

The Personal Legend Project

Background:

Paulo Coelho's novel, *The Alchemist*, speaks of the Soul of the World, a universal consciousness that we connect with throughout our lives in the form of people we meet, books we read, experiences we have, connections we make, and moments that become significant for us. This Soul of the World is said to directly and indirectly inform us of our *personal legend* -- our ultimate goal and destiny in the world. Throughout the story, Santiago hones his recognition of omens, his name for those moments that connect him with his destiny. In this mini-project, we'll explore themes from the book through journaling, learning about ourselves and our own interests, and then developing a short career goal statement. The ultimate objective is a better understanding of our personal legends.

Objectives:

- You will analyze passages from *The Alchemist* and communicate your findings.
- You will begin the broader journey of your capstone *I Am Project* by identifying personal career goals and interests.
- You will synthesize your tentative goals into a brief, strong piece of writing.

Process:

1. You will read the following prompts and choose any 3 to respond to in thoughtful, engaging journals at least 1 page long. These journal entries will all be kept in one Google Doc titled, "Your Name - Personal Legend."
2. We will read and discuss our thoughts together as a class.
3. As you focus on figuring out our own *personal legend*, in whatever form you believe it exists, you will complete several career assessment and exploration activities.
4. You will plan and write a brief goal statement wherein you describe your tentative vocation goal, your reasons for choosing it, and a hypothesis of how you might begin your pursuit of this goal.
5. You will turn in your journal entries, screenshots and/or summaries of the results of your career exploration activities, your goal statement planning, and your goal statement itself (all in your Personal Legend Google Doc).

Notes:

- There are no announced due dates for in-class projects. We work together as a group and turn our work in together. Periodic "status of the class" checks will alert you if you are behind.
- Do not work on this project at home unless you are explicitly asked to.

Assessment: You will be assessed based on the following rubric.

Prompts: Choose any 3 to write a response to on your Google Doc. Response must be at least one page long, thoughtful, and well-written.

1. When Santiago arrives in Africa, he is robbed of all of the money that he intends to use on his travels to the pyramids to find his treasure. He sits alone in the empty market feeling sorry for himself and frustrated that he trusted the thief. Has there been a time in your life when you've given up something to pursue a dream and failed in the process? Has that stopped or delayed you from continuing your dream as it did for Santiago? If so, has life and growth made you realize the need to continue the pursuit? What specifically?
2. As Santiago's caravan travels through the desert, he talks of how intriguing the desert and wind are. He takes the time to drink in the rhythm of his surroundings. In contrast, the Englishman spent his time absorbed in his books. Santiago tells the Englishman, "You should pay more attention to the caravan. We make a lot of detours, but we're always heading for the same destination." The Englishman replies, "And you ought to read more about the world...Books are like caravans in that respect." What do you suppose the Englishman means by that? Does this relate to the story the old king told of the man who had to carry a spoon of oil while admiring his surroundings in the castle? What do you think is more important: observing, learning by reading, or both?
3. Read the camel driver's advice to Santiago on pages 84-85. The practice he's describing is called many different things by many different people, but it's often referred to as *mindfulness*. Research mindfulness from a few different sources online. In your own words, describe what it is, how one achieves or practices it, and the benefits of doing so. How does mindfulness relate to knowing yourself? To enjoying your life as a process? In what ways does mindfulness play a part in your school life right now, or how could it? Propose an exercise in mindfulness you might like to complete. (Also see page 102.)
4. Read the paragraph on page 101 that begins, "The camel driver understood..." and goes on to discuss how everyday occurrences and objects take on more significance in our lives. Have you ever felt that an occurrence, a book you read, or an object you saw gave you a flash of insight you didn't expect? For instance, when I walked into the Carolina Poodle Rescue, dozens of dogs were wandering about but one poodle was staring straight into my eyes. I took this as an omen, so to speak, and today Byrd, that little poodle, is my very best friend. Describe any experiences you've had like this and the significance you attached to them.
5. On page 44, Santiago talks about how shepherding, in many ways, taught him about the world. The phrase "noble work" came to mind when I read this passage. Why do we call community service "Noble Work Day"? What is noble about that work and what does it give you? What other jobs or service can give you the sort of knowledge that Santiago gained? Have you ever participated in any? Describe it and what you learned.
6. On page 43, Santiago says, "This candy merchant isn't making candy so that later he can travel or marry a shopkeeper's daughter. He's doing it because it's what he wants to do." Find the root of the word *vocation* and discuss what you find. What's the difference between a vocation and a job? Have you come across examples of people working jobs versus people living their vocation in your life? Discuss.

(some of these adapted, with gratitude, from [here](#))

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	Exceptional (19-20)	Proficient (17-18)	Developing (15-16)	Beginning (0-14)
Journal Entries	The journal entries were carefully crafted using varying sentence structure for fluency, excellent diction (word choice), sophisticated ideas, nearly impeccable conventions (spelling and grammar), and thoughtful organization. Above all, they were extraordinarily insightful.	The journal entries were crafted using fluent sentence structure, appropriate diction (word choice), good ideas, careful conventions (spelling and grammar), and appropriate organization. They were insightful.	The journal entries might have had inappropriate sentence fluency (such as run-ons, fragments, or listing), inapt word choice, some unclear or weak ideas, some mistakes in conventions (spelling and grammar), and some unclear organization. However, it did not have all of these things.	The journal entries had several of the following: inappropriate sentence fluency (such as run-ons, fragments, or listing), inapt word choice, unclear or weak ideas, mistakes in conventions (spelling and grammar), and unclear organization. They were rushed or seemed thoughtless.
Career Exploration Activities	The student engaged enthusiastically and with an open mind with the career exploration tools provided. They conducted a passionate independent search and compiled an interesting array of results and materials.	The student engaged with an open mind with the career exploration tools provided. They conducted an independent search and compiled an array of results and materials.	The student may have compiled an incomplete or lackluster portfolio of results and materials, but they engaged with the task appropriately.	The student may have compiled an incomplete or lackluster portfolio of results and materials, and they did not engage with the task appropriately.
Goal Statement	The goal statement was carefully crafted using varying sentence structure for fluency, excellent diction (word choice), sophisticated ideas, nearly impeccable conventions (spelling and grammar), and thoughtful organization. It was thoughtful, well-reasoned, concise, and strong.	The goal statement was crafted using fluent sentence structure, appropriate diction (word choice), good ideas, careful conventions (spelling and grammar), and appropriate organization. It was insightful.	The goal statement might have had inappropriate sentence fluency (such as run-ons, fragments, or listing), inapt word choice, some unclear or weak ideas, some mistakes in conventions (spelling and grammar), and some unclear organization. However, it did not have all of these things.	The goal statement had several of the following: inappropriate sentence fluency (such as run-ons, fragments, or listing), inapt word choice, unclear or weak ideas, mistakes in conventions (spelling and grammar), and unclear organization. It was rushed or seemed thoughtless.