

The Alchemist Socratic Seminar Questions

These are the questions we will use to start our Socratic Seminar in-class graded discussion. It would be beneficial if you spent some time thinking about the answers to these questions as you read. Your teacher will collect your responses to these questions, so please complete your responses before the first day of the school year.

These questions are a place to begin the discussion. It will be acceptable if we begin by discussing one of these questions and move into a topic which is not mentioned here, as long as the topic is related to the text in some way.

For each response, please provide cited textual evidence from *The Alchemist* supporting your opinion.

1. How does Santiago's spiritual journey parallel the alchemist's practice of transforming metal into gold?
2. What are the weaknesses that Santiago sees in his flock of sheep, and how do they relate to the weaknesses of human beings who fail to pursue their Personal Legends?
3. What role do forces of nature such as the wind and the sun play in Santiago's journey?
4. What stylistic strategies does Coelho use to make *The Alchemist* come across as a mythic, universally applicable story?
5. What is the function of magic in *The Alchemist*, and what does the ability to practice magic symbolize?
6. What is the attitude of *The Alchemist* towards material wealth and individualism, and how does it differ from major world religions in this regard?
7. Discuss one of the symbols used in the novel. Identify the symbol and how it is used. How does the symbol affect the characters? the reader's understanding of the book?