The Scarlet Letter

Curriculum Unit

The Center for Learning

The Scarlet Letter

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Curriculum Unit

Michael A. Benedict

Contributor

Amy Richards

The Center for Learning

TheCenterforLearning
www.centerforlearning.org

Curriculum Unit Author
Michael A. Benedict, who earned his M.Ed. at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is an English teacher and department chairperson. He is a 1989 Christa McAuliffe Fellow and a fellow at the Center for the Study of Writing at Carnegie Mellon University. He is also the author of The Center for Learning novel/drama curriculum units *The Red Badge of Courage, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* and *Dandelion Wine*.

Editorial Team
Mary Anne Kovacs, M.A.
Rose Schaffer, M.A.
Mary Jane Simmons, M.A.
Bernadette Vetter, M.A.

Copyright © 2007 The Center for Learning, Cleveland, Ohio. Reprinted 2012.
Manufactured in the United States of America.
Printed on recycled paper.

The worksheets in this book may be reproduced for academic purposes only and not for resale. Academic purposes refer to limited use within classroom and teaching settings only.

ISBN-13: 978-1-56077-749-6
ISBN-10: 1-56077-749-4

Contents

		Page	Handouts
Introduction		v	
Teacher Notes		vii	
1	Gathering Background Information	1	1, 2
2	Exploring Hawthorne's Style of Writing	5	3, 4
3	Symbols and Character	11	5, 6, 7
4	Beginning *The Scarlet Letter:* Chapters 1–6	17	8
5	The Artist in Residence: Chapters 7–12	21	9, 10, 11, 12
6	Point of View—Intimacy between Reader and Narrator: Chapters 13–15	29	13, 14, 15, 16
7	Setting—Landscaping the Story: Chapters 16–19	37	17, 18, 19, 20
8	The End of the Labyrinth: Chapters 20–22	47	21, 22, 23
9	The Finale: Chapters 23–24	55	24, 25, 26
10	The Novel as a Whole	61	27, 28, 29, 30
Supplementary Materials			
	Essay Topics	70	
	Reading Check: Chapters 1–6	71	
	Reading Check: Chapters 7–12	72	
	Reading Check: Chapters 13–19	73	
	Reading Check: Chapters 20–24	74	
	Answer Key—Reading Checks	75	
Bibliography		77	

Introduction

The Scarlet Letter is a complex novel. Readers have to contend with the intrusion of the narrator commenting on the characters and their actions. Another difficulty lies in Nathaniel Hawthorne's language and style. Before reading the novel, it is important that students become familiar with the time periods in which the novel was written and in which the story is set.

Since so many years have passed between Hawthorne's writing of this novel and students' reading of it, students will need to assess changing values toward the central issues of the novel. Hopefully, they will come to understand the universality of some of the issues. A good class discussion might focus on the unequal treatment of males and females caught in the same web, or the fact that Hester is a strong female, emerging from her punishment with her integrity and personhood intact, even strengthened.

The development of the lessons and handouts in this unit has been guided by several underlying assumptions. Students are asked to try to replicate Hawthorne's writing style. The rationale for this is drawn from research promulgated by Miles Myers, James Moffett, and others. By trying to write what they are to read, students can become more aware of the difficulty all writers encounter. This experience also helps them to see the relationship between the writer and the reader. In this unit, students are also asked to write to various audiences. Thus, they will be able to make certain rhetorical choices that will enhance their writing and their understanding that writing is not done in a vacuum.

Another underlying assumption upon which some of the lessons are built is found in the reader-response theory of literary criticism promulgated by Wolfgang Iser and others. Students are shown that meaning is a negotiation between the reader and the text and that meaning evolves from this negotiation. This is not to say, however, that meaning is whatever the reader wants it to be. It does mean that the reader brings to the text his or her own experience and background as a necessary tool of understanding. Students, with guidance, should see that every time they read or reread a work, they bring new meaning to the text. Predicting the outcome of the novel and rewriting the ending are examples of negotiating with the text. Words and sentences within a text do not exist in isolation but lead the reader to predict the next word or next sentence. The same applies to ideas that also force students to become more careful readers of the text.

The lessons in this resource unit do not cover the full range of discussion or angles of approach possible for this novel. They are supplementary and can be expanded upon or altered in order to accomplish particular goals and objectives.

Teacher Notes

The lessons and the handouts for *The Scarlet Letter* are designed to lead students inductively to some of the literary concepts that are relevant not only to this novel, but also to all works of fiction. With guidance, they will come to understand the complexities of the novel's central characters and point of view.

The lessons in this unit are designed to be sequential, with one lesson building on another. However, with preparation, the lessons may be used independently of sequence. Although each lesson is planned for a forty-five minute class segment, this may vary depending on the nature of the class or the discussions that are generated from the lessons. Long-term projects on symbols and character study begin in Lesson 3 and culminate in Lesson 10.

Reading assignments for this unit are as follows:

Chapters 1–6 for Lesson 4

Chapters 7–12 for Lesson 5

Chapters 13–15 for Lesson 6

Chapters 16–19 for Lesson 7

Chapters 20–22 for Lesson 8

Chapters 23–24 for Lesson 9

One of the goals of the lessons in this unit is the development of a sense of scholarship among students beginning to visualize themselves as a community of scholars exploring a common topic from several angles. Students are encouraged to share findings as well as ideas with their classmates. The final lesson invites the idea of a symposium, a celebration of ideas (and maybe even a celebration of relief that students are finished with the novel).

Instruct students to keep a reader-response journal as they read the novel. This helps them prepare for class discussion. They should make an entry at the end of each reading assignment. As a tool to keeping this journal, direct students to use sticky notes as they read. They can put a self-stick note on every page or two (commenting on action, asking questions, making predictions, etc.). Direct them to review these notes before making their reader-response journal entries and also before coming to class. This greatly enhances class discussion and participation. It also ensures close reading of the novel.

The supplementary materials section at the end of the unit contains essay topics and reading checks with suggested responses.

Answers will vary unless otherwise indicated. Additional paper may be needed to complete some handouts.

Lesson 1
Gathering Background Information

Objectives

- To understand Nathaniel Hawthorne's background against which the novel was written
- To understand the Puritan Age in which the story is set
- To discover how concepts and attitudes change

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson is designed as a prereading lesson to be completed before students begin reading the novel. Its purpose is to develop a background against which to discuss *The Scarlet Letter*. Since it was written in a time period different from the actual time setting of the novel, students need to be aware of the difference in attitudes between these two time periods. They also will recognize a change of attitude from Hawthorne's time to their own. Investigating and discussing these differing attitudes provides a firmer base for discussing some of the issues of the novel.

Handout 1 directs students to explore these changing attitudes in four specific areas. Having students work in research teams encourages a sense of scholarship and the sharing of ideas. Students work in their groups to present the material to the rest of the class and to provide classmates with a written synopsis of their works so that everyone in the class understands the background material. This greatly enhances students' reading of the novel. Allow several days for research, group preparation for presentations, and for the presentations themselves.

After groups have presented their reports, students complete **Handout 2**, which asks them to think and write about what it would have been like to live during the Puritan Age as opposed to the present. Many of the things that students depend on daily, such as the automobile, the telephone, and the Internet, were nonexistent. Students are asked to question how living during the Puritan Age would affect their own attitudes and inner selves.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 1**, and make group assignments, giving each group one of the areas of investigation found on part A. You may want each group to have a heterogeneous composite of strong and weaker students to ensure a collaborative learning atmosphere during the research. Schedule time for reference work. Also, allow time for any interviews suggested for Investigation 3. After research is completed, instruct students to use part B to prepare their presentations creatively in the form of short skits, reports complete with audiovisual aids, etc. Finally, instruct groups to complete part C for distribution to rest of the class after their presentations are complete. This sheet should summarize the most important facts that groups discovered while completing their research. In this way, all class members will have a copy to study and refer to during reading of the novel.
2. Have groups present information to the class.
3. Distribute **Handout 2**, and have students write a description of what living during the Puritan Age would be like for them. The questions help guide students to think about modern conveniences and advances such as the Internet and how they may take for granted the things that they rely on for their daily lives. These questions also direct students to think about their inner selves and how their inner selves are formed within a certain environment. They are led to consider whether the environment affects the formation of that inner self or not.

Name_____

Date_____

Investigative Reporting

Part A.

Directions: Investigate the area of study assigned to you.

Investigation 1

The action of *The Scarlet Letter* takes place in the 1600s. Investigate the Puritan Age to discover how the Puritans viewed the world. How did the Puritans define *guilt, sin, crime,* and *adultery*? What characterized Puritan religion and government?

Investigation 2

Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. Find out what the world was like at that time. How did the people of Hawthorne's time feel about guilt, sin, crime, and adultery? Did Hawthorne believe the same way as his contemporaries did? What were the major thoughts about religion at this time?

Investigation 3

Connotations of terms and ideas change over time. The action of *The Scarlet Letter* takes place in the seventeenth century. Hawthorne wrote the novel in the nineteenth century. You are reading it in the twenty-first century. Obviously, there have been many changes in attitudes during each period of time. How does today's society respond to guilt, sin, crime, and adultery? You might draw on television shows such as soap operas and reality TV, and on governmental and religious arenas. You might also consider conducting interviews with fellow students, ministers, adults, etc.

Investigation 4

The following terms are necessary for understanding certain concepts in *The Scarlet Letter*: *repentance, preternatural, remorse, contrition, penance, atonement, sorrow, penitence, revenge,* and *sin*. While a dictionary definition might suffice in some cases, you may want to interview ministers, priests, and/or rabbis to get a fuller understanding of these terms in the context of religious teachings since the novel is intricately involved with the religious teachings of the Puritans.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions based on your group investigation. Then, prepare to present what you learned to the rest of the class. Be creative. Whatever form your presentation takes, you are responsible for conveying accurate information.

Investigation Area_____

1. What important facts did you learn during your investigation?

2. Based on your investigation, what did you learn about the attitudes of the time period you researched?

3. What do you want the rest of the class to know when you finish your presentation?

4. What is the best way to present this material to the rest of the class so that everyone will understand what you learned?

Part C.

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, summarize the most important facts that your group discovered while completing your investigation.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Another Time, Another Place

Directions: *The Scarlet Letter* takes place during the Puritan Age. This setting is far removed from our time. Consider the following questions. Then, write a description of what you think living during that time would have been like. Remember, many of the things that you take for granted were not available or even conceived during that time. Also, consider how, or if, living during the Puritan Age would affect your inner self.

1. What would it be like to live during the Puritan Age?

2. How would you entertain yourself?

3. What hardships would you face?

4. What would you not have to rely on?

5. What would your attitude be like?

6. Would you be the same person that you are today? Why or why not?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 2
Exploring Hawthorne's Style of Writing

Objectives

- To examine Nathaniel Hawthorne's style of writing
- To discuss the use of language

Notes to the Teacher

Hawthorne's language and writing style are challenging for most readers. **Handout 3** asks students to rewrite a passage from the novel as a means of "translating" Hawthorne. The exercise can be further implemented by selecting other passages for similar rewrites. Such effort can lead to a profitable class discussion on the use of language, especially as it reflects the mind of the author and of the audience. **Handout 4** asks students to read a passage from a modern novel and to rewrite it using Hawthorne's writing style. Completing these handouts prepares students for the complexities of language that they will encounter in *The Scarlet Letter*. Furthermore, they gain an understanding of the relationship between a writer and an audience which will serve them well for the work with point of view in Lesson 6.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 3**. Ask students to rewrite the passage from *The Scarlet Letter* that is provided in part A. Encourage them to use simple sentences in order to contrast their writing and Hawthorne's.

2. Instruct students to complete part B of the handout.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Words such as* tremulous, vehemence, unobtrusive, capering, *and* airily *might be unfamiliar to students.*

   2. *Some responses might focus on the complexity of the language. Other responses might notice the objective tone in the language.*

   3. *Hopefully, students will notice the intellectual quality of his writing, his craft of writing.*

   4. *Students should appreciate that the audience was familiar with the craft of writing as developed by Hawthorne, and that many readers were at least as learned as the writer.*

   5. *Today's readers are not accustomed to complex sentence structures and vocabulary. We use fewer complex sentences and "lighter" vocabulary words.*

3. Distribute **Handout 4**. Ask students to try to write like Hawthorne. Encourage them to duplicate the sentence structure, and, if possible, the vocabulary that they encountered in the Hawthorne passage found on **Handout 3**.

   Suggested Responses:

   Students might focus on the fact that the Paolini excerpt is easier for them to read and understand because it reflects the writing style that is currently popular. Its sentence structure and vocabulary are not as complex as they are in Hawthorne's writing. Students will probably feel that their writing is closer to Paolini's than Hawthorne's. Discuss the use and structure of language as a means of conveying ideas and as a reflection of the mind of the writer and an understanding of the writer's audience.

4. Discuss the use of reader-response journals. Instruct students to keep a reader-response journal as they read the novel. This helps them prepare for class discussion. They should make an entry at the end of each reading assignment. Instruct students to pay close attention to the novel's characters, symbols, and themes as they write their responses. Also, encourage them to write down their reactions to their reading, not just the facts of plot. Direct them to think about how the reading makes them feel and how it relates to their lives.

   As a tool to keeping this journal, it is extremely helpful to have students use sticky notes as they read. They should put a self-stick note on every other page

or so. These notes help all students, especially those with a short memory span, to remember what they thought about as they read. This not only helps them refresh their memories before writing their reader-response journal entries, but also gives them something to refer to during class discussion. Students should consider the following when making these notes:

- Predictions about what will happen next and/or the final outcome
- Predictions about how specific characters will act and/or change
- Comments on character traits and questions about a character's actions or thoughts
- Questions about plot, character, author intentions, theme, symbols (e.g., What does the rosebush symbolize? How will Hester's husband react if he returns? Where is the baby's father?)
- Personal feelings and reactions to the story and its characters

Name_____

Date_____

Rewriting Hawthorne

Part A.

Directions: Read the passage from chapter 8 of *The Scarlet Letter.* Then rewrite the passage as it might be written today.

Hawthorne's Passage	Rewrite
The young minister, on ceasing to speak, had withdrawn a few steps from the group and stood partially concealed in the heavy folds of the window-curtain; while the shadow of his figure, which the sunlight cast upon the floor, was tremulous with the vehemence of his appeal. Pearl, that wild and flighty little elf, stole softly towards him, and, taking his hand in the grasp of both her own, laid her cheek against it; a caress so tender, and withal so unobtrusive, that her mother, who was looking on, asked herself,—"Is that my Pearl?" Yet she knew that there was love in the child's heart, although it mostly revealed itself in passion, and hardly twice in her lifetime had been softened by such gentleness as now. The minister,—for, save the long-sought regards of woman, nothing is sweeter than these marks of childish preference, accorded spontaneously by a spiritual instinct, and therefore seeming to imply in us something truly worthy to be loved,—the minister looked round, laid his hand on the child's head, hesitated an instant, and then kissed her brow. Little Pearl's unwonted mood of sentiment lasted no longer; she laughed, and went capering down the hall, so airily, that old Mr. Wilson raised a question whether even her tiptoes touched the floor.	

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Before answering the following questions, reread both Hawthorne's passage and the rewrite that you did in part A.

1. What words from Hawthorne's passage did you have to look up in the dictionary?

2. What is lacking in your rewrite that is contained in the original?

3. What does your work with this passage show you about Hawthorne as a writer?

4. Assuming that a writer writes with an audience in mind or that a writer's audience understands a writer's style, what does Hawthorne's passage tell you about readers of Hawthorne's time?

5. What does your reading of Hawthorne's passage, and your rewrite of it, tell you about modern readers?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Writing Like Hawthorne

Directions: Rewrite the following passage from a contemporary novel using the type of sentence structure and vocabulary that Hawthorne would use. Then answer the questions.

Selected Passage	Rewrite
Wind howled through the night, carrying a scent that would change the world. A tall Shade lifted his head and sniffed the air. He looked human except for his crimson hair and maroon eyes. He blinked in surprise. The message had been correct: they were here. Or was it a trap? He weighed the odds, then said icily, "Spread out; hide behind trees and bushes. Stop whoever is coming . . . or die." Around him shuffled twelve Urgals with short swords and round iron shields painted with black symbols. They resembled men with bowed legs and thick, brutish arms made for crushing. A pair of twisted horns grew above their small ears. The monsters hurried into the brush, grunting as they hid. Soon the rustling quieted and the forest was silent again. The Shade peered around a thick tree and looked up the trail. It was too dark for any human to see, but for him the faint moonlight was like sunshine streaming between the trees; every detail was clear and sharp to his searching gaze. He remained unnaturally quiet, a long pale sword in his hand. A wire-thin scratch curved down the blade. The weapon was thin enough to slip between a pair of ribs, yet stout enough to hack through the hardest armor.[1]	

[1]Christopher Paolini, *Eragon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 1.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

1. How is Christopher Paolini's writing different from Nathaniel Hawthorne's writing?

2. Which writing style are you more familiar with reading, Hawthorne's or Paolini's?

3. What did your attempt to rewrite the Paolini passage in Hawthorne's writing style show you about your own writing in relation to both Hawthorne and Paolini?

4. What did it show you about Hawthorne's writing style?

5. Which is easier, "translating" Hawthorne or trying to write like Hawthorne? Why?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 3
Symbols and Character

Objectives
- To explore the use of symbols
- To begin character study

Notes to the Teacher
This lesson is designed as a prereading lesson to introduce students to the use of symbols and the study of character.

In this lesson, universal symbols and symbols specific to a work of literature are introduced. Students discuss their familiarity with symbols and learn how to identify a symbol. Then they are assigned symbols to study throughout their reading of the novel. A reading from Roland Bartel assists students in thinking through the discovery of symbols.

Likewise, students begin their study of character. The handout on character study is an inductive approach in which conclusions about the characters are drawn by looking at their significant actions and statements. Formulating conclusions about the characters requires students to read the text closely, thus verifying that they are fulfilling reading assignments.

Students' study of symbols and character is ongoing and culminates in Lesson 10.

Procedure
1. Divide the class into small groups. Distribute **Handout 5**. Ask groups to read the statement from Bartel and answer the questions that follow. After each group has completed the questions, engage students in a class discussion on the different criteria that have evolved. Lead the discussion to consensus that best suits study of *The Scarlet Letter*. This ensures that students are all working from a common base.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Students' backgrounds with symbols will vary greatly. Have students who are familiar with symbols brainstorm with the class where they have encountered symbols, what kinds of symbols they were, and how they acquired extra meaning.*
   2. *Emphasis should be on the commonsense approach to discovering symbols.*
   3. *Answers may point to extensive study of those items throughout the entire work. Some students may mention the need to be alert to the context of a symbol within a work. Remind students that using the sticky note method of reading (mentioned in Lesson 2) will provide them with an easy way to mark things that they believe might be symbols in the novel. They can then trace the author's use of these things and determine if the author is, in fact, ascribing extra meaning to them.*
   4. *Students should recognize symbols, but they should avoid playing "symbol-hunters," seeing a symbol at every turn of the page.*
   5. *Some criteria should include the following: the repetition of an object; its reference to meanings outside the work; cautious observation.*

2. Discuss the differences between symbols that are universal in nature and those that are specific to a certain work of literature. For example, universal symbols include
   - spring (often symbolizing rebirth)
   - water (often symbolizing cleansing)
   - owls (often symbolizing wisdom)
   - trees (often symbolizing growth)
   - darkness (often symbolizing death)
   - fire (often symbolizing torment)

   On the other hand, symbols that are specific to a particular work of literature include
   - the lighting bolt on Harry Potter's forehead in the *Harry Potter* series by J. K. Rowling
   - Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*
   - the great white whale in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*
   - the scarlet-colored "A" that Hester Prynne wears in *The Scarlet Letter*

   Both types of symbols are used in *The Scarlet Letter.*

3. Distribute **Handout 6.** Select from the list of symbols that follow or use symbols of your own choice. Divide students into groups of two or three. Assign each group a symbol. This is a long-term project culminating in Lesson 10, in which all students have an opportunity to explain their work with symbols. Most of this work can be done individually as homework with occasional class time set aside for groups to compare notes. Students may need additional copies of this handout. Remind students to use self-stick notes as they read and to mark symbols in the text. Instruct them to record their observations in their reader-response journals.

   Symbols

   - colors
   - darkness/light
   - doorways
   - drapery
   - forest
   - gold
   - letter "A"
   - mirrors
   - moon/sun
   - night/day
   - plants
   - reflections
   - rosebush
   - scaffolding
   - steps
   - water
   - windows

4. Distribute **Handout 7**, and assign appropriate groups. Direct each group to study one of the following characters in detail throughout the reading of the novel:

   - Hester Prynne
   - Pearl
   - Roger Chillingworth
   - Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale

   This long-term assignment culminates in Lesson 10, in which all students have a chance to explain their work with character study. Students will need additional copies of this handout. Remind them to use sticky notes throughout the novel for observations of characters not specifically assigned to them.

5. Assign the reading of chapters 1–6 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 4. Direct students to use sticky notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Name_____

Date_____

What Does a Symbol Mean?

Directions: Read the following excerpt about symbols, and answer the questions. Be prepared for class discussion.

Identifying Symbols

> Learning to recognize symbols is largely a matter of using our intuition and our background in literature. We should remember first of all that anything may be a symbol, that a symbol is any sign that has acquired extra meaning. It may be an object, a gesture, an incident, a person, a plot, a color, a sound, a pattern or sequence of action—anything that reminds us of something else that in turn seems applicable to the text before us. The word *may* is crucial. Although we must develop a sensitivity to the possibility that anything unusual *may* be symbolic, we must refrain from concluding that everything unusual *is* symbolic. A balance between sensitivity to the possibility of symbols and a commonsense approach to the basic meaning of the text is the best guide.[1]

1. What do you already know about symbols in general?

2. How does Roland Bartel's explanation add to that understanding?

3. What should you do in order to determine whether or not some thing, some person, some action, etc., might be symbolically used in a work of fiction?

[1]Roland Bartel, *Metaphors and Symbols: Forays into Language* (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1983), 62.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

4. Explain what Bartel means by saying: "The word *may* is crucial. Although we must develop a sensitivity to the possibility that anything unusual *may* be symbolic, we must refrain from concluding that everything unusual *is* symbolic." How can this best be done?

5. Based on this reading, draw up a list of criteria that you will use as a guide to determine what the symbols are in *The Scarlet Letter*.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Symbols Chart

Directions: As you read *The Scarlet Letter*, complete the following log based on the symbol assigned to you.

Chapter	Page	Description	Significance

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Character Study

Directions: Keep the following log on the character assigned to you.

Category	Notes
Chapter/Page	
Significant Action	
Significant Statement	
Insight into Character Provided by Action and Statement	
Personal Reaction to Character	

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 4
Beginning *The Scarlet Letter*: Chapters 1–6

Objectives
- To enter the world of *The Scarlet Letter*
- To examine how punishment reflects society
- To understand why Hester Prynne stayed to endure her punishment
- To consider how Hester would be treated in today's society

Notes to the Teacher
Students are introduced to many of Nathaniel Hawthorne's symbols in chapters 1–6 of the novel. (Examples include colors, thresholds, gold, the letter "A," the rosebush, and the scaffold.)

Chapters 1–6 also introduce students to Hester Prynne, Pearl, Roger Chillingworth, and Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. It is a good idea to look at the work that students have done on their symbols chart and character study chart, **Handouts 6** and **7**, which were distributed in Lesson 3. Because these are ongoing assignments to be completed throughout the novel, it is important to review students' first set of entries to make certain that students are on the right track. It is helpful to review additions that students make to these handouts as they read the novel.

In this lesson, students look at how Hester and the act of adultery are dealt with in chapters 1–6 of the novel. They compare that treatment (which reflects her Puritanical society) with how she would be treated in modern society. They discuss the fact that even though the consequences of adultery may differ in modern culture, there are many consequences.

Before continuing to read the novel, students must discuss and come to understand why Hester stays in the Puritanical society in which she lives. Students may have a hard time understanding at first why she endures her punishment instead of fleeing with her daughter, Pearl, to a place where neither her past nor her sin are known.

After students have considered the characters, symbols, and society portrayed in the novel, they recreate the riveting scene on the scaffold. Recreating this dramatic scene provides students with a creative way to connect personally with Hawthorne's work.

Procedure
1. Divide students into the groups to which they were assigned to complete **Handout 6**, which was distributed in Lesson 3. Allow them a few minutes to review the symbols assigned to them. Then, together as a class, review students' work on **Handout 6**. Make sure that students are tracking the symbols assigned to them and that they are considering not only where and when they encounter the symbols in the novel, but also, and most importantly, their significance.

2. Divide students into the groups to which they were assigned to complete **Handout 7**, which was distributed in Lesson 3. Allow groups a few minutes to discuss their insights into and personal reactions to their assigned characters. Then, meet together as a class for discussion on character traits that have been revealed thus far in the novel.

   Suggested Responses:

   Hester—*The act of her adultery, her reactions on the scaffold, her reactions to seeing "the stranger" in the crowd, and her conversation with Chillingworth in the jail reveal some of the many aspects of her character: weakness, strength, dignity, grace, sympathy, etc.*

   Pearl—*Her name, her perfect shape and beauty, her wails and screams on the scaffold and in the jail, her laugh, her being always next to Hester, her "freakishness," her imaginative games, and the "laughing image of a fiend peeping out" of Pearl's eyes provide insight into her character.*

Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale—*His words to Hester as she stands before the crowd reveal his religious fervor, his eloquence, and his sympathy. As students do not at this point know his role in Hester's sin, it is important not to reveal the guilt that his words cover.*

Roger Chillingworth—*His reactions in the crowd, the secret he forces Hester to keep, his admission that the scales are balanced between them, and his vow for revenge provide insight into his character.*

3. Distribute **Handout 8**. Have students complete the essay as directed. Students will be quick to point out how differently adultery is viewed in modern society. They might observe that such views vary throughout the country and the world and that not all groups or individuals agree on these views. In Hollywood, for example, adultery and childbirth out of wedlock are behaviors that seem to be accepted as commonplace and are often a means of publicity and fame. Have a few volunteers share their essays with the class. Discuss how although the punishment for Hester's act may be greatly different in today's society, there are still serious consequences, such as the risk of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, the breakdown of the family, and other problems associated with adultery, sex outside of marriage, etc.

4. Discuss with students why Hester stayed to endure her punishment. Have them review chapter 5 of the novel. Why didn't Hester pick up Pearl and move somewhere where she could start fresh? She could have done her needlework anywhere in order to support herself and her daughter. In today's highly mobile society, it might be hard for students to understand why Hester stays in a place where she and her daughter will be treated as outsiders and with such pervasive scorn. There are various reasons given in the novel, including Hester's need to stay in a place where something so pivotal to her life occurred, her belief that she needs to pay on earth for her sin in order to free her soul, and also maybe a desire to stay close to her lover.

5. Instruct students to recreate the scene of Hester and Pearl on the scaffold. They can make shoebox dioramas or other three-dimensional recreations, create posters, act out the scene in groups, paint pictures of the scene, or use any other means to portray this riveting scene.

6. Assign the reading of chapters 7–12 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 5. Remind students to use self-stick notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Name_____

Date_____

Then and Now

Directions: Review chapters 1–6 of *The Scarlet Letter*. Examine how Hester is punished for her crime of adultery, how she is judged by the people in the crowd as she stands with Pearl on the scaffold, and how she judges herself. Think about instances in today's society in which someone is revealed to have committed adultery. Write a well-thought-out essay comparing Hester's punishment and treatment in her Puritanical society with how an individual would be treated and punished in today's society. Consider how these similarities and differences impact the life of the adulterer (and in the case of Hester, impact the life of the adulterer's child). Also, consider how the differences and similarities reflect society, both then and now.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 5
The Artist in Residence: Chapters 7–12

Objectives

- To understand the dynamics of visual art
- To view a written passage with the same understanding applied to visual art
- To scrutinize the character of Roger Chillingworth

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson asks students to do some interdisciplinary study and divergent thinking by looking at a work of art and transferring their conclusions to the written art. Rembrandt van Rijn is chosen as the artist because of the tonal qualities of his work and the application of contrasts between light and dark. His work evokes some of the same somberness found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "painting," making a good transitional element for discussion.

After students have studied the painting and a selected descriptive scene from the novel, they can then look more intensively at a character in the novel. This microscopic look will apply the same techniques as a method of understanding how a character is drawn in order to convey a mood or timbre of being.

To complete the opening procedure, you will need prints or online images of paintings by Rembrandt. Suggested paintings include *The Night Watch* and various self-portraits.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 9**. An art teacher can be invited to explain the terms listed in part A of the handout. The art teacher could also lead a discussion about the Rembrandt paintings chosen for this lesson because they convey some of the same tonal qualities as *The Scarlet Letter*. Allow students time to complete part B.

   Suggested Responses, Part B:

   1. *The light focuses on certain areas of the painting to accentuate either people or objects.*
   2. *After looking at the highlights, the viewer attempts to see what is concealed in the darkness.*
   3. *Students should note the somberness of the overall painting.*
   4. *The light comes from outside the painting. This allows the viewer to think about the reason for the lighting and why certain areas are highlighted and others are not.*

2. Distribute **Handout 10**, and allow students time to collaborate on answering the questions.

   Suggested Response:

   1. *Students may underline the words* black, dense, sombre, gray, *etc.*
   2. *Students may circle the words* mystery, glimpses, flickering, sunshine, *etc.*
   3. *Students should note any words or phrases that indicate the light/dark, somber quality of the scene. For example, "the mystery of the primeval forest."*
   4. *The questions that were used in looking at Rembrandt's work could be used to look at this passage.*
   5. *Feelings might include oppression, mystery, and foreboding, depending on word and phrase choices.*
   6. *Hawthorne creates a sense of coldness and isolation by describing how the sunlight keeps moving away. Rembrandt also isolates with his use of light and dark tones.*

3. Distribute **Handout 11**. This handout is designed to allow students to examine a character in the same manner as they did the Rembrandt painting and the scene from the novel. Allow time for students to read part A and to share their analysis of Chillingworth's character. Then assign part B.

   Suggested Responses, Part B:

   1. *There is the same use of light and dark contrasts and pictorial descriptions. Some students might notice that the quality of light references is different.*

2. *Contrasts include his dark qualities being emphasized by the references to light and fire.*

3. *The tone is one of evil and cunning.*

4. *Answers should focus on the evil intentions of the coldness of his character which conflict with his profession.*

4. Distribute **Handout 12**. Instruct students to refer to the handouts that they completed in Lesson 3 and those completed in this lesson when responding to the questions.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Students should recognize the "brush strokes" of Hawthorne's writing. The descriptions are pictorial in nature and would be easy to draw.*

2. *Answers should mention the pictorial, effective nature of these descriptions.*

3. *Students should be able to discern the somber, highlighting qualities.*

5. Assign the reading of chapters 13–15 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 6. Remind students to use sticky notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Optional Activity

Look at various Web sites containing photographs of Rembrandt's paintings. Pay special attention to Rembrandt's dramatic use of color. One source is *Web Museum* (http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/rembrandt/). It features images of Rembrandt's artwork (organized by decade) and a biography of Rembrandt.

Name_____

Date_____

Rembrandt the Painter

Part A.

Directions: Formulate definitions for the following terms as they apply to art. As you observe the selected paintings, notice how these terms are used to describe the paintings.

1. Nuance

2. Chiaroscuro

3. Hue

4. Tint

5. Contrast

6. Value

7. Shading

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: As you study the pictures, consider the following questions about technique and effect.

1. How does Rembrandt use lighting to draw your attention to various people or objects in the painting?

2. How does he use darkness to accentuate other aspects of the painting?

3. What is the overall impression you get about the tonal quality of the painting from the colors and light and dark mixtures of the painting?

4. Does the light come from a source within or outside of the painting? How does this affect your perception of the painting?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Hawthorne the Painter

Directions: After completing the study of Rembrandt's paintings in **Handout 9**, read the passage below from *The Scarlet Letter* and answer the questions that follow.

From Chapter 16

> The road, after the two wayfarers had crossed from the peninsula to the mainland, was no other than a footpath. It straggled onward into the mystery of the primeval forest. This hemmed it in so narrowly, and stood so black and dense on either side, and disclosed such imperfect glimpses of the sky above, that, to Hester's mind, it imaged not amiss the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering. The day was chill and sombre. Overhead was a gray expanse of cloud, slightly stirred, however, by a breeze; so that a gleam of flickering sunshine might now and then be seen at its solitary play along the path. This flitting cheerfulness was always at the further extremity of some long vista through the forest. The sportive sunlight—feebly sportive, at best, in the predominant pensiveness of the day and scene—withdrew itself as they came nigh, and left the spots where it had danced the drearier, because they had hoped to find them bright.

1. Underline any words or phrases that suggest the tonal qualities you found in the Rembrandt paintings.

2. Circle any words or phrases that correspond with the art terms on **Handout 9**.

3. How does Hawthorne paint this scene using words instead of paint?

4. How do the questions of **Handout 9** help you to visualize this scene?

5. What feeling does Hawthorne evoke in you as you read this scene? How does he accomplish this?

6. How does he use contrast of light and dark in this scene? How is this similar to Rembrandt's use of light and dark?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

The Painting of a Soul

Part A.

Directions: Read the following descriptions of Roger Chillingworth. As you read these passages from chapter 10, think of the work you did with the Rembrandt painting and the scene from the novel. Apply some of the same techniques in analyzing Chillingworth's character.

Passage 1

Sometimes, a light glimmered out of the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Bunyan's awful door-way in the hill-side and quivered on the pilgrim's face. The soil where this dark miner was working had perchance shown indications that encouraged him.

Passage 2

Then, after long search into the minister's dim interior, and turning over many precious materials, in the shape of high aspirations for the welfare of his race, warm love of souls, pure sentiments, natural piety, strengthened thought and study, and illuminated by revelation,—all of which invaluable gold was perhaps no better than rubbish to the seeker,—he would turn back, discouraged, and begin his quest towards another point. He groped along as stealthily, with as cautious a tread, and as wary an outlook, as a thief entering a chamber where a man lies only half-asleep,—or, it may be, broad awake,—with purpose to steal the very treasure which this man guards as the apple of his eye. In spite of his premeditated carefulness, the floor would now and then creak; his garments would rustle; the shadow of his presence, in a forbidden proximity, would be thrown across his victim.

Passage 3

But with what a wild look of wonder, joy, and horror! With what a ghastly rapture, as it were, too mighty to be expressed only by the eye and features, and therefore bursting forth through the whole ugliness of his figure, and making itself even riotously manifest by the extravagant gestures with which he threw up his arms towards the ceiling, and stamped his foot upon the floor! Had a man seen old Roger Chillingworth, at that moment of his ecstasy, he would have had no need to ask how Satan comports himself, when a precious human soul is lost to heaven, and won into his kingdom.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Obviously, the way a writer describes a person is different from the way he or she would describe a scene. In both cases, the author's "brush strokes of color" are words. Answer the following questions about the passages in part A.

1. How is Hawthorne's description of Chillingworth similar to his description in the scene on **Handout 10**?

2. What contrasts, either direct or indirect, does Hawthorne use in his description of Chillingworth in these passages?

3. What is the overall tone of these descriptions?

4. What insight into Chillingworth's character do the contrasts and tone of the descriptions provide?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Viewing the Painting

Directions: Viewing a painting is a visual experience. In a sense, reading literature is also a visual experience since you must use your eyes. The significant difference between a painting and a novel is that the painter uses paints to represent a scene and a novelist uses words. The reader must supply the visual aspect of the novel by means of imagination. Symbolism and characterization are "brush strokes" of a novelist's palette. Consider these points as you answer the following questions.

1. How has Hawthorne used words and symbols to create a picture?

2. What do the descriptions both of the scene in **Handout 10** and of Roger Chillingworth in **Handout 11** tell you about Hawthorne as a "painter" of verbal pictures?

3. How are Rembrandt and Hawthorne similar in their use of color, light and dark, and contrast?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 6
Point of View—Intimacy between Reader and Narrator: Chapters 13–15

Objectives

- To understand point of view as a concept
- To apply understanding of point of view to a literary work
- To demonstrate the relationship between a narrator and a reader as a function of point of view

Notes to the Teacher

Point of view in a story is sometimes a very difficult concept for students to grasp, especially in its importance to understanding the story. Students have an easy time visualizing point of view as demonstrated in a painting, photograph, or movie. By capitalizing on this skill, they can move to understanding point of view in a piece of writing.

The next step is for students to recognize the choices a writer makes when adopting a point of view. Students will then be able to understand that the readers' reactions to the story and characters are shaped and colored by the narrator's point of view. The exercises in this lesson help students understand point of view and apply knowledge to the story.

To complete procedure 1, you will need to provide a large painting or photograph; another possibility would be to select a single frame from a video. Your school's art department is a possible source, as are the Web sites for the National Gallery of Art (http://www.nga.gov) and the Smithsonian American Art Museum (http://americanart.si.edu). Choose one (or more) image that you like and that you think your students will find interesting.

Procedure

1. Display a large painting or photograph, or stop a video at an interesting moment. Ask students to study it carefully and to describe what they see.
2. Distribute **Handout 13**, and conduct a discussion based on the questions.
3. Point out that the previous discussion focused on the topic of point of view. Explain that point of view is also significant in literary works.
4. Distribute **Handout 14**, and have students read the information, which relates to but also expands on the traditional consideration of four basic points of view, ranging from first person to omniscient. Emphasize the relationships between the narrator and the reader and between the point of view and the story itself. Use the questions to guide further discussion.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Point of view is very important. It directly influences how a story is told and read.*
   2. *There is essentially no difference. Both present a view of the world through certain colorations and hues.*
   3. *Point of view helps to define a structure for the story. Meaning is shaped or defined by point of view. By examining what a narrator presents and the way in which it is presented, a reader can begin to realize the themes of a story.*
   4. *Knowing the narrator's limits and strengths, the reader can more easily recognize framing devices, stream of consciousness, flashbacks, repetitions, foreshadowing, and other structural elements.*

5. Distribute **Handout 15**. This handout shuttles students between thinking about the novel and thinking about their own experiences. By identifying the point of view of the novel, students can begin to understand what Hawthorne is doing through his narrator. Students are then asked to examine their own experiences from their own points of view. By asking them to retell those experiences from another point of view, they can be led into a discussion of changes and choices necessitated by different points of view.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Students may have a difficult time with this since there is the fact of the author's intrusion into the novel. Basically, the point of view is a privileged narrator with moments of the dramatized point*

of view. Some students might question the reliability of this narrator. Others might feel offended by the commentary that seems to moralize about the actions and thoughts of the characters.

2. *Students should select passages that show the narrator's ability to enter the minds of the characters while interplaying both long summaries and character dialogue with authorial commentary.*
3. *Students likely have many experiences to recount.*
4. *Students should realize that no two people will recount an experience in exactly the same way.*
5. *Descriptions will vary but will be from students' point of view.*
6. *Descriptions will vary, but students should notice how the descriptions differ.*
7. *Responses should indicate an understanding of size relationship. A four-year-old child would not be able to see certain things and would need to be lifted. Another factor to look for is the language that would be used by a four-year-old child.*

6. Distribute **Handout 16**. Students move from a global comprehension of point of view and apply understanding to a particular character. Stress the relationship of the author/narrator to a character. How that character is shaped and presented is a function of point of view.

Suggested Responses:

1. *He seems to be at her elbow.*
2. *There seems to be a tone of respect for her, especially in the fact that she appears to have overcome the situation instead of letting the situation overcome her. There also is a tone of awe and wonder at her accomplishments.*
3. *Students will find many words and phrases showing the narrator's respect for Hester and her charitability, helpfulness, resolve, and strength.*
4. *Students should notice the respect in Hawthorne's attitude toward Hester.*
5. *The changes are in Hester and how the community views her. It shows her as pure, sympathetic to others, strong, and valued by the community.*

7. Assign the reading of chapters 16–19 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 7. Remind students to use sticky notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Optional Activity

Draw a picture from a particular point of view. Select a scene from the novel and render it as a drawing with some of the tonal qualities of the scenes as described by Hawthorne.

Name_____

Date_____

The Artist's Point of View

Directions: Study a visual work of art carefully, and answer the following questions.

1. Where is the artist standing relative to the subject of the painting?

2. What does this position tell about what is important in the painting? What is important to the artist?

3. What does the artist want you to think about the subject? How do you know?

4. What details does the artist seem to emphasize in this picture?

5. What insight do these details give you into the mind of the artist?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Point of View—Literature

Directions: Read the following information about point of view, and answer the questions.

Point of view is a critical aspect of all fiction. It is one of the first things the writer must determine, and the choice of the narrative voice affects every aspect of the story. First, the narrator must be either inside or outside of the storyline. Outside narrators come in two types: those who know characters' thoughts and those who can report only actions and conversations. Both types are close to the author's voice, and both are generally reliable.

The inside narrator is often a character in the story who uses first person pronouns to describe thoughts, events, and other characters. This narrator knows only his or her own thoughts and may or may not be reliable. Another form of inside narrator uses third person pronouns and is limited to thoughts of only one of the characters. Here, again, narrator reliability can be an issue.

The narrator and the reader have a close relationship, as one recounts the story and the other listens and responds. Effective readers pay careful attention to point of view and are aware of what the narrative voice knows and does not know, reveals and does not reveal. They make their own judgments based on characters' actions and words, and they compare those assessments with generalizations made by the narrator. These comparisons are helpful tools in determining the narrator's reliability, that is, the extent to which the narrator's statements can be accepted as true.

Point of view in a story is no accident. It is a critical choice for the author, and a focus on it can lead readers directly to central themes.

1. How important is point of view to your understanding of any story? Explain.

2. What is the difference between an artist's use of point of view and a writer's use of point of view?

3. How do you think point of view helps to discover a theme or themes of a story?

4. How might point of view help you discover the structure of a story?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

This page intentionally left blank.

Name_____

Date_____

Examining Point of View

Directions: From the chosen point of view, we learn what the author is thinking about a character, a scene, or an action in the story. Reread chapter 13 of *The Scarlet Letter* carefully and answer the following questions.

1. What is the point of view of this novel thus far? (Choose the appropriate one from the chart on **Handout 14**.)

2. How do you know this? Support your answer with direct proof from the novel.

3. In real life, we often interpret actions, events, and people based on our own point of view. We make judgments and decisions based on our experience as individuals. Recount here one important event from your own life.

4. Reread your accounting. How did you present it? How would your best friend recount that event? What is the difference?

5. Write a description of a water fountain.

6. Now, write a description of a water fountain from the point of view of a four-year-old child.

7. What choices did you have to make in describing the water fountain as a four-year-old child would view it?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Hawthorne and Hester

Directions: Readers of fiction are always looking through someone else's eyes. We call this person the narrator. The narrator makes judgments about the characters and actions. The story is filtered through the narrator's eyes, and readers make judgments about characters based on what the narrator tells them.

1. Where do you see the narrator standing in relationship to Hester in chapter 13?

2. How does the narrator feel about Hester?

3. What specific words or phrases indicate this?

4. Look carefully at the following passages from chapter 13. Explain how they help to substantiate the narrator's attitudes and judgments about Hester.

   a. The links that united her to the rest of human kind—links of flowers, or silk, or gold, or whatever the material—had all been broken.

   b. It was perceived, too, that, while Hester never put forward even the humblest title to share in the world's privileges,—farther than to breathe the common air, and earn daily bread for little Pearl and herself by the faithful labor of her hands,—she was quick to acknowledge her sisterhood with the race of man, whenever benefits were to be conferred.

   c. She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked forward to this result. The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her,—so much power to do, and power to sympathize,—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength.

   d. She who has once been woman, and ceased to be so, might at any moment become a woman again, if there were only the magic touch to effect the transfiguration.

   e. Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling, to thought.

   f. Thus, Hester Prynne . . . wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of the mind; now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now . . . ghastly scenery all around her, and a home and comfort nowhere.

5. In what ways is the presentation of Hester in chapters 13–15 different from that of previous chapters?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 7
Setting—Landscaping the Story: Chapters 16–19

Objectives

- To demonstrate the relationship between setting and point of view
- To observe how setting is a reflection of the characters' minds and thoughts
- To analyze setting and to see how setting can be an indicator of theme

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson asks students to consider the importance of setting in general. Then they concentrate on one of the settings of the novel, namely the forest. The forest is a very important part of Hawthorne's novel. Characters' moods are reflected in the descriptions of the forest. Students draw on their own associations toward forests as a prelude to working with Hawthorne's descriptions and uses of the forest. Students examine how mood is evoked through description of the forest. They also analyze character's actions and feelings while in the forest. While this lesson focuses on only one of the novel's settings, other settings can be selected for assignment.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 17**. Ask students to read the commentary about setting. They may work in groups to answer the first three questions. Question 4 should be done individually. Encourage students to demonstrate their understanding of setting through their descriptions.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Answers should focus on the interdependence of setting, character, and point of view.*
   2. *Characters are influenced, sometimes even controlled, by the setting. Setting adds believability to the characters.*
   3. *Point of view affects how and to what extent setting is described.*
   4. *Make sure that students' descriptions demonstrate their understanding of setting.*

2. Distribute **Handout 18**. This handout may be done as a homework assignment. Its purpose is for students to draw on their own experiences as a prelude to working with Hawthorne's descriptions of the forest. Emphasize the use of concrete and specific detail in the writing of the descriptions.

3. Distribute **Handout 19**. It may be used either as a group or as an individual activity. In part A, students give an overall description of the forest in the first column of the chart. Then they select a representative particular description to list under the second column. In the third column, they determine an overall mood of the chapter. Students should refer to part A to answer the questions in part B.

   Suggested Responses, Part B:

   1. *Students should notice the impassive quality of the forest.*
   2. *Hawthorne describes both the somberness in chapters 16, 17, and 18 and the "flood of sunshine" in chapter 19.*
   3. *Answer should focus on the use of nature in a romance.*
   4. *Encourage students to realize that the associations they bring to their reading vary greatly.*
   5. *It is important that students realize how strongly their associations color their reading.*

4. Distribute **Handout 20**. You may choose to allow groups to complete part A together. One option is to assign each group member a different character for part A. Then each group member is responsible for sharing information about that character with the rest of the group. Another option is to assign each group a character. Then jigsaw the groups and allow students to share information with their new group. A variation on this option is to have groups give oral presentations to the other groups. Allow time for students to answer individually the questions in part B based upon the character assigned in part A.

Suggested Responses, Part B:

1–4. Answers will vary depending on the assigned character.

5. *Characters' moods are reflected in the physical description as well as the affective description of the forest. This is most evident in chapter 19 when there is elation in the characters and a brightening of the forest by the sunlight.*

6. *Hawthorne is playing with emotions in the characters and therefore making the reader more sympathetic toward their plights and sufferings.*

7. *Students might focus on literary associations rather than on personal associations. For example, the Garden of Eden, "Young Goodman Brown," "Sleeping Beauty," and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" all contain associative values with the forest.*

8. *The association with evil and Satan, especially in the description of Dimmesdale as "The Black Man," becomes evident. This is also evident in "Young Goodman Brown."*

9. *Several themes are suggested, among them the use of nature in this novel.*

5. Assign the reading of chapters 20–22 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 8. Remind students to use sticky notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Optional Activity

Draw or create collages of forest scenes, trying to capture the mood described by Hawthorne.

Name_____

Date_____

Setting—Reflection of the Soul

Directions: Read the information about setting, and answer the questions.

At its most basic level, setting includes the time and place(s) during which a story takes place. Some settings are described in meticulous detail, while others are left somewhat vague. Some settings are real, while others are totally imaginary.

In some stories setting is far more than just a backdrop, as it becomes an active part of the conflict and a driving force for the characters. When an author chooses a real historical place and/or time, the setting can evoke powerful responses from readers. Accuracy about details is obviously important, or the reader will quickly lose confidence in both the narrator and the writer. The author of a story set in Australia needs to learn a lot about that continent before beginning to write.

Settings affect the way characters talk, the things they talk about, the places they go, and the things they do. A story set in the 1920s is likely to refer to Prohibition, and one set during World War II might mention rationing. It would not work for a character in a story set in the 1950s to e-mail a friend.

Setting also contributes atmosphere and mood, sometimes in a very powerful way. Although these can be nebulous and hard to pin down, in literature, as in real life, people respond to atmospheres of intrigue, menace, romance, and mystery.

1. Using your own words, describe the importance of setting.

2. How are character and setting related? Why is this important?

3. How are point of view and setting related? Why is this important?

4. Describe a real life place from your experience. Convey the mood of the place through your description.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

This page intentionally left blank.

Name_____

Date_____

Seeing the Forest for the Trees

Directions: Respond to the following questions carefully, describing your experience and association with nature in general and the forest in particular. In writing your descriptions, be as graphic and concrete as possible.

1. Describe a scene in a forest that you remember most vividly from firsthand experience or from viewing a picture. Try to capture the texture of the trees, the forest floor, sounds, time of year, temperature, and lighting.

2. How did your stay in the woods make you feel?

3. How do you feel now, recalling this scene?

4. What does the word *nature* mean to you? Why?

5. How does your feeling about nature in general and about the forest scene you described color your description? Was your experience a positive or negative one? How did this tinge your description?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

The Hawthorne Trees

Part A.

Directions: Reread chapters 16–19 carefully. Pay particular attention to the descriptions of the forest in each chapter. Describe the mood that each chapter presents through its description of the forest.

Chapter	Overall Description of Forest	Particular Description of Some Part of the Forest	Overall Mood Evoked in the Chapter
Chapter 16			
Chapter 17			
Chapter 18			
Chapter 19			

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What overall impression do you get about the forest based on your charting?

2. What differences do you see in the descriptions through the different chapters?

3. What impressions about nature does Hawthorne present with his descriptions of the forest in these chapters?

4. What associations about forests, trees, and nature do you bring to the text? (Base this answer on your work with **Handout 18**.)

5. How have these colored your reading of the chapters? How are they different from Hawthorne's impressions?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Among the Trees

Part A.

Directions: Note the characters' actions and feelings when they are in the forest.

Chapter	Overall Description of Forest	Particular Action of a Character in Forest	Feeling of Character in Forest
Chapter 16			
Chapter 17			
Chapter 18			
Chapter 19			

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What did you notice about the character's actions and feelings while in the forest?

2. What changes take place in the character's feelings? in personality?

3. How are these changes related to or reflected in the description of the forest?

4. What does Hawthorne wish you to know about the character by his presentation in the forest scenes? How do you know this?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

5. How has Hawthorne linked the forest scenes with his characters?

6. How has Hawthorne manipulated your reactions to his characters by placing them in the forest?

7. What are some associations you have with the forest?

8. Of what might Hawthorne's forest be symbolic?

9. In one sentence, describe a possible theme of the novel that was generated from your study of the forest.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 8
The End of the Labyrinth: Chapters 20–22

Objectives

- To analyze the character of Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale prior to his confession
- To analyze how Nathaniel Hawthorne describes the four major characters in order to understand their changes of attitude
- To understand how the forest functions as both a physical setting and a spiritual power in the contrasting marketplace scenes

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson brings the minister and the reader out of the labyrinth that Hawthorne has constructed. In fact, all the characters have descended into their own labyrinths, each emerging with varying results. You may want to recount the mythological legend of the Labyrinth of the Isle of Crete as a prelude to the handouts. The handouts in this lesson set the stage for the final act and curtain of the drama through which Hawthorne has moved his characters in his "morality play."

The handouts can readily be used as groundwork for comparison/contrast or analysis papers.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 21**. Use part A as an in-class group assignment. Brainstorming after completion of part A is useful for giving students a broad range of information. Assign the questions in part B.

   Suggested Responses, Part B:

   1. *Students should select words or phrases from each of the categories.*
   2. *Students should select words or phrases from each of the categories.*
   3. *Dimmesdale is vacillating because of his obligations to himself, to Hester, and to the community.*
   4. *Dimmesdale has changed spiritually, prodded by his sojourn in the forest with Hester and Pearl and his encounters with various townspeople on his way home.*
   5. *The fact that he is able to write his Election Day sermon is one indication.*

2. Distribute **Handout 22**. This handout asks students to look at the changes in characters and setting, again as a prelude to the finale. Part A lends itself to small group work. Assign the questions in part B.

   Suggested Responses, Part B:

   1. *Students should realize that authors use physical descriptions very purposefully to present various aspects of the characters they create.*
   2. *Hester and Pearl are sympathetically presented. Dimmesdale is not. Reactions to the townspeople will vary, but the townspeople are not as harshly presented as in earlier chapters.*
   3. *The contrasts in clothing add to the festive quality of the scene.*
   4. *There is an air of the holiday, which is different from the "holiday" atmosphere in the earlier chapters.*
   5. *The festive mood seems to be underscored.*
   6. *The expectations and the moods are different. There is more of an acceptance of Hester in their midst.*
   7. *They seem to accept each other more.*
   8. *The characters have undergone their own "forest experience," confronting the "sin" that walks among them and responding or not responding to it in their own ways.*

9. *This is a speculative question, but students should guess that the final confession will take place.*

3. Distribute **Handout 23**. Its purpose is for students to see the major differences between the two uses of the marketplace and to realize its use as a symbol. Lead students to comprehend how the forest becomes both a physical presence and a spiritual metaphor or symbol.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Based on their work with **Handout 22** as well as this one, students will see the attitudinal changes reflected in the characters and their reasons for being in the marketplace. Thus, the description of a place is colored and shaped by the characters.*

2. *The characters have all confronted certain issues in their lives and are now coming together for different reasons.*

3. *They have lived with Hester among them and have responded to her many works of mercy and seem to have forgotten her scarlet letter.*

4. a. *Hester—seems to be more at ease with herself, stronger as a person*
   b. *Pearl—little, if any change*
   c. *Dimmesdale—more open with himself about his role in Hester's sin*
   d. *Chillingworth—hardened even more*

5. *Mistress Hibbins; to confront Hester with the darkness of sin; to remind the reader of the evil that is associated with the forest*

6. *a place of evil and possibly a form of redemption*

7. *By having the characters journey through the forest, Hawthorne may be showing that the marketplace no longer suggests the dread and animosity it once did since the major characters have suffered since their earlier experiences in the marketplace.*

4. Assign the reading of chapters 23 and 24 of *The Scarlet Letter* for Lesson 9. Remind students to use sticky notes as they read and to make entries in their reader-response journals.

Name_____

Date_____

Un-Mazing Grace

Part A.

Directions: Reread chapter 20 carefully in order to complete the following chart. Find specific words or phrases that fit the categories listed.

Category	Peace	Terror/Dismay
Natural Setting		
Other Setting Details		
Sense Imagery		
Feelings		
Social Setting		

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What are the strongest image words used to create a sense of peace?

2. What are the strongest image words used to create a sense of dismay or terror?

3. What conclusions can you draw from these contrasting images?

4. What insight into Arthur Dimmesdale do you have at this point?

5. In what ways do the contrasting images seem to indicate that Dimmesdale has had a great burden lifted from his soul?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Setting the Stage

Part A.

Directions: Reread chapters 21 and 22 carefully. Imagine that these chapters are two scenes from a movie. Try to visualize what is going on and what the settings and characters look like. Find words or phrases in these chapters to use in completing the chart.

Character	Physical Description	Clothing Description	Sense Imagery	Feelings
Hester				
Pearl				
Dimmesdale				
Chillingworth				
Other Characters				

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Part B.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. Based on the physical descriptions of the characters, what does Hawthorne want you to think about them?

2. Which characters are sympathetically presented? Which are not? Why is this so?

3. How do the clothing descriptions add to an understanding of the characters and their roles?

4. How does the sense imagery set a tone?

5. What role do the feelings of the characters play in setting a tone?

6. In the opening chapters of the novel, there was a gathering of people, as there is in these two chapters. What is different about the two gatherings?

7. What is different about the characters now as compared with the opening chapters?

8. What has caused this difference?

9. For what do you think Hawthorne is setting the stage? How do you know?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

The Forest and the Marketplace

Directions: Reread the first three chapters and chapters 21 and 22. You will notice that the marketplace is the central setting in these chapters. However, the forest also plays an important role in chapters 21 and 22, so the two settings are merged. Complete the following chart, and answer the questions.

Topic	The Marketplace Chapters 1–3	The Marketplace Chapters 21–22
People Present in Marketplace		
Reasons for Being There		
Attitudes of Those Present		
Major Sense Imagery Used in Description of Market		

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

1. What major differences do you see in the two descriptions of the marketplace?

2. Why have these changes taken place?

3. How are the townspeople different?

4. While the forest is not physically present in the second presentation of the marketplace, it is spiritually present. The four major characters—Hester, Pearl, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth—have all been in the forest at one time or another and for various reasons. How has this changed them?

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

5. What other character present in the marketplace is associated with the forest? Why is the character in the marketplace?

6. What is the spiritual power of the forest?

7. How has the forest affected the second presentation of the marketplace in chapters 21 and 22 and thus affected all those present?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 9
The Finale: Chapters 23–24

Objectives
- To critique the final chapters
- To demonstrate a division of the novel with the scaffold as the dividing symbol
- To establish the theme of isolation

Notes to the Teacher
In this lesson, students look at the final chapters as critics, evaluating certain things that Hawthorne did. They read, and answer questions based on, a commentary describing the importance of the scaffold as a dividing symbol of the novel. They evaluate the purpose of chapter 24 in light of the entire novel.

Procedure
1. Distribute **Handout 24**. Allow some time for small group discussion so that students can respond to the questions. Follow with a class discussion, challenging defense of answers with proof from the novel.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *The scaffold acts as a physical division of the novel and as a symbol. It raises the characters to public view and shame.*
   2. *Challenge students to support their contentions with proof from the novel.*
   3. *Students should use the physical and affective descriptions Hawthorne provides in these chapters.*
   4. *The differences occur in the range of physical deterioration of the scaffold between the first three chapters and the conclusion. There is also the difference detailed in Dimmesdale's nighttime visit to the scaffold.*
   5. *Students should comment on the public shame experienced by those who ascend the scaffold.*

2. Distribute **Handout 25**, and instruct students to answer the questions based on their reading of chapter 23.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *She is despairing.*
   2. *This action tends to isolate her even more.*
   3. a. *Hester—The townspeople move away from her and she is no closer to Pearl.*

      b. *Pearl—Hester shuts her off from asking about Dimmesdale.*

      c. *Dimmesdale—He has effectively withdrawn from his parishioners and, in a sense, is isolated from God.*

      d. *Chillingworth—He no longer has a hold over Dimmesdale and, therefore, has no justification for his efforts.*

   4. *Students should extract specific comments from the novel to support their contentions.*
   5. *Students should come to see how the characters have been isolated throughout the novel. This is an opportunity to present one of the traditional themes of Hawthorne—that of isolation as a serious sin.*

3. Distribute **Handout 26**. Allow time for students to complete it.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. *Responses might indicate the tying up of loose ends.*
   2. *Details will come from the text to describe various viewpoints about Dimmesdale, the rapid deterioration of Chillingworth, the departure of Hester and Pearl, and the return of Hester.*
   3. *Indications of consistency should arise from understanding how the characters acted previously. The deaths of Dimmesdale and Chillingworth culminate the process of deterioration they*

have experienced throughout the novel. Hester and Pearl, in contrast, grow in strength.

4. *Encourage students to be creative when thinking about how they would end the novel.*

Optional Activity

Research the history and use of the scaffold in Puritan towns, and explain why it was located in the marketplace.

Name_____

Date_____

Climb Every Scaffold

Directions: Read the following commentary carefully, and answer the questions that follow.

The Scarlet Letter

> [The novel] is built around the scaffold. At the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story the scaffold is the dominating point. Just as it literally rises above the market-place, so does it structurally rise out of the novel's plan and attribute pattern to it. In chapter 2, after the very short first chapter, Hester is taken up on the scaffold. In chapter 12, the middle chapter (when we omit the concluding chapter), Dimmesdale mounts the scaffold. In chapter 23, the last (omitting the conclusion), Dimmesdale takes Hester and Pearl up there with him. These three incidents are, in every sense, the high points of the novel. The middle chapter, number 12, tends to divide the story into two parts (or three parts, counting this middle chapter). This division is logical when we realize that up to chapter 12, neither the reader nor Chillingworth is certain that Dimmesdale is the father of little Pearl; after chapter 12, there can be no doubt.[1]

1. Based on the commentary, what is the importance of the scaffold in the novel?

2. Is the writer's contention that the scaffold divides the novel into two or three parts a valid one? Why or why not?

[1]Leland Schubert, *Hawthorne, the Artist: Fine-Art Devices in Fiction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 138.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

3. How is the scaffold described in the following chapters?

   a. Chapters 1–3

   b. Chapter 12

   c. Chapter 23

4. What are the differences in these descriptions?

5. What is the symbolic use of the scaffold?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

The Scarlet Letter
Lesson 9
Handout 25

Name_____

Date_____

In Full View

Directions: Answer the following questions about chapter 23.

1. How does Hester respond to Dimmesdale's asking her and Pearl to come up onto the scaffold with him?

2. Why do you think she feels this way?

3. The following characters, rather than uniting, become more isolated. Explain their isolation.

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

4. What specific evidence in the novel reveals their isolation?

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

5. Show how this sense of isolation is a possible theme for the novel.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Conclusion

Directions: Reread chapter 24 carefully before answering the following questions.

1. Some critics say that chapter 23 is the actual end of the novel. If this is so, why do you think Hawthorne wrote chapter 24?

2. How are the following characters described in chapter 24?

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

3. How are these descriptions consistent with what has happened to the characters?

4. If you were writing this novel, how would you end it? Why?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Lesson 10
The Novel as a Whole

Objectives

- To present the results of the study of symbolism
- To present the results of the study of character development
- To view these elements in the context of the complete novel

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson brings together elements of study done while students were reading the novel. In particular, their ongoing work with symbols and character will culminate in this lesson. Create a "community of scholars" who share their findings and insights in a symposium atmosphere. **Handout 29** presents a schema for analyzing the main characters. It is based on the four classical humors. **Handout 30** may be used to create a group paper, an individual paper, or some type of oral presentation. The important point is that all students are exposed to the full range of possibilities.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 27.** Ask students to convene in the groups to which they were assigned to complete **Handout 6** in Lesson 3. Instruct groups to complete the handout and to present their summaries creatively to the class. Students should see how the symbols grow out of the context of the story and the actions of the characters.

2. Distribute **Handout 28**. Ask students to convene in the groups to which they were assigned to complete **Handout 7** in Lesson 3. Instruct groups to complete the handout and to present their information creatively to the class.

3. Distribute **Handout 29**. Have students complete it individually.

   Suggested Responses:

   1. a. *Hester—blood; hot and moist; air*
      b. *Pearl—phlegm; cold and moist; water*
      c. *Dimmesdale—black bile; cold and dry; earth*
      d. *Chillingworth—yellow bile; hot and dry; fire*
   2. *Students should see the actions of Dimmesdale as being aligned closely with the Black Man and that there is a certain quality of melancholia in him. Chillingworth is closely aligned with fire, as shown in the scene in **Handout 11**.*
   3. *Students should see that this may be a valid, although artificial, device. Guide them through the use of this device without going to extremes.*

4. Distribute **Handout 30**. This handout lends itself to small group work. There are six possible themes listed, but other themes of your choice may be added or substituted. Help students to understand that theme is an organic outgrowth of the novel, not an artificial imposition. They should also become aware that theme is not necessarily a story's moral, as in an Aesop fable. Have groups share their work with the rest of the class, or instruct them to do group or individual papers based on their work. These papers can then be shared with the class or collected and photocopied as a collection of critical essays to be distributed.

Name_____

Date_____

The Symbol—A Means of Understanding

Directions: Refer to your work on **Handouts 5** and **6** on order to develop an accurate and concrete summary of your findings.

Assigned Symbol_____

1. What stands out in your mind about the symbol as you follow it throughout the novel? What is the significance of the symbol in relation to the novel?

2. How does the symbol weave itself into the texture of the novel?

3. How does the symbol help you to understand the story?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

4. Is the symbol in any way connected with any of the characters in the novel? What is the connection? How does this connection help you to understand the character?

5. What other conclusions and observations can you make about the symbol?

6. What information and understanding of the novel can you share with the class based on your work with the symbol?

7. What is the best method for presenting this information? Why is this the best way?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Character Analysis

Directions: In **Handout 7**, you were assigned a character to follow throughout your reading of the novel. Review the charts you have kept, and then answer the following questions.

Character Studied _____

1. What are some of the character's significant actions as we follow him or her throughout the novel?

2. What insight do these actions provide into the personality of the character?

3. What are some of the most significant statements made by the character?

4. How do these statements provide insight into the character?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

5. How does the character interact with other characters?

6. In the final analysis, how do you feel about the character and the character's role in the story?

7. What information do you need to present to your classmates so that they will understand what you have learned about this character?

8. What is the best way for you to present this information? Why?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Character Analysis

Directions: Read the following information about the humors, first discussed by Hippocrates. Answer the questions that follow.

Hippocrates, a fourth-century Greek, explained human disease on the basis of four humors. These were *blood,* which originated in the heart; *phlegm*, which originated in the brain; *black bile*, or melancholia, which originated in the spleen; and *yellow bile*, or cholera, which originated in the liver. These humors were associated with other elements as follows:

Blood .....air .....hot and moist

Yellow bile .....fire .....hot and dry

Phlegm .....water .....cold and moist

Black bile .....earth .....cold and dry

This concept of using humors as a basis for understanding disease also became the basis for understanding human personality. This theory continued well into the nineteenth century, so it is likely that Nathaniel Hawthorne was aware of the humors and their relevance to medicine and psychology of his time.

1. Based on this brief description of the four humors and your work with character study, which humors seem to dominate the following characters?

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

2. What actions of the main characters seem to be consistent with their associated humors?

   a. Hester

   b. Pearl

   c. Dimmesdale

   d. Chillingworth

3. Is this a valid device for understanding and describing these characters? Why or why not?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Theme—A Thread That Binds

Directions: A theme of any story is a thread that runs throughout the story. In the case of a novel there may be several themes. Listed below are some of the themes that are commonly discussed in relation to *The Scarlet Letter*. Based on the knowledge you have acquired, work with the theme assigned to your group.

Possible Themes

1. The effects of guilt
2. The effects of sin
3. Isolation and alienation from self and society
4. Intolerance and nonforgiveness
5. Obsession for revenge
6. Suffering, punishment, and redemption

Assigned Theme _____

1. How is this theme demonstrated by the actions of the characters? What character best demonstrates this theme? Why?

2. How do the symbols used in the novel serve to underscore the theme? What symbol best demonstrates this theme? Why?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

3. What aspect of setting best demonstrates the theme? How? Why?

4. How does the point of view allow you to see this as a theme for the novel?

5. How does the structure of the novel, as presented in **Handout 24**, help you to understand this theme?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Essay Topics

Directions: Write a well-organized composition on one of the following topics.

1. Select one of the major characters from *The Scarlet Letter*. Write an article showing how that character's inner state of being or state of mind is reflected in a specific setting of the novel.

2. Select a symbol that proves to be especially significant to understanding the novel. In a paper written for someone who has not yet read the novel, explain how your understanding of the action of the novel or of a particular character is aided by this symbol.

3. Select one of the novel's major characters and explain how the narrator feels about the person. You are to write this paper for a classmate who has read the novel but does not fully understand the importance of point of view. Cite specific examples from the novel to support your position.

4. Critics debate who commits the greater sin: Hester Prynne, Roger Chillingworth, or Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Based on your understanding of the novel, explain your choice of the person who commits the greater sin to a classmate who disagrees. Support your position with specific proof.

5. Write an article for a literary magazine in which you demonstrate the relevance of a work written in the 1800s to today's society. Using *The Scarlet Letter* as a basis for this article, show how it is meaningful to the modern world.

6. Minor characters in a novel can be almost as important as major characters. They may not be as fully drawn, but they contribute to the overall purpose of the story. Select any three minor characters from *The Scarlet Letter*, and present an argument in which you demonstrate their importance for a full understanding of the novel.

7. You are a contemporary of Nathaniel Hawthorne and have just finished reading his new novel, *The Scarlet Letter*. You are also a writer, have had several stories published, and are writing a novel. You do, however, have a problem with the point of view that Hawthorne has chosen for the novel. You also dislike the editorial intrusion of the narrator. Write a letter to Hawthorne explaining how a different point of view could improve the story.

8. One critic has said that Hawthorne seems to write a story as if it were a dream. A classmate disagrees with this. Write a rebuttal to this classmate's position in which you demonstrate that *The Scarlet Letter* has a dreamlike quality. Support your position with proof.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Reading Check: Chapters 1–6

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What is the purpose of chapter 1? Explain.

2. In chapter 2, Nathaniel Hawthorne presents a sampling of the Puritan society. Describe the attitudes of this society toward Hester Prynne and Pearl.

3. In chapter 3, Hester and Pearl stand on the scaffold in the marketplace. How would you describe Hester's attitude as she stands there?

4. In chapter 4, Roger Chillingworth and Hester talk in her prison cell. How would you describe each of them?

   Chillingworth—

   Hester—

5. Explain the importance of Hester's needlework in chapter 5. Why do you think she is not asked to sew for weddings?

6. What are your impressions of Pearl in chapter 6? What leads to these impressions?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Reading Check: Chapters 7–12

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. Explain how the breastplate of the suit of armor and Pearl help to define the symbol of the scarlet "A" in chapter 7.

2. What is the importance of chapter 8 as Nathaniel Hawthorne brings together his four major characters?

3. What changes do you notice in Roger Chillingworth in chapter 9? How have these changes been foreshadowed in previous chapters?

4. How is Chillingworth described in chapter 10? How does Hawthorne create a contrast to describe him?

5. What is the irony of Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale's public confession of sinfulness in chapter 11? How does he take advantage of this?

6. How does the second scaffold scene in chapter 12 help the reader to focus on Dimmesdale? What is the psychological impact of this scene?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Reading Check: Chapters 13–19

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What are two possible reasons for chapter 13?

2. How does Nathaniel Hawthorne present Roger Chillingworth as a character worthy of sympathy as well as condemnation in chapter 14?

3. How does Hawthorne develop Pearl in chapter 15? Why does he have the reader view Pearl through Hester Prynne's eyes?

4. Select two symbols from chapter 16, and explain their significance to the chapter and to the novel.

5. What makes chapter 17 unique regarding the characters of Hester and Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale?

6. What use does Hawthorne make of nature in chapter 18?

7. What is the symbolic significance of Pearl's washing away Dimmesdale's kiss in chapter 19?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Name_____

Date_____

Reading Check: Chapters 20–24

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. In chapter 20, how has Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale changed?

2. In chapter 21, what do you learn about Puritan society? What contrasts does Nathaniel Hawthorne use to portray that society?

3. In chapter 22, what is the importance of focusing on Dimmesdale?

4. In chapter 23, how does the third scaffold scene bring Dimmesdale's struggle to a conclusion?

5. What is the main purpose of chapter 24?

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Answer Key—Reading Checks

Chapters 1–6

1. This chapter is mainly a mood-setter. There are aspects of ugliness, the setting of the prison and cemetery, and the rose bush.
2. The Puritan society condemns Hester without admitting its own sinfulness.
3. Hester is filled with dread, horror, and steadfastness.
4. Chillingworth—lonely, gentle, determined

   Hester—uncaring toward Chillingworth, loving toward Dimmesdale
5. It gives her some contact with the community. She does nothing for weddings since the Puritans would see this as hypocritical in view of her sin.
6. She is uncontrollable, intelligent, emotional, impish. Her actions with other children, her imagination, and the descriptions the narrator provides help form these impressions.

Chapters 7–12

1. The breastplate reflects the scarlet "A" and magnifies it. Pearl is also reflected in the breastplate.
2. He establishes the relationships among the four characters.
3. Chillingworth becomes more evil, as has been hinted at by his relationship with Dimmesdale.
4. Chillingworth is vicious and merciless. Dimmesdale is passive, especially as he sleeps under the doctor's scrutiny.
5. The more he tries to admit his sinfulness, the more the townsfolk admire his holiness. He does not strongly try to dispel this attitude.
6. Dimmesdale stands alone on the scaffold, agonizing over his part in the sin that has condemned Hester to wear the scarlet letter. The reader is shown the depth of Dimmesdale's grief.

Chapters 13–19

1. Possible reasons are to relieve the tension of chapter 12 and to further the development of the characters.
2. Chillingworth's discussion with Hester brings out both feelings.
3. He shows her playing along the seashore, and we see by her games the depth of both her intellect and her imagination. We see her through Hester's eyes in order to understand Hester's concern for her.
4. Answers vary.
5. This is the first time they have been alone together, and we see them as lovers.
6. Nature is in control.
7. She rejects his attempts at closeness.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Chapters 20–24

1. He becomes openly scornful of the Puritan ways and seems to submit to sin.
2. Puritans suppress joy, even on a joyous occasion; their somber dress is contrasted with the bright clothing of the Indians and sailors.
3. He must reveal himself to the townspeople; we see his struggle in deciding to do so.
4. Dimmesdale asks Hester and Pearl to join him on the scaffold. He then admits his role in Hester's sin.
5. The main purpose is to update the reader with the outcome of the characters after the plot ends.

© COPYRIGHT, The Center for Learning. Used with permission. Not for resale.

Bibliography

Bartel, Roland. *Metaphors and Symbols: Forays into Language*. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1983.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. 1850. Reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

McKenzie, Barbara, ed. *The Process of Fiction: Contemporary Stories and Criticism*. 2nd ed. Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

Paolini, Christopher. *Eragon*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

"Rembrandt." *WebMuseum*. 19 September 2002. <http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/rembrandt> (30 May 2006).

Schubert, Leland. *Hawthorne, the Artist: Fine-Art Devices in Fiction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

The Publisher

All instructional materials identified by the TAP® (Teachers/Authors/Publishers) trademark are developed by a national network of 460 teacher-authors, whose collective educational experience distinguishes the publishing objective of The Center for Learning, a nonprofit educational corporation founded in 1970.

Concentrating on values-related disciplines, the Center publishes humanities and religion curriculum units for use in public and private schools and other educational settings. Approximately 600 language arts, social studies, novel/drama, life issues, and faith publications are available.

Publications are regularly evaluated and updated to meet the changing and diverse needs of teachers and students. Teachers may offer suggestions for development of new publications or revisions of existing titles by contacting

The Center for Learning
Administration/Editorial
29313 Clemens Road, Suite 2E
Westlake, OH 44145
(440) 250-9341 • FAX (440) 250-9715

For a free catalog containing order and price information and a descriptive listing of titles, contact

The Center for Learning
Customer Service
590 E. Western Reserve Rd., Unit 10-H
Youngstown, OH 44514
(800) 767-9090 • FAX (888) 767-8080
http://www.centerforlearning.org

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

The Scarlet Letter

ISBN 978-1-56077-749-6

Entire Unit

RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
RI.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
W.11-12.2b	Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
W.11-12.2c	Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
W.11-12.2d	Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

W.11-12.2e	Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
W.11-12.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
SL.11-12.1a	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.11-12.1b	Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
L.11-12.4a	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
L.11-12.4b	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*).
L.11-12.4c	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
L.11-12.5a	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
L.11-12.5b	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Source

Common Core State Standards (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)

The Center for Learning

TAP® Instructional Materials
Teachers/Authors/Publishers

NOVEL/DRAMA

CURRICULUM UNITS

ISBN-13: 978-1-56077-749-6
ISBN-10: 1-56077-749-4

ISBN 978-1-56077-749-6
9 781560 777496