



District 88

WILLOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

"Expectations for Excellence"

1250 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE – VILLA PARK – ILLINOIS 60181

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District 88

May 2025

Dear Student:

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

This year's summer reading selection is:

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

***The English Department has ordered the novel for you. The novels will be distributed to your current school before your last attendance day. Students who add the course after novel distribution will need to pick up a copy of the text at Willowbrook High School. Please e-mail Dr. Jamie Gourley, Assistant Principal, at jgourley@district88.net to make arrangements.**

You must complete the following by the first Friday of the 2025-2026 school year:

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

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

Finally, we have attached the 2025/2026 Willowbrook English Department Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy/Contract. Please sign and date the policy and return it to your teacher during the first week of classes.

We hope you will find this novel interesting and challenging.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Leslie Allenspach
English 9 Honors Teacher
lallenspach@dupage88.net

Mr. Brett Blair
English 9 Honors Teacher
bblair@dupage88.net

English 9 Honors Summer Reading Sample Close Reading of the Text

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

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

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

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

This sounds important!

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

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

theme?

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

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

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

The Alchemist

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

* the owner of a business

*

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

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

! stereotype

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

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

?

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

This reminds me of Belle from Beauty and the Beast

?
Does he get lonely?

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

Student Name

Teacher Name

English 9 Honors

19 August 2024

English 9 Honors Summer Reading
Theme Analysis Writing Assignment

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

Your written responses must be complete and ready to submit before class begins on the first Friday of the 2025-2026 school year. Be prepared to discuss your responses with your classmates.

Your written response must:

- Identity and analyze one theme present in the text
- Include quotations and paraphrased ideas from the text to support the theme you are following (with proper parenthetical citations)
 - Example of parenthetical citation: Santiago wondered if “some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep” (Coelho 4).
 - Two cited pieces of evidence per paragraph.
- Be two-full body paragraphs, typed and double-spaced (12 Times New Roman font), with an MLA header (See format modeled at the top of this page)
 - Each paragraph should have a strong topic sentence and detailed analysis
 - This is not a complete essay, so you do not need to have introduction or conclusion paragraphs.
 - Each of your 2 paragraphs should offer a different perspective on one of the themes that you saw emerge and include at least one direct quote or paraphrased passage from the book.

Some possible themes from *The Alchemist* include:

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

English 9 Honors Summer Reading Discussion Questions Assignment

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

To receive full credit for this assignment, you must:

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

Bloom’s Taxonomy Higher Level Question Starters:

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

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

- Type your questions and have them ready to submit before class on the first Friday of the 2026-2026 school year.
- Be original: Ask questions that you will truly enjoy discussing.
- You will not receive credit for questions that were copied from an online source, study guide, or another student.

2025-2026 Willowbrook English Department

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and AI

Plagiarism

Definition: Plagiarism is the act of claiming another person's writing or ideas as one's own without giving credit to that original author. Black's Law Dictionary's definition is "The act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writing, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's mind." Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the written work: musical compositions, artwork, projects, computer software, websites, peer's work, etc.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Copying and pasting from a source without using a citation
- Taking an idea from a source and including it in your paper without a citation
- Forgetting to cite a source or citing it incorrectly
- Taking all or part of another student's work
- Submitting your own work produced for another course
- Using websites that are created to cheat, copy, purchase, and/or take essays

To avoid plagiarism, be sure to conform to the following (adapted from *Lester's Guide of the Research Paper*):

1. Acknowledge all borrowed material, whether it is a direct quotation or paraphrasing of another's idea. Introduce the information with the authority's name and include the source of information in a properly formatted parenthetical citation.
2. Always put quotation marks around direct quotations, along with citing them.
3. Simply rearranging material that is not originally yours into your own words is still plagiarism; be sure to cite the ideas of others clearly.
4. Include documentation for every piece of borrowed material.
5. Include a properly formatted works cited entry in the "Works Cited" page for each source that is used in your assignment; do not include works that you did not cite.

Artificial Intelligence

Definition: "Artificial intelligence" or "AI" is intelligence demonstrated by computers, as opposed to human intelligence. "Intelligence" encompasses the ability to learn, reason, generalize, and infer meaning. Examples of AI technology include ChatGPT and other chatbots and large language models.

AI is not a substitute for schoolwork that requires original thought. Students may not claim AI generated content as their own work. The use of AI to take tests, complete assignments, create multimedia projects, write papers, or complete schoolwork without permission of a teacher or administrator is strictly prohibited. The use of AI for these purposes constitutes cheating or plagiarism.

Relying too much on AI can lead to missing crucial nuances and context. Teachers will clarify if, when, and how AI tools can be used on assignments, and students are expected to review outputs generated by AI before incorporating them into their work.

Students may not use AI, including AI image or voice generator technology, to violate school rules or school district policies.

In order to ensure academic integrity, tests, assignments, projects, papers, and other schoolwork may be checked by AI content detectors and/or plagiarism recognition software.

The consequences for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and improper use of artificial intelligence, may include a zero on the assignment, parent/guardian contact, and a Dean's referral.

WB English Department Academic Honesty Contract

Student: I have read this information sheet. I fully understand my responsibility as a student to produce original work ethically and responsibly.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Contract: I have received this policy and discussed it with my student. I understand the consequences for academic dishonesty.

Printed Name

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Date