



Rosati-Kain English Department
Class of 2022
American Literature Summer Reading/Writing Assignments

We ask that during the summer you read one novel and do some persuasive/argumentative written work in preparation for your sophomore English class. You are responsible for finding your own copy of the book mentioned below.

1. Please read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne; skip “The Custom House” introduction and begin reading Chapter One. You will take a quiz to test your comprehension of the novel as well as turn in a written assignment to your teacher on the first day of class; in addition, you will discuss this novel at the beginning of the year. To prepare for the discussion, please write an original, well-developed five-paragraph essay on the following topic:

Based upon at least three reasons, choose one of the three main characters in the novel and prove that he or she is the biggest sinner in the story.

Please type and double space your assignment. Your headings, page numbers, and page citations for quotes should be in MLA format. Use fully developed examples to prove your thesis. By the way, on the back of this sheet, you will find some study questions to help you with your reading comprehension; it is not necessary to write out answers for these questions; they are to help guide you through the reading.

2. For your second assignment, you are asked to think of three appropriate things that you would like to receive/do/buy, but you would need to ask your parent(s)/guardian(s) for permission to receive/do/buy them. These items could be material things like new clothes or shoes, or experiences like going to a concert or visiting Six Flags, or even money (a reasonable amount) to purchase an item or to do something like redecorate your room. After you come up with your three specific, appropriate requests, create a list of arguments you think that your parent(s)/guardian(s) might use to reject these requests. For each of the three appropriate requests, list as many “parental/guardian” reasons as you can against purchasing these items.

Please use the MLA format for this assignment.

These two written assignments are due to your teacher on the first day of English class. These papers will not be graded, but they may be used for discussion, evaluation, and as a basis for future assignments.

Chapter One: Describe the Puritan people found in this chapter. What is the setting—time and place—of the novel (beyond the year 1650)?

Chapter Two: Who is the person in front of the crowd? What is sewn onto her dress? What is in her arms?

Chapter Three: Trace the act of “recognition” in this chapter. What is more of Hester’s history? Why is Hester considered to be a criminal? What is a theocracy?

Chapter Four: Explain why Hester is suspicious of Chillingworth. How have Hester and Roger wronged each other? Give two possible reasons why Roger told Hester not to reveal his identity.

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Chapter Five: Why is Hester a “preacher’s symbol”? Why does Hester decide to stay in Boston? Contrast Hester’s and Pearl’s clothes. Explain the changing effects of the “A” on Hester.

Chapter Six: Use the five aspects of personality (physical, mental, social, moral, and emotional) to characterize Pearl.

Chapter Seven: Why is it ironic that Bellingham purchases the gloves from Hester? Should Pearl stay or not stay with her mother?

Chapter Eight: Describe the relationship between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth. Analyze Pearl’s answers to Rev. Wilson’s questions. Contrast Pearl’s interactions with both ministers.

Chapter 9: How is “leech” an appropriate name for Chillingworth? What is the community’s attitude toward him in this chapter? Why does Chillingworth live with Dimmesdale? List any possible causes for Dimmesdale’s failing health.

Chapter 10: Trace changes in Chillingworth’s character. Outline the debate between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth in this chapter; issue: Should all sin be confessed? Identify what Chillingworth sees at the end of this chapter when Dimmesdale sleeps.

Chapter 11: How has Chillingworth and Dimmesdale’s relationship changed? How does Dimmesdale’s congregation view him? How does Dimmesdale attempt to make up for his sin?

Chapter 12: Why does Dimmesdale climb the scaffold at night? Identify the frightening things Dimmesdale sees or hears there. What is the symbolic significance of the red “A” in the sky (note differences in interpretations).

Chapter 13: Debate the following: Has Hester changed for the better or for the worse?

Chapter 14: Is Chillingworth justified in his evil treatment of Dimmesdale? Why does Hester break her promise to Chillingworth about his identity? Interpret Chillingworth’s statement, “let the black flower blossom as it may.”

Chapter 15: Analyze Hester’s feelings toward Chillingworth at his point. Should Hester have lied to Pearl about the meaning of the scarlet letter?

Chapter 16: What is significant about Dimmesdale and Hester meeting in the woods and the sun shining on Pearl but not on Hester? How does Pearl explain the “A”?

Chapter 17: What are Hester’s plans for Dimmesdale’s future?

Chapter 18: Prove that the narrator believes Hester’s plans for Dimmesdale’s future are immoral.

Chapter 19: Why does Pearl have a tantrum by the brook? When has she been contrasted with/ compared to the “A” in the book?

Chapter 20: Debate the following: Will Hester and Dimmesdale live happily ever after?

Chapter 21: What are Hester’s emotions in this chapter? What does Hester learn from the ship’s captain? Why is this significant?

Chapter 22: Describe the change in Dimmesdale in this chapter. Illustrate the foreshadowing of Dimmesdale’s confession.

Chapter 23: Trace the community’s reaction to Dimmesdale’s sermon. Evaluate Dimmesdale’s decision to confess (both the good and the bad).

Chapter 24: Why does Chillingworth die soon after Dimmesdale does? What happens to Pearl? Why does Hester return to Boston? Interpret the epitaph on Hester’s and Dimmesdale’s graves.