

Eastchester High School
Summer Reading Assignment

This year, the English Department has selected **Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*** as the summer reading title for grades 9-12.

Students entering grade 12 who are not taking AP Literature will also read **Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest***.

Students will use the assigned title(s) in September as a component of a reading and writing unit; teachers will employ strategies to help students access the intricate details found within each of these titles, exploring the physical construction of each work of literature as well as layers of character development, symbolism, conflict, and theme. This unit of instruction will lay the groundwork for the school year, and will culminate in an essay on the assigned title.

As you read the assigned novel(s), ask yourself the following questions:

What are the key values, opinions, and/or beliefs of the main characters, and how do these factors result in conflicts with other characters and/or with society? Do the characters show any growth or development over the course of the novel?

In what ways does the author use the setting (physical location as well as the time period) to impact the novel's storyline? How, for example, does the setting alter the course of events, create conflicts, and reflect the novel's theme?

How do the events in the novel lead readers from one point to the next? In essence, how is there a sequence of ideas that moves the storyline from a beginning point to its ultimate conclusion?

What central message, moral, or theme does the author want readers to take away from the novel? How do the events of the book lead you to this conclusion?

Students are encouraged to think of these prompts while reading. Students may wish to take notes as they read, annotate a personal copy of the text, or simply jot down thoughts upon completing the novel.

Please remember that the specific assignments for Honors and Advanced Placement classes will be posted on the Eastchester Department website.