

The Alchemist's letter

PLEASE NOTE The Literacy Shed website should ALWAYS be used under the supervision of an adult. There are some clips on the site which are only suitable for use with Year 6 children or KS3. Please ensure that children do not search the website independently.

The activities in this pack are designed to use with the following clip...

<https://www.literacyshed.com/the-almchemists-letter.html>

We will be using this clip over the next three weeks for our work

The Alchemist's letter

Monday – comprehension

Questions to ask: Watch the opening 45 seconds (up until we see 'The Alchemist's Letter'

- What have we learned up to now?
- What do Alchemist's do? (share a dictionary definition)
- Why does the film maker include this section before the titles? • What is the film going to be about?

Pause the film after 54 seconds when the man looks at the key and sighs.

- When is the story set? How do we know?
- How is the man feeling?

Pause the film after the phrase, 'The more powerful the machine.'

- What relationship between the narrator and the man we can see?
- What is the man's name?
- What has his father left behind?
- Where is his father?
- Why do you think he has left it behind?
- Do you think Veridion has seen his father recently?

Pause the film at 1 min 35 seconds where we see two people sitting by a waterfall.

- What are your most precious memories?
- What do you think the narrators most precious memories could be?
- What does the word precious mean?

Pause the film at 2 min 15 seconds after the phrase, 'She died alone.'

- What are the narrator's most precious memories? • Why do you think this is?
- Why do you think Veridion's mother died alone?

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Pause at 2 mins 43 When the young Veridion throws away the pocket watch. You may want to rewatch that section.

- What does the narrator mean when he says, "because of the creature I was becoming?" We see a visual metaphor of the minotaur. Does the author actually mean he was physically changing?
- Who is sat under the tree with the pink leaves?
- What do you think he is thinking before he throws the watch?
- Why does he throw the watch away?

Pause the film after the phrase, "Just as I abandoned you." 3 mins.

- Why was Veridion abandoned?
- Why might his father think Veridion will abandon his daughter?

Pause the film after the word Nicholas at 3 mins 22 secs.

- What is the narrator's name?
- What things matter the most?
- What is the thing that matters the most?
- What is interesting about the way the last section of the letter is written? "Now I understand what matters the most. Love. Your father Nicholas" or "Now I understand what matters the most. Love your father, Nicholas."

Pause the film at 3 mins 30 secs when the machine explodes.

- What has created the gold watch?
- Why do you think machine has exploded?
- Do you think Nicholas ever succeeded in creating gold?

Pause the film at 3min 45 secs when Veridion is looking at the watch.

- What do you think he is thinking now?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What has happened to the machine? Why?

At the end of the film • Why doesn't Veridion take any of the coins with him?

- Does he take anything with him?
- Why has the laughter been included in the closing credits? What does it show?

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Tuesday – vocabulary

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Vocabulary Work:

Dear Veridion, I have fashioned a most incredible device.

What do you think the underlined word means based upon the context above?

Look up the word in the dictionary and explain what it really means.

Write an interesting sentence of your own using the word. *

Write a question which includes the word. *

What type of word do you think it is? (verb / noun / adjective etc.) Why?

Use the letters from it to make as many new words as you can (each letter may only be used once in each word).

Write the word neatly using three different styles of handwriting.



*you may wish to change the tense of the word

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SYNONYM ALLEY

3 sets and space to create your own.

Draw a line from the words on the left to its synonym on the right.

construct	intrigued	neglect	flow
curious	regret	ebb	driven
remorse	fabricate	determined	abandon

conceive survey

inspect transform

metamorphose invent



THE ALCHEMIST'S LETTER
VocabularyNinja

7 'Words unlock the doors to a world of understanding...'

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Wednesday – descriptive writing

Today I would like you to write a descriptive passage just about the machine. You might find it helpful to complete the table on the next page to give you ideas for what to include in your writing.

Remember when we are writing to take it slow – write two sentences, re-read them, edit them and then move on. The word bank below will give you some ideas of great vocabulary to use. Try and use some of the words from yesterday as well.

colossal wondrous caution	delicate complicated instructions	intricate unimaginable precarious
pipework magical ancient	metallic powerful neglected	lustre mysterious damaged
polished hazard defected	tarnished unique dusty	repetitive clattering mechanical

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What materials might the different elements be made of?

What shapes do you see?

How do things move/connect with other elements?
What verbs would you use?

What memories do you see?

What colours do you see?

What similes do you think of?

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Thursday – powerful memories

Today we are going to write a powerful memory that could be used to fuel the machine.

First read the text below:

Suddenly the lights dimmed so that all I could see was the glow coming from the kitchen. All around me, my family and friends were singing. The whites from their huge beaming smiles were plastered on their faces, visible against the darkness. I felt warm inside- like some invisible force was hugging me and reminding me of all the wonderful things in my life that I should be grateful for. Yes, I was lucky but something was still missing. I yearned for that one special bond with someone who I knew would always be by my side. When would they arrive? Masking my loneliness, I tried to focus back to the current situation.

Mum strolled into the room with the most glorious cake on a beautiful mirrored plate. The candles flickered, their delicate flames dancing like some kind of ritual as she put the delicious treat in front of me.

Same routine every year. Unfortunately, the result was also the same. Candles were blown, cheers were yelled, but the empty wish always remained unanswered. I blew. Happy birthday to me.

Then, from nowhere, the cake was swiped from the table and replaced with a large box, holes poked around the top and a comforting smell emanating from within. I remember thinking that I heard it make a noise and my heart started to race, before telling myself not to get my hopes up. It couldn't be, could it?

Ever so carefully, I pulled up the corner of the soft cardboard, hoping with all my heart that today my wish had finally come true. Before I had chance to peel back the flap and peep inside, a black, wet nose poked out and sniffed my shaking hand, followed by a slobbery tongue determined to land a loving lick on its new owner. My lips curled at the edges. My heart danced. Finally, I had my forever friend...

How is the person feeling at different parts throughout the text? How do we know? Now have a go at writing about your own powerful positive memory, can you make it as exciting as the one you have just read?