstacles occur during Santiago’s search for his Personal Legend—such as getting robbed, or delayed in Tangier for a year. In both cases, the obstacles must be overcome, then a reorientation towards one’s goal charted, and finally a return to course.

5. What is Coelho suggesting when he points out that the challenges of the caravan go unnoticed by the Englishman?

Coelho is alluding to the fact that even though the Englishman is intelligent, he does not possess the right sort of knowledge to accomplish his goal. Coelho is foreshadowing the Englishman’s failure.

6. How does Coelho continue to teach the reader about the major themes of his book, namely, The Soul of the World and the Universal Language, while Santiago is merely traveling within the larger scope of the caravan traveling across the desert?

Coelho places the caravan and the desert within the context of his themes. These themes don’t just affect Santiago, but also the world that Coelho has created. In this way, Coelho can have Santiago be a mere spectator while on his journey through the desert, but Coelho can still give examples for, and discuss his themes.

Beginning, “The caravan began to travel day and night,” and ending, “And, if I have to, I will accept the fact that he has become a part of the clouds, and the animals, and the water of the desert.”

1. When Santiago sees the oasis on the horizon and asks the camel driver, “Well, why don’t we go there right now?” the camel driver’s response is, “Because we have to sleep.” What does this accomplish?

Coelho had just made his point about living in the present. He used this as an opportunity to show the reader what he meant while the idea was still at the forefront of their mind.

2. Coelho uses many literary tools in order to introduce the oasis to the reader for the first time including imagery, allusion, emotion, and exposition. However, he does not use dialogue. Explain.

Coelho does not use dialogue in his introductory scene of the oasis. The Englishman’s line, “It looks like A Thousand and One Nights,” is a quotation, not an exchange of words between characters. Likewise, the caravan leader’s instructions are written in the narrative.

3. What narrative purpose does the war serve?

The war is the vehicle Coelho uses to stall Santiago at the oasis. Santiago is surprised to find the woman he loves at the oasis. In order for Santiago to get to know her, and for them to share their stories, Coelho must keep Santiago from immediately moving on.

4. What further purpose is served by making oases places of refuge from the tribal wars?

Coelho creates a lull in the tension for the reader, giving them an emotional rest from the threat. It prevents the reader from becoming de-sensitized to the dramatic tension, and allows the characters to focus on other things.

5. Coelho is using the Rule of Three when he has Santiago talk to the woman dressed in black, the man, and the young woman at the well, before Santiago discovers where the alchemist lives. Why do this?

Coelho is using the Rule of Three to create progression. He does not introduce the young women right away, but instead gets closer to his answer with each encounter. Santiago is compelled to keep at it. This makes for a more engaging outcome. It creates obstacles for Santiago and builds suspense without tiring the reader.

6. Coelho introduces Santiago to his love object in the middle of his search for his Personal Legend. What does this accomplish for the story?

Coelho is complicating the plot. The question whether Santiago will continue his search is raised. Also, Santiago is becoming more and more adept at overcoming the obstacles in the way of his finding his treasure. In order for the action to build toward a climax, the obstacles must get bigger as Santiago grows, in order to maintain the dramatic tension.

7. What is the line, “The boy listened to the sound of her voice, and thought it to be more beautiful than the sound of the wind in the date palms,” an example of?

The line is an example of hyperbole, or poetic exaggeration.

8. The character of Fatima serves many narrative purposes including, objective, obstacle, priority and surprise, but not guide. Why?

Fatima does not serve the purpose of guide because she teaches Santiago about the women of the desert, but she does not teach him anything new about his Personal Legend.

9. Santiago’s decision either to stay with Fatima or continue along his journey is the culmination of this passage’s rise in action. What makes it so effective?

Santiago’s decision to either stay with Fatima or continue along his journey will impact the rest of the story. Neither choice contains everything that Santiago wants, and both choices carry a possible penalty. Santiago is conflicted and the character’s future is far from certain. The stakes have been raised, and the unanswered question piques the interest of the reader. Everything hinges on this decision.

10. In order for characters to be dynamic, they must grow. How does Coelho use this passage to significantly mark Santiago’s growth?

Coelho uses the passage to show how quickly Santiago is adopting his new lessons, and as he accelerates toward his Personal Legend, it will allow him to reveal even more dramatic and powerful experiences for Santiago in the future. Also, the passage reveals that Santiago has become “at home with the silence of the desert.” In other words, he has overcome the fear that almost kept him from entering the desert in the first place. Santiago gets closer to understanding the Language of the World and realizing that it speaks in many ways. He even admits to living the lessons of his past and following his dreams. Finally, Coelho reveals the alchemist, signaling that Santiago is ready for what he has to teach him.

Beginning, “He wandered for a while, keeping the date palms of the oasis within sight,” and ending, “‘We’ll leave tomorrow before sunrise,’ was the alchemist’s only response.”

1. What is Coelho doing by having Santiago experience his vision in the desert, and not in the oasis?

Coelho is keeping his character consistent. Santiago has learned to hear the Language of the World in the desert, not in the groves of the palm trees.

2. What makes Coelho’s turn of events ironic, in that Santiago may be shot for warning the tribal elders of an attack against them?

It is ironic because Santiago was trying to understand the Soul of the World in order to save himself from a life of merely looking for food and water, and now he may be killed for his success in reading through to the Soul of the World.

3. How does Coelho create his frightening introduction of the alchemist?

Coelho makes the alchemist violent and supernatural. The alchemist is a force of nature, one who seems to control even the wind. Dressed completely in black, he looks more like the night than a man. He appears out of nowhere, and the sound the alchemist makes is “thundering,” so powerful it echoes off trees. He obscures the moon and creates a wind like Santiago has never seen before. Santiago is thrown to the ground with the alchemist brandishing an enormous sword above him.

4. How does Coelho get Santiago to trust the alchemist after frightening him so?

Coelho has the alchemist explain himself. The alchemist uses language that Santiago knows and trusts. He also has the alchemist encourage the boy to succeed.

5. What is Coelho’s purpose for asking Santiago to become the counselor of the oasis?

Coelho creates another temptation for the boy, which might distract him away from his journey to find his Personal Legend. It increases the drama by making his reasons for staying at the oasis even greater.

6. It seems Santiago is constantly being tested. In this passage alone he is tested three times; physically, when he is introduced to the alchemist; emotionally, when his desires are satisfied by Fatima and his wealth; and spiritually, when he is asked to find life in the desert. Why do you suppose Coelho does this?

Coelho is constantly refining Santiago. In order for Santiago to be dynamic he must grow, and in order to grow he must be tested or subjected to adversity. The lessons Coelho wants Santiago to learn are especially difficult. They are not grasped by the majority of people in Coelho’s story. As a result, Santiago must be tested especially hard.

Beginning, “The boy spent a sleepless night,” and ending, “It said that the darkest hour of the night came just before the dawn.”

1. Coelho thinks it's important enough to take the time to develop the relationship between Santiago and Fatima. Why is this important if Santiago is just going to leave to find his treasure?

This relationship adds an additional layer of character complexity to Santiago. It reveals his humanity to the reader in a way that searching for treasure never could.

2. Why does Coelho decide to use personification (specifically prosopopoeia) now?

Santiago is almost to his Personal Legend, and the closer he gets to it, the closer he gets to the Soul of the World and understanding its language. Since everything can speak the Language of the World, he can speak to anything.

3. What purpose does Coelho accomplish by revealing the conversation Santiago has with his heart, in the midst of journeying with the alchemist?

It's a way for Coelho to resolve Santiago's internal conflict and for Santiago to make peace with himself. This develops the character and opens the door for more growth.

4. From Coelho's perspective, why is it significant that Santiago has had a literal conversation with his heart?

It is a culmination of one of the novel's biggest themes—the Language of the World. Santiago was told at the beginning of his journey that there exists a language that everything in the universe speaks and understands. Now, Coelho's main character has developed to the point where he understands that language enough to have a quotable conversation with his heart.

Beginning, “So what should I do now?” and ending, “They mounted their horses, and rode out in the direction of the Pyramids of Egypt.”

1. What opportunity does Coelho miss while Santiago and the alchemist are searched by the three armed tribesmen at the very beginning of the passage?

Coelho reveals that the alchemist does indeed possess the legendary Elixir of Life and Philosopher's Stone, and he reveals this to the reader in order to teach a lesson to Santiago. However, the lesson could still be taught even after the reader knew the alchemist was in possession of the Masterwork. Revealing it in this manner for the first time was a lost opportunity by Coelho to add more drama and interest to his story. The alchemist acknowledges they are great treasures, but Coelho presents them in a very anti-climatic way.

2. How is Coelho able to increase the sense of danger for Santiago crossing the desert even when compared to earlier in the book while the tribes are at war?

By having Santiago actually encounter the armed tribesman, either by being searched or by passing close to their camps.

3. Santiago has learned many truths about Coelho's world. What does Coelho do to prevent his character from becoming over confident?

He has the alchemist remind him that no one is immune from danger. The world is still a dangerous place, and he uses the examples of the desert and war to make his point.

4. How is it that Santiago is already an alchemist? For what, ultimately, is alchemy a metaphor?

The alchemist reveals at the end of the passage how true alchemists were able to make gold. They changed themselves by following their Personal Legends and everything around them (including the gold) changed as a result. Those who just wanted to make gold never succeeded because they were trying to change the base metals (lead, copper, iron) into gold without changing themselves. Santiago has changed in the same way by following his Personal Legend.

Beginning, “The two were taken to a nearby military camp,” and ending, “And that he, a boy, could perform miracles.”

1. When the alchemist and Santiago are captured, the alchemist tells the chief that he “was simply acting as a guide” for Santiago, and that Santiago is an alchemist. Why would Coelho's character do this?

It is Coelho's way to get Santiago to realize his full potential. We know this because it is the alchemist who puts Santiago up to this challenge in the first place. Santiago knows everything he needs to know. Now, he must put it into action. Further proof of this is the alchemist's continuing guidance over the next three days as well as his revelation that he already knows how to turn himself into the wind.

2. Coelho tells the reader just before the desert is quoted, that it and Santiago speak the same language. Why do this?

It explains to the reader why it is possible in Coelho's story for Santiago to carry on a conversation with the desert.

3. How does Coelho's use of personification in the passage enhance the story's message?

Giving elements of nature (i.e. desert, wind, sun) the ability to speak impacts the reader more powerfully, especially when the message is that the universe is conscious and has a voice.

4. How does Coelho show the reader that Santiago truly understands the Soul of the World?

Santiago's whole conversation with nature revolves around his love for Fatima. This context is very personal for Santiago, something no one else could teach him. It reveals to the reader that Santiago has heard and understood his lessons, then applied them to his life.

5. What else does Coelho's decision to use love as Santiago's topic to engage nature accomplish for the story?

Coelho's characters in nature (desert, wind, sun) are very wise and knowledgeable. Coelho needed a topic that Santiago was knowledgeable in, but that they knew nothing about.

6. How might this passage be considered the climax of the book?

The goal of Santiago has always been to Understand the Soul and Language of the World. Santiago's Personal Legend was simply his motivation to begin a journey that he knew nothing about, in order to be able to engage the World. His treasure was never the purpose (unlike the Englishman, who only wanted gold—not necessary to understand and speak the Language of the World). It is here in this passage that Santiago has a personal and life altering encounter with the Soul of the World, when he experiences the hand that wrote all, reaches through to the Soul of the World and sees part of God's soul. All the gold in the world is nothing compared to that.

Beginning, "The boy rode along through the desert for several hours," and ending, "Because now he knew where his treasure was."

1. How does Coelho effectively communicate to the reader the relief Santiago feels as his long journey comes to a close?

Coelho uses the boy's emotions to effectively communicate to the reader the relief Santiago feels. The pure excitement of Santiago's heart leaping, and his tears of joy communicate hardship, struggle, and a long journey.

2. Coelho uses positive emotions through painful hardships to do what in the passage?

To create a sense of ambivalence. For example, when Santiago expresses his joy despite being nearly beaten to death.

3. What is the narrative purpose of the terrible assault on Santiago?

To reveal the location of Santiago's treasure. Santiago thinks he's found his treasure, but Coelho uses the leader of those who assaulted him to reveal to Santiago the true location of his treasure. Only the violent leader is able to reveal this to him, something he would never do under ordinary circumstances.

4. What does Coelho accomplish by setting this passage at the Pyramids?

Just as the text states that the boy could not build a Pyramid on his own, he has just as much control over his own Personal Legend. Coelho uses the Pyramids to symbolize Santiago's Personal Legend as being bigger than himself.

5. How are dreams used in the passage?

Coelho uses dreams as a device to reveal to Santiago his treasure. It would have been impossible for Santiago to have known about his treasure if not for his first two dreams, as well as the robber's dream.

The Alchemist

PART ONE

Beginning, “The boy’s name was Santiago,” and ending, “The boy could see in his father’s gaze a desire to be able, himself, to travel the world—a desire that was still alive, despite his father’s having had to bury it, over dozens of years, under the burden of struggling for water to drink, food to eat, and the same place to sleep every night of his life.”

1. Why is Santiago sleeping on the ground and using a book as a pillow?

2. How does Coelho set the tone of the book within the first couple of pages?

3. What do Santiago’s sheep, his father, and the merchant’s daughter all have in common?

4. Coelho has Santiago believe that the church he slept in may be haunted because it caused him to have the same dream for a second time. By doing this, Coelho effectively establishes what?

5. How does Coelho suggest Santiago's ability to experience personal growth?

6. What does Santiago's jacket reveal about him?

7. How does Coelho work Santiago's background into the story?

8. What makes Santiago happy as a shepherd?

Beginning, “The horizon was tinged with red, and suddenly the sun appeared,” and ending, “He looked to the skies, feeling a bit abashed, and said, ‘I know it’s the vanity of vanities, as you said, my Lord. But an old king sometimes has to take some pride in himself.’”

1. Why is Santiago afraid of gypsies?

2. How does Coelho reassure the reader that the gypsy isn’t going to harm Santiago?

3. If Santiago enjoys meeting new people, why is he annoyed when the old man tries to spark up a conversation with him?

4. What does Coelho accomplish in describing Santiago’s errands after his consultation with the gypsy?

5. How does Coelho give credibility to Melchizedek?

6. How does Coelho introduce the themes of The Soul of the World and Personal Legends to the reader and communicate the weight of these ideas?

7. What does Coelho do to change Santiago's mind about not believing in dreams and marrying the merchant's daughter, thus saving the story?

8. If everyone knows what their Personal Legend is when they are young, why do people give up?

9. Why does Santiago curse the moment he met Melchizedek?

10. What is the narrative purpose for Melchizedek to insist that Santiago give him one-tenth of his flock?

11. What does the introduction of the stones, Urim and Thummim, do for the character of Santiago?

12. What is the point of telling a story within a story?

13. Why does Coelho include the short passage beginning, "At the highest point in Tarifa there is an old fort, built by the Moors," and ending, "But an old king sometimes has to take some pride in himself"?

Beginning, “How strange Africa is, thought the boy,” and ending, “And after another long silence, he added, ‘I need money to buy some sheep.’”

1. How does Coelho choose to transport the reader to Africa?

2. Why does Coelho mention the beautiful sword in the market?

3. What is the narrative purpose for Santiago’s being robbed of all his money?

4. After Santiago gets robbed in Tangier, what does Coelho accomplish by revealing how happy the candy merchant is or by revealing how unhappy the crystal merchant is?

5. Why does Coelho end Part One with the line, “I need money to buy some sheep?”

PART TWO

Beginning: “The boy had been working for the crystal merchant for almost a month, and he could see that it wasn’t exactly the kind of job that would make him happy,” and ending, “Not everyone can see his dreams come true in the same way.”

1. How has Santiago’s role changed in the beginning of Part Two?

2. What does Santiago’s change of roles say about his development as a character?

3. What theme is advanced by Santiago’s success in this section?

4. What is the point of the conversation between Santiago and the crystal merchant?

5. What is the primary effect of the crystal merchant's words?

6. How does Coelho reveal that the usually impatient and curmudgeonly crystal merchant is tolerant of Santiago?

7. What is the narrative purpose of the crystal merchant's story about the five obligations of Muslim law?

8. Coelho uses the crystal merchant's questions as a technique to do primarily what?

Beginning, “The boy went to his room and packed his belongings,” and ending, “What could it cost to go over to the supplier’s warehouse and find out if the Pyramids were really that far away?”

1. What is Coelho’s purpose for keeping Santiago in Tangier for a year?

2. Why doesn’t Santiago initially want to pursue his Personal Legend to the Pyramids?

3. What purpose do Urim and Thummim serve?

4. What is Coelho’s intent for continually referencing the old king during his description of other characters?

Beginning, “The Englishman was sitting on a bench in a structure that smelled of animals, sweat, and dust: it was part warehouse, part corral,” and ending, “And I better read your books,” said the boy.

1. Coelho’s main purpose for introducing the character of the Englishman is to what?

2. How does Coelho create a sense of danger before Santiago heads out into the desert?

3. What is Santiago talking about when he describes “the mysterious chain that links one thing to another, the same chain that had caused him to become a shepherd, that had caused his recurring dream, that had brought him to a city near Africa, to find a king, and to be robbed in order to meet a crystal merchant, and...?”

4. How is journeying across the desert analogous to Santiago’s search for his Personal Legend?

5. What is Coelho suggesting when he points out that the challenges of the caravan go unnoticed by the Englishman?

6. How does Coelho continue to teach the reader about the major themes of his book, namely, The Soul of the World and the Universal Language, while Santiago is merely traveling within the larger scope of the caravan traveling across the desert?

Beginning, “The caravan began to travel day and night,” and ending, “And, if I have to, I will accept the fact that he has become a part of the clouds, and the animals, and the water of the desert.”

1. When Santiago sees the oasis on the horizon and asks the camel driver, “Well, why don’t we go there right now?” the camel driver’s response is, “Because we have to sleep.” What does this accomplish?

2. Coelho uses many literary tools in order to introduce the oasis to the reader for the first time including imagery, allusion, emotion, and exposition. However, he does not use dialogue. Explain.

3. What narrative purpose does the war serve?

4. What further purpose is served by making oases places of refuge from the tribal wars?

5. Coelho is using the Rule of Three when he has Santiago talk to the woman dressed in black, the man, and the young woman at the well, before Santiago discovers where the alchemist lives. Why do this?

6. Coelho introduces Santiago to his love object in the middle of his search for his Personal Legend. What does this accomplish for the story?

7. What is the line, “The boy listened to the sound of her voice, and thought it to be more beautiful than the sound of the wind in the date palms,” an example of?

8. The character of Fatima serves many narrative purposes including, objective, obstacle, priority and surprise, but not guide. Why?

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Beginning, “The two were taken to a nearby military camp,” and ending, “And that he, a boy, could perform miracles.”

1. When the alchemist and Santiago are captured, the alchemist tells the chief that he “was simply acting as a guide” for Santiago, and that Santiago is an alchemist. Why would Coelho’s character do this?

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1. How does Coelho effectively communicate to the reader the relief Santiago feels as his long journey comes to a close?

2. Coelho uses positive emotions through painful hardships to do what in the passage?

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5. How are dreams used in the passage?

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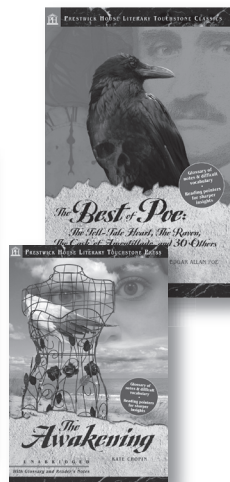
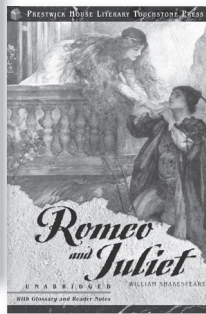
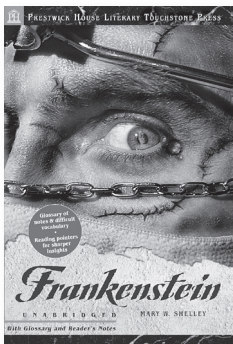
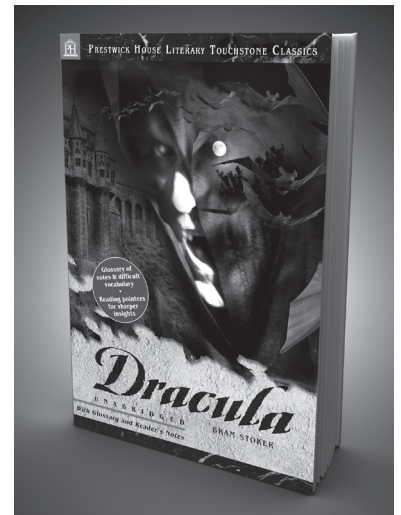
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ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

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