

# HHS 11-Honors Summer Homework

## *The Scarlet Letter*

### **DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:**

Your summer reading assignment will be to read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It can be any edition or publication date. Annotate as you read to be prepared to discuss the novel when you come back to school. Read through the study questions before you read the novel, so you can be watching for the information to answer them. It will count as a MAJOR grade in your classes.

**Type your answers in complete sentences in MLA Format.** Create your answer sheet to be easy to follow by labeling the different chapter sections and connection piece. You may consult *Spark Notes* to help you with the story line, but your answers will be checked for plagiarism. Do not rewrite the questions.

There will be a **TEST** on the novel during the first week of school that will contain questions and prompts not found in *Spark Notes*.

### **Chapters 1-8**

1. How does the author describe the prison door? Explain the imagery and/or other descriptive words. What does this description say about how people of that society feel about their criminals?
2. What might the rose bush in the beginning scene **symbolize**?
3. What is significant about the letter Hester is wearing on her dress? What does it stand for? Why do the women in the crowd criticize her for it?
4. What do you think the purpose of Hester's punishment on the scaffold is? What might this scene represent in comparison to historical events concerning public punishment?
5. Why do you think she does not want to reveal the father's name?
6. What do you think the significance is of the name "Pearl" for Hester's daughter?
7. When Hester sees the Scarlet "A" in the reflection of the armor what is her reaction? What do you think her reaction might **symbolize**? Why do you think the author included this scene in the story?
8. What do you think the governor meant by Pearl being "a blessing and a curse"? Do you think Hester agrees? Explain why or why not.
9. What event in history is the author making an **allusion** to when he tells of Mistress Hibbins' invitation?

### **Chapter 9-15**

11. What **type of irony** is being used when Chillingworth becomes a part of the storyline?
12. What might the narrator be foreshadowing for you, as a reader, by describing the tapestries in Dimmesdale's room?
13. Why do you think Dimmesdale begins to distrust and hate Chillingworth?
14. What does the word "empathize" mean and why can it be considered "the heart's native language?" (Chapter 11)
15. Why do you think the author chose to include an "A" in the heavens for the town's people to ponder about?

16. What is the change in Hester? Why do you think there has been a change in Hester?
17. Explain the **symbolism** of the Chillingworth's change in appearance in connection with the story line?

### Chapter 16-24

18. What do you think Pearl has concluded about wearing a scarlet letter according to the following quote from Chapter 16? **Use the quote in your answer and cite it according to MLA standards.**

*"Mother," said little Pearl, "the sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom...it will not flee from me; for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!"*

19. There are more references to the "Black Man" *who* is he? What is the **symbolism** of the author attaching the color black to the reference?
20. What are the positive **connotations** the author uses concerning Hester's scarlet letter in the quote at the beginning of Chapter 18 when he says,

"The scarlet letter was [Hester's] passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These have been her teachers..."

**Use the quote in your answer and cite it according to MLA standards.**

21. Explain why you think Dimmesdale is behaving differently when he returns to town after meeting with Hester. **Infer** what his thought process might be.
22. What do you think the author is saying when he uses the **allusion** of the townspeople's "Elizabethan" love of splendor?
23. Explain why Mistress Hibbins reference to Pearl's father as the "Devil" is a use of **figurative language**. Do you think she really referring literally to Satan, or is she implying something else? Which type of figurative language is it?
24. Read the quote at the beginning of chapter 24 summary again. Why do you think the author used the words like "something to be sorrowed over," "looked upon with awe," and "with reverence" when referring to how the world sees "the scarlet letter" now?

### Connection:

Full sentences/short-but-thorough paragraphs.

1. What would you say is the *most dominant theme* in this story?
2. How can this story be considered and **allegory**?
3. What do you think the **climax** of the story is? Explain why.