

THE ALCHEMIST

Text type: Excerpt from a novel
Theme: Tourism/Travelling
Subthemes: Self awareness

In this unit the students will be able to

- Deduce meaning of unfamiliar words
- Recognize rules for using indefinite pronouns.
- Illustrate use of tenses learnt earlier. Identify, change the form of, and use Present and Past Perfect Continuous tenses.
- Demonstrate use of appropriate conventions to give a job interview
- Use summary skills to write summary/ précis of simple passages / poems.
- Write a persuasive/argumentative essay.
- Use appropriate vocabulary, style and tone for a covering letter/ job application/ resume
- Write and revise formal letters to people in extended social and academic environment for various purposes

Pre-Reading

- What do you know about Paulo Coelho, the author of "The Alchemist"?
- What information can you gather from the provided text about the main character, Santiago, and the setting of the story?
- Based on the introduction, what expectations or assumptions do you have about the book's plot or themes?

The Alchemist

Paulo Coelho

(Translated by Alan R. Clarke. Published 1992)

The boy's name was Santiago. Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church. The roof had fallen in long ago, and an enormous sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood.

He decided to spend the night there. He saw to it that all the sheep entered through the ruined gate, and then laid some planks across it to prevent the flock from wandering away during the night. There were no wolves in the region, but once an animal had strayed during the night, and the boy had had to spend the entire next day searching for it.

While-Reading Question

How does the author describe Santiago's relationship with his flock of sheep?

He swept the floor with his jacket and lay down; using the book he had just finished reading as a pillow. He told himself that he would have to start reading thicker books: they lasted longer, and made more comfortable pillows.

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.

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 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.

"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.

"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.

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

"Like everybody learns," he said. "In school."

"Well, if you know how to read, why are you just a shepherd?"

The boy mumbled an answer that allowed him to avoid responding to her question. He was sure the girl would never understand. He went on telling stories about his travels, and her bright, Moorish eyes went wide with fear and surprise. As the time passed, the boy found himself wishing that the day would never end, that her father would stay busy and keep him waiting for three days. He recognized that he was feeling something he had never experienced before: the desire to live in one place forever. With the girl with the raven hair, his days would never be the same again.

But finally the merchant appeared, and asked the boy to shear four sheep. He paid for the wool and asked the shepherd to come back the following year. And now it was only four days before he would be back in that same village. He was excited, and at the same time uneasy: maybe the girl had already forgotten him. Lots of shepherds passed through, selling their wool.

"It doesn't matter," he said to his sheep. "I know other girls in other places."

But in his heart he knew that it did matter. And he knew that shepherds, like seamen and like traveling salesmen, always found a town where there was someone who could make them forget the joys of carefree wandering.

The day was dawning, and the shepherd urged his sheep in the direction of the sun. They never have to make any decisions, he thought. Maybe that's why they always stay close to me.

The only things that concerned the sheep were food and water. As long as the boy knew how to

While-Reading Question

Are there any hints or clues in the text that suggest events or developments that might occur later in the story?

find the best pastures in Andalusia, they would be his friends. Yes, their days were all the same, with the seemingly endless hours between sunrise and dusk; and they had never read a book in their young lives, and didn't understand when the boy told them about the sights of the cities. They were content with just food and water, and, in exchange, they generously gave of their wool, their company, and – once in a while – their meat.

If I became a monster today, and decided to kill them, one by one, they would become aware only after most of the flock had been slaughtered, thought the boy. They trust me, and they've forgotten how to rely on their own instincts, because I lead them to nourishment.

The boy was surprised at his thoughts. Maybe the church, with the sycamore growing from within, had been haunted. It had caused him to have the same dream for a second time, and it was causing him to feel anger toward his faithful companions.

He drank a bit from the wine that remained from his dinner of the night before, and he gathered his jacket closer to his body. He knew that a few hours from now, with the sun at its zenith, the heat would be so great that he would not be able to lead his flock across the fields. It was the time of day when all of Spain slept during the summer. The heat lasted

While-Reading Question

What role does the abandoned church and the sycamore tree play in the narrative?

until nightfall, and all that time he had to carry his jacket. But when he thought to complain about the burden of its weight, he remembered that, because he had the jacket, he had withstood the cold of the dawn.

We have to be prepared for change, he thought, and he was grateful for the jacket's weight and warmth.

One afternoon, on a visit to his family, he had summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn't want to become a priest. That he wanted to travel.

"Those people, when they see our land, say that they would like to live here forever," his father continued.

"Well, I'd like to see their land, and see how they live," said his son.

"The people who come here have a lot of money to spend, so they can afford to travel," his father said. "Amongst us, the only ones who travel are the shepherds."

"Well, then I'll be a shepherd!"

His father said no more. The next day, he gave his son a pouch that held three ancient Spanish gold coins.

"I found these one day in the fields. I wanted them to be a part of your inheritance. But use them to buy your flock. Take to the fields, and someday you'll learn that our countryside is the best, and our women the most beautiful."

And he gave the boy his blessing. The boy could see in his father's gaze a desire to be able, himself, to travel the world – a desire that was still alive, despite his father's having had to bury it, over dozens of years, under the burden of struggling for water to drink, food to eat, and the same place to sleep every night of his life.

1. Glossary

words	Meanings
sacristy	a room in a church where sacred vessels and vestments are kept.
sycamore	a type of tree with lobed leaves and spherical fruit, native to temperate regions.
shepherd	a person who herds, tends, and guards sheep
crook	a long staff with a curved end, used by shepherds to manage sheep
andalusia	a region in southern spain known for its rich cultural heritage
moorish	relating to the moors, a group of muslim people of north african descent who conquered parts of spain in the middle ages
merchant	a person involved in trade, especially one dealing with foreign countries or supplying goods to a particular trade
dry goods	goods that do not contain liquid or require refrigeration, such as textiles, grains, and spices.
instincts	inherent or intuitive tendencies or abilities.
seminary	a school that prepares students for priesthood or religious ministry.
theology	the study of the nature of god and religious belief.
latin	the language of ancient rome and the roman catholic church, widely used in scholarly and religious contexts.
blessing	a prayer asking for divine favor, protection, or guidance.
desire	a strong feeling of wanting or wishing for something to happen.
inheritance	Property or money passed down to an heir after the death of the owner.

2. Reading and Critical Thinking Skills

- Why does Santiago feel a desire to live in one place forever, and what contributes to this feeling?
- What is Santiago's purpose in life according to the text, and how does he plan to fulfill it?
- How does Santiago's father react when he expresses his desire to become a shepherd and travel? What values does his father convey?
- Identify and discuss potential themes present in the excerpt. How might these themes relate to the overall story?

- v. Explore Santiago's motivations for becoming a shepherd and his desire to travel. How do these motivations shape his character?
- vi. Consider the symbolic significance of the church, sycamore tree, and the boy's jacket. What might they represent within the narrative?
- vii. Read the recount given in the lesson text and discuss the impact it had on the reader. Also compare it with a similar genre of story you have read earlier. Comment on implied meaning
- e. g. writer's view point and relationship between characters.

3. Vocabulary and Grammar

- i. Find synonyms for the word "captivating" as used in "The Alchemist."
- ii. Identify antonyms for the word "abandoned" in the description of the church.
- iii. Use context clues to determine the meaning of the word "proprietor" as it is used in the passage.
- iv. Consult dictionary/glossary to find pronunciation, precise meaning, part of speech/etymology. SYCAMORE, SEMINARY, MOORISH, ANDALUSIA.

Phrases Practice

- i. Identify any idiomatic expressions or phrases used in the text. Explain their meaning.
- ii. Find examples of similes or metaphors in the provided lesson text. Explain the comparisons made.
- iii. Read Santiago's dialogues and compare the way other characters express themselves. Comment on the uniqueness of Santiago's speech.

Indefinite Pronouns

A. Fill in the Blanks:

- i. Everyone ____ excited about the upcoming event.
- ii. Has ____ seen my keys around here?
- iii. There is ____ at the door. Can you see who it is?
- iv. ____ of the students submitted their assignments on time.
- v. She wants ____ to contribute to the charity fundraiser.
- vi. The party was fun, and ____ enjoyed themselves.
- vii. ____ are welcome to join the meeting.
- viii. My sister is inviting ____ to the wedding.
- ix. I have ____ to share with you.
- x. ____ were surprised by the sudden announcement.
- xi. She gave ____ a piece of advice.
- xii. The team needs ____ to contribute ideas.

xiii. They decided to go without ____.

xiv ____ of the cake is gone.

B. Present Perfect Tense :

Complete the Sentences:

i. By the time she arrives, I ____ already ____ the report.

ii. We ____ never ____ such a thrilling movie before.

iii. How long ____ you ____ in this city?

iv. They ____ just ____ a new car.

v. ____ you ____ to that country?

C. Choose the Correct Form:

i. She ____ (has/have) lived here for five years.

ii. ____ they ____ (seen/see) this movie yet?

iii. I ____ (already/just) ____ finished my homework.

iv. By the time I got there, she ____ (has/had) left.

v. We ____ (never/ever) ____ visited that museum.

D. Decide whether to use present perfect or simple past.

i. She ____ (visit/has visited) Paris several times.

ii. I ____ (just/saw) the latest episode of my favorite show.

iii. They ____ (has/have) completed the project last week.

iv. ____ you ____ (ever/been) to Asia?

v. We ____ (already/ate) dinner when you called.

E. Passage for Tense and Pronoun Practice:

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate indefinite pronoun and the correct form of the present perfect tense.

has, have, lived, experienced, decided, discovered, offers, joined, tried, has been, introduced, learned, pursue, started, passed, has improved, made, always loved, become, become, plan, has completed, feels, has achieved, work, has become, becomes, never expected, found, moved, has changed, looks

F. PASSAGE

Samantha ____ in this small town for ten years. Over the years, she ____ many adventures and met interesting people. Recently, she ____ to explore new hobbies. One day, she ____ a local art class that ____ lessons for beginners.

Excited about the opportunity, Samantha ____ the class. She ____ painting before, but the

instructor ____ patient and helpful. During the first session, everyone ____ themselves, and Samantha ____ that some classmates ____ art for years, while others ____.

As the weeks ____, Samantha ____ her skills and ____ new friends. She ____ creative activities, and this art class ____ a significant part of her life. The other participants ____ like a second family to her.

One day, the group ____ a gallery exhibition to showcase their work. Samantha ____ several paintings for the event. She ____ proud of what she ____ in such a short time. Everyone ____ hard, and the atmosphere in the class ____ incredibly supportive.

The upcoming exhibition ____ a highly anticipated event in the town. Samantha ____ that she ____ such a fulfilling community when she ____ here a decade ago. Life ____ in ways she ____, and she ____ forward to the exciting journey ahead.

4. Oral Communication skills

- A. Hold an interactive interview with a traveler or professional tourist. Follow the instructions and conclude the activity on reflections.

Conventions of Conducting Interviews

- Divide the participants into pairs: an interviewer and a traveler.
- Decide on a scenario for the interview. For example, the traveler could be someone who has explored unique destinations, embarked on a specific adventure, or is a professional travel blogger.
- The interviewers prepare a set of open-ended questions related to the traveler's experiences, challenges, cultural encounters, favorite destinations, travel tips, etc.
- Encourage interviewers to include questions that require detailed responses to promote a dynamic conversation.

5. Writing Skills

- A. Write an essay by crafting a descriptive and engaging travelogue about a chosen destination. Use mind mapping or graphic organizer to formulate your thoughts about the destination you choose.

Teacher's Point

• Guide students to produce legible work that shows the correct spelling of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization. Also help them recall and practice construction of sentence patterns and structures learned in earlier classes.

Travelogue Writing: Before starting the travelogue, it is important to research the space. Only research can help you to mention the accurate places and their significance. Make sure you mention accurate details to help the readers understand. Keep a camera handy to capture the images for later.

Write Down in Descriptions

After researching, make sure to write down the places in the descriptions. The reader can read the descriptions and have an idea of the places. Make sure you mention the correct details of the places along with their historical significance.

Format of a Travelogue:

Introduction- Body paragraphs- Conclusion

Highlight the Various Attractions

A writer needs to mention all the attractions of the city. These attractions are noted down in different categories such as eateries and restaurants, historical places, etc.

Mention the Mode of Transportation

Include the transportation facilities provided in the country. The list can include various types of transportation facilities like buses, trains and other type of transportation. You can also include the cost of different types of transportation for their reference.

Mention the Cultural Background of the Place

It is very important to mention the cultural background of the place. It gives a richer value to the place. Most people want to know the historical and cultural background of any place. You can also include the background and the weather of the place so that it makes it easy for people to pack.

List Down Some Famous Eateries

It is very important to mention some famous and affordable eateries in the location. A lot of people who are travelling to a new country find it difficult to find good restaurants for their food likings. It will help the readers if there is a detailed list of the restaurants according to the cuisines.