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# Hero's Journey, The Alchemist [9th grade]

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: The Hero's Journey, The Alchemist

Grade Level: 9<sup>th</sup>

Subject/Topic Area(s): English Language Arts

Designed By: Kristen Morgan

Time Frame: 22 Days for 50-minute Class Periods

School District: Lockhart

School: Lockhart High School Freshman Campus

School Address and Phone: 419 Bois D'arc 512-398-0170  
Lockhart, TX 78644

### **Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Students and ninth-graders especially are in search of something to use to make sense of the world. I start the year with the students establishing goals for themselves both academically and personally. Then, we move into a unit that overviews the uses of genre. This unit on the hero's journey is to extend their ideas of the novel and what it can do as a work of fiction using Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. Like Santiago, the novel's main character, the students journey to understanding by reading the story. **Understanding:** The novel genre can be used for different purposes; it can be both a mirror by which you can understand yourself as well as a window through which you can learn about the world. **Essential Question:** What can you learn from a novel?

The hero's journey in this unit is only an introduction to the richness of Joseph Campbell's ideas of a hero story structure common to all cultures, which will be picked up again later in the year with *The Odyssey*. **Understanding:** The hero's journey is a process with essential steps leading to a goal (i.e. a realization, a product, a treasure, an understanding, etc.). **Essential Question:** What is a process?

In order to be successful in any journey but especially the hero's, one must observe and reflect on what one has learned; this unit strives to further develop the students' skills of observation and reflection. These tools also address the year-long question in my class of "How do people make sense of the world and of themselves?" **Understanding:** Observation and self-reflection are essential tools for the hero's journey, for reading, and for life. **Essential Question:** What can you learn from observation and self-reflection?

This unit culminates in a performance task that asks the students to address the understandings of the unit by persuading their peers who have not read *The Alchemist* to follow or not to follow their personal legends using a variety of media.

**Year: How do people make sense of the world and of themselves?**

**Unit: The Hero's Journey (The Alchemist)**

**Grade: 9<sup>th</sup>**

## Stage 1: Desired Results

### Understandings

*Students will understand that...*

- The hero's journey is a process with essential steps leading to a goal (i.e. a realization, a product, an understanding, etc.).
- Observation and self-reflection are essential tools for the hero's journey, for reading, and for life.
- The novel genre can be used for different purposes; it can be both a mirror by which you can understand yourself as well as a window through which you can learn about the world.

### Essential Questions

#### • What can you learn from a novel?

- How do you learn from a novel?
- How do you read a novel?
- What is a novel?
- What is the author's purpose for writing the novel?

#### • What is a process?

- How do you complete a process?
- What does a process do?
- How do you know when a process is finished?

#### • What can you learn from observation and self-reflection?

- How do people make sense of themselves and of the world?

### Knowledge & Skills (TEKS)

- (1) The student writes in a variety of forms, including personal, literary, and persuasive texts, for various audiences and purposes.
- (4) The student uses writing as a tool for learning.
- (5) The student evaluates his/her own writing and the writings of others.
- (6) The student uses a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words and to build vocabulary.
- (7) The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies.
- (8) The student reads extensively and intensively for different purposes in varied sources, including world literature.
- (9) The student reads widely, including world literature, to increase knowledge of his/her own culture, the culture of others, and the common elements across cultures.
- (10) The student expresses and supports responses to various types of texts.
- (11) The student analyzes literary elements for their contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student reads critically to evaluate texts.
- (15) The student listens to analyze, appreciate, and evaluate oral performances and presentations.
- (16) The student speaks clearly and effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- (17) The student prepares, organizes, and presents informative and persuasive oral messages.
- (19) The student understands and interprets visual representations.
- (21) The student produces visual representations that communicate with others.

#### Specific Knowledge

**Vocabulary:** novel, hero's journey vocabulary, alchemist, personal legend, "soul of the world", "universal language", Urim, Thummim, Mecca, Moors, Koran, infidel, process, observation, self-reflection

**People:** Melchizedek

**Geography:** Spain (Andalusia), Northern Africa

#### Specific Skills

- Identify and analyze structure within a novel
- Analyze process of hero's journey within *The Alchemist*
- Analyze the motives and actions of characters (APE method)

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

### Performance Task:

\*\*Your goal is to convince students within our school community whether or not they should follow their personal legends through the media of your choice. Your argument should include why they should or should not follow it. These products will be presented to other students in the school including those in your class.

\*\*Your product will include the following:

- What a personal legend is (remembering your audience may have never heard of this idea)
- At least 4 steps and/or experiences involved in attaining your personal legend
- At least 2 warnings about possible obstacles and At least 2 pieces of advice for the journey.
- At least 2 examples from *The Alchemist* to support your argument
- At least 1 example from your personal experience regarding your personal legend

\*\*You will convince this group using a combination of media (*at least 2, one of which needs to involve writing*) you think your audience would respond to positively. Here is a list of ideas; you are welcome to add your own as well. Please note that your supplies for the product of your choice may not be available at school.

Poster	Skit	Web site	Blog	Song
Cartoon	Newsletter article		Brochure	Video (speech, commercial, etc.)

\*\*During work on this task, you will get and give feedback regarding the effectiveness of your arguments and the media chosen as the form for your arguments. In addition, you will get feedback from at least 5 people from your target audience after your presentation.

### Other evidence:

(quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc.)

*note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)*

- Writer's Notebook Entries
- Periodic self-assessments regarding understanding of hero's journey and novel.
- Diagram outlining Santiago's inward and outward journey.
- Unit Test
- Short Quizzes
- Essays and discussions on essential questions as well as the attitudes, actions, and decisions of the characters in the novel. (i.e. a debate including characters who follow personal legends and those who don't)

## Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

*What is underlined are different assessments. "HW" stands for homework.*

### Day 1 – Hook: *Goals*

- Writer's Notebook Entry: Review your Mission Statement. (In the first few weeks of school, I have the students write personal mission statements outlining personal, academic, and social goals for the year). Evaluate how you are doing on your goals and what you have done to achieve them. Are you following the steps you laid out in your statement? What can you do to improve your movement toward your goal? What is standing in your way? What is helping you achieve your goal? Are these still the goals you think are important? Once you've answered these questions, draw a bull's-eye and an arrow that illustrates where you are in relationship to your goal (the bull's eye).

- During class discussion, record responses onto butcher paper to post in the room.
- Class discusses progress with the goals and steps to achieve them. What is it like achieving a goal? What do you have to do and what tools do you need to get to your goal? Transition to presentation about *The Alchemist* and how the main character is working to achieve a goal but in order to do so, he must go through a process with similar characteristics to the process they are going through achieving their goals.

**Exit Slip - Assessment:** What are the benefits and drawbacks of having goals and trying to achieve them?

HW: *What is a process?* You can use a definition, an example, and/or what you know about the word to answer the question.

## Day 2 – Introduce unit/performance task/rubric

- Pass back exit slips with feedback on answers. Discuss answers to that and to homework.
- Transition using these ideas and how they relate to process of reading a novel, self-improvement and understanding. Relate to how we will be studying the novel, *The Alchemist*, along with the idea of a hero's journey. *Establish goals for reading the novel:* give a few examples (purpose to reading novel). *Brainstorm ideas for reaching those goals* (reading comprehension strategies-build on prior knowledge). Add these personal goals to Writer's Notebook.
- Introduce essential questions – Students think-pair-share their answers.
- Explain performance task and rubric.

## Day 3 – Vocabulary and Prediction

- Pre-Assess: “Probable Passage” to help see what they think of terms, names, definitions, and descriptions. *Use this pre-assessment for grouping and differentiating.*
- In partners, students will fill out the “probable passage” sheet to make predictions about the novel. Students look up and define “unknown words” if possible.
- They compare their predictions with others using the Stand and Share coop. activity.
- Keep the sheet to compare predictions.
- **Show Video Clip or Pictures of what Andalusia & Pyramids Look Like or use smart board and do google earth and other sites to show the geography**

## Day 4 – “Prologue” – pg. 11

**Play Music from area of Spain as students walk in**

- Read as a class the “Prologue” What could this mean about the story? Why does this start with the Alchemist? What does this mean for the structure of the novel?
- Read pages 3-11 as a class. *What do you notice about the structure of the novel?* “part one” and stars separating chunks of information. What do we know about Santiago already?  
Examples from text of what Santiago faces to start his dream of traveling. Father discourages him from going with a few arguments. “Amongst us, the only ones who travel are shepherds” (9).
- Read pages 11-15 independently.

HW: Give students a copy of a “Miss Manners” or some news article that gives advice to a person who sends it in. Have students read the article. If this advice is for the person who wrote in to Miss Manners, then why is it published in a newspaper?

## Day 5 – The Call pg. 15- 32 *What can you learn from a novel?*

- Discuss answers to homework question. Students should recognize that although the advice was for one person, it's in the newspaper because another person may need the same advice. Ask how this idea might connect to experiences had by characters in a novel and/or advice. Use this as the focus for the students' reading.

- Read pg. 15-32 as a class. – periodically, let students read a few pages on their own. Connect the idea of the news article to Melchizedek’s advice for Santiago. It can also be advice for the reader. Who is Melchizedek The King of Salem’s audience for his advice? Who is the audience for the novel? How does he frame his advice? (with examples of people not following personal legend)

- Graphic Organizer: show the levels of the novel. Use the perspective of the reader: they experience what the characters experience, and the characters experience what the author intends and/or writes. An image that moves from the inside to the outside of something. And from the experience of the author: Paulo Coelho writes advice for reader through Melchizedek to Santiago.

- Self-Assess: Writer’s Notebook - Review your writer’s notebook entry on your goal for this novel. What strategies are you using to reach your goal for reading this novel?

- Writer’s Notebook: Write about one piece of advice Melchizedek gives to Santiago. Copy the quote into your notebook. Use quotation marks to show it is a quote. What do you think about this advice? Is this advice good or bad? Why? Would you take the advice? Why or why not? Can you use this advice in achieving your goals set out in your Mission Statement?

*Possible Extension to Entry*: Write about a time when something out of the ordinary happened to you. What were the circumstances? Who did you go to for advice? Was it a good or a bad thing that happened? When did you know whether or not this was a good or bad experience?

- Exit Slip: What is a personal legend?

## Day 6 – Review Vocabulary & Characters Encountered

- Personal Legend, Melchizedek, Santiago, the Baker, Merchant’s Daughter, Omen, Urim & Thummim (black “yes” and white “no”), Levanter, Geography: Mediterranean, Andalusia, Egypt, Levant

**Play Music from area of Spain as students work on their terms and characters**

- In partners (to differentiate-go back to pre-assessment and assign topics students are less familiar with), pick one term or character and find where in the novel they are referenced and on a piece of butcher paper, write the novel’s definition or character description, write the same in students’ own words, and draw an image of what the term is, or what the character looks like. Present these to the class. During presentations, students compare what they’ve learned to their predictions on the “Probable Passage” sheet.

- Students self-assess what was correct in their predictions and what was incorrect and make notes accordingly.

- Presentations: Assess on clarity of explanation and speaking clearly for the audience. Give specific feedback such as “clear explanation but work on looking at your audience.” – Some papers will be posted in the room to be added to during the reading of the novel.

## Day 7 – Challenges on the Journey

- Intro: Sign on door – “Meet in the Library” Make the library look different. Have the students sit somewhere they would not normally sit. Act like it’s all normal. Hand out “How to Bartle Puzballs”. Give students time to puzzle over it, wait till one figures out one of the answers.

- Writer’s Notebook: What was it like walking into class and having unfamiliar things around you? What did you do? How did you feel? What did you observe others doing? How can you compare this experience to Santiago’s when he arrives in Africa? What he does? What others do?

- What are the challenges that Santiago faces? (Do at the start and at the end of class)

- Read pages 33-47 (end of Part one) using Say Something with a partner. – Make a comment, Ask a question, Clarify

HW: Why do you think the author chose to end part one now? Study for quiz.

## Day 8 – Through the Threshold, Point of View

- Example/Non-Example for Point of View
- Point of View: narrator knows what multiple characters know, mainly Santiago and therefore reader does.
- As you read pages 51-61, think about the following directions.

Chart: Pick two of the following pairs of pages to look at and fill in the following chart to prepare you for answering the questions.

Pages/Description of what is happening	A quote that shows what he's doing	A quote that shows what he's thinking	What the quotes tell you about Santiago

- How does the point of view affect what you know as you read? What are the types of things Santiago does? What does he think about when he's thinking?
- HW: Study for the Quiz over part one and "Prologue."

## Day 9 – Self-Assessment & Quiz over Part One

When finish quiz, start homework.

Review metaphor with a few examples for the homework.

HW: Read "Dream Deferred" and/or "Dream". What are the metaphors in this poem?

## Day 10 – Dream or Personal Legend Deferred

Compare the dreams and their effect on people in the poems "Dream Deferred" and/or "Dream" to The Merchant and The Baker in *The Alchemist* – What did there deferred dreams do? Compare the idea of a dream to a personal legend.

What makes Santiago different from these two characters? Will Santiago attain his personal legend?

- Graphic Organizer: "Brake Pedal and Accelerator Pedal" – What are the things accelerating Santiago's progress toward his personal legend? What are the things slowing him down? Pros and cons of both?

HW: Give the students a basic map for Santiago's journey. Have them map where he has been and who he met at each place so far. The map will eventually include what he has learned in each place and serve as a timeline for his journey.

## Day 11 – Map Santiago's Journey, Reading Day

- The students check what they have on their maps with others in the class and add or change what they need to. Now they add lessons learned (even how he's survived) in each place using a quote from the text. When finished, students have the rest of the class to read.

Exit Slip: What is happening in the novel where you ended? What do you observe Santiago doing when he is faced with a new challenge? What question about the story do you have at this point?

## Day 12 – Cont. Reading

**Play Music from Egypt as students work.**

Students continue reading independently working on their map as they go. While students are reading, check in on individual understanding of the novel so far, using exit slips.

- Before class ends, address confusion or wonderings so far.

Exit Slip: What is happening in the novel where you ended? What is something you have learned from Santiago's experiences? Write down a quote from the book that relates to this lesson.

## Day 13 – Finish the Journey

### **Play Music from Egypt as students work.**

- Group students according to where they are in the novel. The group the furthest along will finish and compare their maps and use the “snow-globe” graphic organizer to address the role of the setting in the novel; this group will share out their ideas on setting with the class at the start of the next day’s work. The group in the middle will finish the novel, compare their maps, and adjust them accordingly. Teacher works with the group with the most pages to finish reading as a group; finish the map if time permits.

- Exit Slip: What do you understand about the end of the novel? What do you not understand about the end of the novel? What about the novel would you like to discuss the most?

HW: Finish the map of Santiago’s journey.

## Day 14 – Analyze the Hero’s Journey

- Students share the “snow-globe” as it relates to the story. Use this for start to discuss the ending of the novel to address questions and misunderstandings.

Anticipatory Set: Have students look at the maps they’ve made of Santiago’s journey. What do you notice about his journey? What types of roles do you see the characters playing in his journey? Do they help or hinder? What kind of process has he gone through? Where did he end up? These questions will lead into the structure of the hero’s journey.

Presentation: Present Campbell’s work on the “monomyth”. The hero’s journey where a hero leaves his or her ordinary world to gain something; in this case, a “personal legend” Powerpoint.

Possible Resource: a PBS special, *Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth*

Guided: As a class, discuss where on the map each part of the hero’s journey occurs for Santiago (i.e. ordinary world, the call, etc). Make sure to compare this hero’s journey idea to the personal legend.

Exit Slip: What is the hero’s journey?

HW: Think about a time when you have experienced a hero’s journey personally. Think about a time when you went on a physical journey and came back with something tangible or an “inward” journey where you came back from it having learned something. Perhaps use the mission statement journey.

## Day 15

Independent: Address answers to exit slip. Have students map out their personal hero’s journey to the outline of it idea of the hero’s journey. Use the “Hero’s Journey Outline.” Compare and contrast the two experiences with the hero’s journey, the personal experience and Santiago’s experience.

What do you notice about the journey? How does it relate to the idea of a process?

HW: Study for Unit Test.

## Day 16

- Reminder of performance task

- One-Minute Essay: From what you know of the hero’s journey and following a personal legend, do you think it is worthwhile to do so?

- Save the Last Word for Me (adapted): Based on their responses to the one-minute essay, each student picks a character in the novel. If the student thinks it is not worth while to follow a personal legend, then the student will pick a character that does not follow theirs, and a student thinking it is worthwhile will pick a character who does. Students need to find at least 3 actions and/or decisions that character makes regarding a personal legend in preparation for the discussion.

- Give students time to find arguments from the novel.



- Format: In groups of about 4 students will discuss their ideas. One student will have one minute to present his or her character and one decision made regarding following their personal legend; the student then defends the character's decision. They will have one-minute to present their arguments. Each student in the group will have 45 seconds to respond to the presenter's argument – what it makes them think about, what they think of the decision, other ideas about that character, questions this argument raises, etc. The Presenter gets the “last word” with one minute at the end of the round to summarize what he or she heard from the other students and any new thoughts or responses. This process repeats until all in the group have been a presenter and had the last word. Then, they have an open discussion about the process and any new ideas generated.

- Exit Slip: How will what we did today help you prepare for your project?

HW: Study for Unit Test

## Day 17 – Unit Test

- Take unit test
- HW: Think about what to do for the performance task.

## Day 18 – Personal Legend (Synectics)

In order to prepare for explaining what a personal legend is, the students will go through a process called synectics in which they will end with a simile of what a personal legend is like.

Process: do the following in columns on the board.

- 1) List adjectives that describe a personal legend.
- 2) Look at the list of adjectives you just made, and list other words that most or all of them describe. Creative and weird answers are encouraged. Try to keep words general.
- 3) Select one word from Step 2. Describe this word using adjectives.
- 4) Select pairs of words from the previous list that are opposites or that are very different in their meaning. Put the pairs together using hyphens to create a “compressed conflicts.” These pairs are called “compressed conflicts” because putting the two words together creates tension and conflicts of thought, logic, and/or feeling.
- 5) Pick one of the “compressed conflicts” and figure out what can be related to it.
- 6) Pick on of the words from Step 5 and describe how it is like a personal legend. Use the chart to explain. A \_\_\_\_\_ is like a personal legend because \_\_\_\_\_.

Noun to represent a personal legend	Explanation of noun	How this noun connects to the idea of personal legend	Passage cited to support this connection
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Discuss: What kind of things can be a personal legend? Can you have a personal legend that hurts people?

HW: Interview an adult about his or her personal legend. What is it? Where do they think they are on the journey? Due in 2 days.

## Day 19 - 21 Performance Task

Discuss answers to exit slip. Address any misunderstandings of a personal legend.

- Students work on performance task with peer feedback periodically. They will use the rubric to assess where they are on their projects.

## Day 22 Present Performance Task

- Students performance tasks to students who have not read *The Alchemist*.

Audience fills out feedback for students. Presenters self-assess using feedback and own ideas.

*The Alchemist* Performance Task Rubric

	Sophisticated	Solid	Adequate	Limited
<b>Hero's Journey</b>	Shows a sophisticated understanding of the hero's journey as part of the attainment of one's personal legend.  Shows the process used to get to one's personal legend thoroughly.	Shows a solid understanding of the hero's journey as part of the attainment of one's personal legend.  Shows the process used to get to one's personal legend solidly.	Shows an adequate understanding of the hero's journey as part of the attainment of one's personal legend.  Shows the process used to get to one's personal legend adequately.	Shows a limited understanding and/or may show misunderstanding of the hero's journey as part of the attainment of one's personal legend.  Does not include any of the process used to get to one's personal legend.
<b>Accuracy</b>	Examples from the novel as well as personal examples relating to the personal legend are presented accurately and clearly.	Examples from the novel as well as personal examples relating to the personal legend are presented.	Examples from the novel as well as personal examples relating to the personal legend are presented adequately but may include some inaccuracies.	Examples from the novel as well as personal examples relating to the personal legend are not presented or are inaccurate.
<b>Insight</b>	Communicates the student has developed a deep insight into the idea of one's personal legend clearly and effectively.	Communicates the student has developed solid insights into the idea of one's personal legend, may have some more simple interpretations.	Communicates the student has developed adequate insight into the idea of one's personal legend, may have some inaccuracies	Communicates the student has developed no insight or a limited insight into the idea of one's personal legend.
<b>Argument</b>	Student has taken a position for or against pursuing one's personal legend clearly.	Student has taken a position for or against pursuing one's personal legend.	Student has taken a position for or against pursuing one's personal legend, may be harder to find.	Student has not taken a position for or against pursuing one's personal legend, or the position cannot be determined.
<b>Support for Argument</b>	Support regarding the argument for or against pursuing one's personal legend is credible and effective.  Support from the novel as well as from personal experience is substantial.  Support chosen connects and justifies the argument effectively.  Support targets a chosen audience clearly.	Support regarding the argument for or against pursuing one's personal legend is credible and effective mostly.  Support from the novel as well as from personal experience is solid.  Support chosen connects and justifies the argument.  Support targets a chosen audience.	Support regarding the argument for or against pursuing one's personal legend is credible and effective somewhat.  Support from the novel as well as from personal experience is adequate.  Support chosen connects and justifies the argument adequately.  Support targets a chosen audience adequately.	Support regarding the argument for or against pursuing one's personal legend is neither credible nor effective or is not apparent.  Support from the novel as well as from personal experience is limited or not apparent.  Support chosen neither connects to nor justifies the argument.  Support does not target a chosen audience.
<b>Quality of Product</b>	The media chosen for presenting your argument engages the audience and is appropriate to the purpose of the product.  Product is polished and near-professional quality.	The media chosen for presenting your argument addresses the audience and is appropriate to the purpose of the product mostly.  Product is a good quality.	The media chosen for presenting your argument addresses the audience and is appropriate to the purpose of the product somewhat.  Product is an adequate quality.	The media chosen for presenting your argument does not address the audience and is not appropriate to the purpose of the product or does this in a limited manner.  Product quality is poor.