

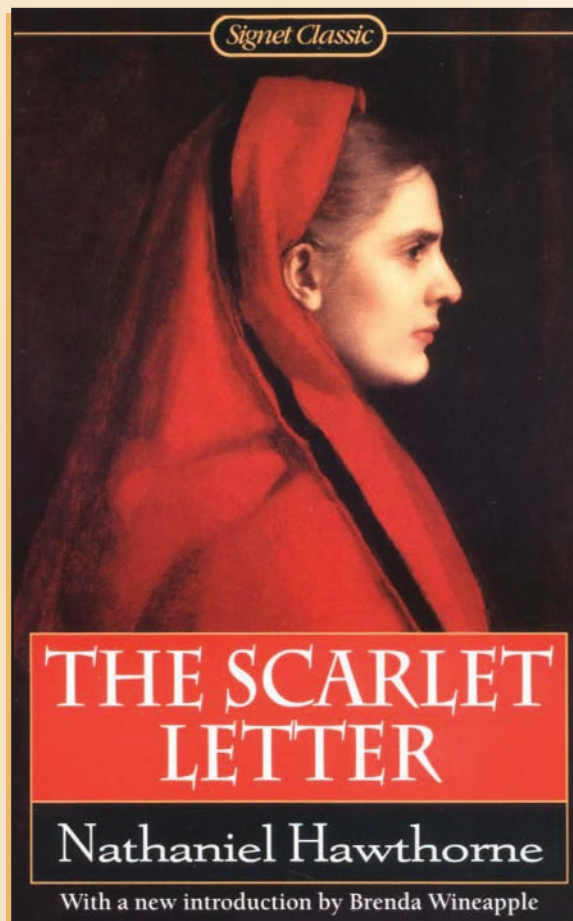
Signet Classic

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE SIGNET CLASSIC EDITION OF

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S

THE SCARLET LETTER

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S E R I E S E D I T O R S :

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INTRODUCTION

Although written almost 150 years ago, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* contains concepts and insights relevant to contemporary readers. The themes of alienation and breaking society's rules are ones to which many teenagers can readily relate. Viewed in this light, the novel can be approached as the story of a woman who let her heart rule her head and suffered the consequences. Hester Prynne's plight can arouse sympathy, Arthur Dimmesdale's hypocrisy can provoke anger, and Roger Chillingworth's evil revenge can elicit disgust among today's high school readers.

This teacher's guide presents a teaching approach to *The Scarlet Letter* that encourages student involvement. Rather than treating *The Scarlet Letter* as an artifact we must study as a cultural obligation, this approach emphasizes the significance this classic literary work holds for the lives of its readers. Many of the activities suggested in this teacher's guide are inductive. They frequently focus primarily upon the individual reader's experience while reading the work and the sharing of these experiences with other readers. The approach incorporates reading, writing, speaking, listening, and creative thinking as they relate to the literary work.

This guide is divided into three sections. The first section offers an overview of the novel which includes a synopsis of the plot, a commentary on the novel, an introduction to Hawthorne's life, a description of the literary scene during Hawthorne's time, and some historical commentary about Puritan New England. This information is provided as a review for the teacher, to aid in answering questions students may ask, and to assist in directing interested students toward further research. The second section contains suggestions for teaching *The Scarlet Letter*. The activities are presented according to effective times to introduce them—either before, during, or after reading the novel. They are also keyed to indicate the ability levels of students for whom they are appropriate.

* means appropriate for all level students

+ means appropriate for non-academic students

means appropriate for all level students

@ means appropriate for academic students

The third section provides ideas for extending students' learning to include current events, literary criticism, and other literary works.

Because reading *The Scarlet Letter* can be difficult for many high school readers, it is important that teachers not expect all students to respond to the novel as literary scholars. Nurturing an interest in the parts of the novel which appeal to students and not dwelling on aspects beyond their comprehension or concern can enhance the reader's relationship with the novel. High school readers who enjoy some aspect of *The Scarlet Letter* may return to it later in life and discover deeper meanings for themselves. The suggestions offered here are designed to optimize the student's enjoyment of the novel. A preliminary suggestion is to have students skip "The Custom House," even though it is subtitled "An Introductory to *The Scarlet Letter*," and proceed directly to reading the novel itself.

OVERVIEW

SYNOPSIS

The story takes place in the Puritan village of Boston, Massachusetts, during the first half of the 17th Century. Several years before the novel begins, Hester Prynne came to the New World to await the arrival of her husband who had business to conclude in Europe. However, Hester's husband was captured by Indians upon his arrival in New England and did not arrive in Boston as Hester expected. While living alone in Boston and believing her husband dead, Hester committed adultery and became pregnant. The village magistrates imprisoned her for this sin and decreed she must wear a scarlet "A" on the bodice of her dress for the rest of her life. While in prison, Hester, highly skilled in needlework, elaborately embroidered the scarlet letter with gold thread.

Before her release from prison, Hester was forced to stand on the public scaffold where all the villagers could see her. As the story opens, Hester is leaving the prison to take her position on the scaffold. She wears the scarlet letter and carries with dignity her three-month-old daughter Pearl. As Hester endures this public disgrace, Roger Chillingworth, an old man new to the village, asks members of the crowd about her and learns as much of her story as is commonly known.

When he asks the identity of the child's father, he discovers Hester has refused to divulge this information. From the balcony overlooking the scaffold, the young Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale also asks for this information and eloquently appeals to Hester to publicly name her partner in sin. She refuses.

Upon her return to prison, Hester is distraught, and Roger Chillingworth, a self-proclaimed physician, comes to calm her and the babe. Chillingworth, who is actually Hester's husband, refuses to publicly acknowledge her and share in her shame. He makes Hester promise to keep his true identity secret and vows to discover and avenge himself on the man who has wronged him.

Hester and Pearl take up residence in a small cottage at the edge of the village. Using her needlework skills, Hester supports herself and Pearl by sewing for the magistrates and wealthy villagers. She also sews for the poor as an act of charity. Although they live humbly, Hester's one extravagance is the way she dresses Pearl. Hester fashions scarlet, elaborately embroidered dresses for Pearl. The townspeople generally shun Hester and her daughter.

Three years pass, and Hester learns the magistrates are considering taking Pearl away from her. Hester passionately implores Governor Bellingham to allow her to keep Pearl, who is her sole joy as well as a constant reminder of her sin. The Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale speaks in behalf of Hester, and Pearl is allowed to remain with her mother. As Hester and Pearl leave the Governor's Mansion, Mistress Hibbins, the Governor's sister, invites Hester to meet the Black Man in the forest. Hester happily declines the offer because she must take care of Pearl.

The story now turns to Roger Chillingworth. Following his secret interview with Hester in prison, Chillingworth becomes a respected member of the community and personal medical advisor to Arthur Dimmesdale, whose health is failing. Chillingworth uses his medical knowledge to treat the minister's physical condition, but suspects some wound or trouble in Dimmesdale's soul is contributing to his declining health. Intent on discovering the truth about Arthur Dimmesdale, Chillingworth one day comes upon the minister in his sleep, pushes aside his shirt, and reads the secret of the minister's heart—the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale is Hester Prynne's partner in adultery and the father of little Pearl. Chillingworth acknowledges Dimmesdale as his enemy and thus makes him the unsuspecting victim of his malevolent revenge.

Although Dimmesdale lacks the courage to confess his sin publicly and risk ruining his reputation as a man of God, he suffers privately. In addition to his constant mental torment, he punishes himself physically with a bloody scourge, fasts to the point of weakness, and keeps nightly vigils. On one of these vigil nights, seven years after Hester stood in solitary shame upon the scaffold, Dimmesdale, thinking the rest of the town is asleep, stands on that same scaffold. However, Hester and Pearl pass the scaffold as they return home from watching at the deathbed of Governor Winthrop. Dimmesdale invites them to ascend the steps and the three stand together on the scaffold. Pearl asks him if they will stand together tomorrow, but Dimmesdale tells her it cannot be. Chillingworth sees the trio on the scaffold. Dimmesdale appeals to Hester for support against the nameless horror he feels for Chillingworth. Hiding his hatred for Dimmesdale, Chillingworth approaches and leads the minister back home.

Hester is shocked by the decay of Dimmesdale's nerve and moral force. She infers Chillingworth to be the insidious cause of his weakened state. Realizing she has allowed this to happen by keeping Chillingworth's identity a secret, Hester resolves to talk to her former husband and try to rescue Dimmesdale from his evil influence. Soon after, Hester approaches Chillingworth and asks him to stop tormenting Dimmesdale. When Chillingworth refuses, she tells her former husband she must reveal the secret of his identity. Chillingworth tells her to do what she will with the minister.

Several days later, Hester intercepts Arthur Dimmesdale as he is walking through the forest. The two retreat to the seclusion of the woods and talk while Pearl plays among the nearby trees. Arthur tells Hester he detests living a lie and is relieved to look into the eyes of one who knows him for what he really is. Hester tells him that Chillingworth also possesses this knowledge, and that he was the husband she betrayed. Dimmesdale is initially horrified, but soon forgives Hester for keeping Chillingworth's secret. Fearing further revenge from Chillingworth, Dimmesdale asks Hester what he should do. She suggests they leave Boston and return to the Old World. Arthur agrees, and they plan to leave aboard the ship currently in the harbor. In their newly discovered freedom, Hester removes the scarlet letter and the cap which binds her hair. Hester wants Arthur to know Pearl and summons her from the trees. But Pearl, distressed by her mother's altered appearance, comes reluctantly. Pearl then bursts into a fit of passion and insists her mother don the letter and cap before she will behave civilly. Hester does this sadly. Dimmesdale gives the child a kiss, which she immediately washes off in the brook.

Upon returning to the village, Hester makes arrangements with the ship's captain for the passage. Arthur is secretly pleased they will not leave until after Election Day when he will have the honor of delivering the Election Sermon. When Election Day arrives, the ship's captain tells Hester that Chillingworth will be traveling with them. Hester cannot warn Dimmesdale of this new development because the Election Procession, of which he is part, is beginning. Reverend Dimmesdale's sermon

is a brilliant triumph, but as the procession is leaving the church, he surprises everyone by inviting Hester and Pearl to ascend the scaffold with him once again, this time in front of the entire village. Chillingworth tries unsuccessfully to dissuade Dimmesdale from this action. Hester supports Arthur, and Pearl holds his hand as the three of them climb onto the scaffold. The scaffold is the only place Roger Chillingworth dares not follow Dimmesdale, and he looks on unhappily as Dimmesdale escapes his revenge.

On the scaffold, Dimmesdale confesses his sin and tears away his shirt to reveal what appears to be a scarlet "A" on his own breast. Chillingworth laments that Dimmesdale has escaped him, and Dimmesdale tells him he too has sinned deeply. Pearl kisses her father's lips and her tears fall on his cheek. A dying man, Dimmesdale bids Hester farewell, but cannot assure her they will meet again in Heaven, reminding her of the gravity of their sin.

Dimmesdale is buried in the village cemetery. Roger Chillingworth dies within the year, leaving Pearl a considerable amount of property. Hester and Pearl leave Boston, but years later, Hester returns and takes up residence in her old cottage where she lives until she dies. She is buried next to Dimmesdale, and although their graves do not touch, they share a common gravestone.

COMMENTARY

Although commonly called a novel, *The Scarlet Letter* is actually a romance. Hawthorne makes this distinction because at the time he was writing, novels were supposed to deal with realistic representations of human experiences or external truths. Romances, on the other hand, were concerned with internal truths, or "truths of the human heart," as Hawthorne states in his Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*. Romances, therefore, allowed the author to deviate from reality in favor of imagination. Thus *The Scarlet Letter* is not an historical novel about Puritan Boston, but a romance set 200 years before Hawthorne's time in which he tells a tale that may have occurred, given some historical facts and many insights into human nature.

Writing a romance about the past gives Hawthorne the freedom to present several versions of what might have happened, depending on whose perspective is presented. This is why after the death of Arthur Dimmesdale, several theories are submitted as to how the scarlet "A" came to be imprinted on his breast. The insignia could have been self-inflicted, or wrought by Chillingworth's magic, or a manifestation of Dimmesdale's remorseful spirit. Hawthorne presents all three theories non-judgementally because what matters most is not how the scarlet letter got there, but that it confirms the truth about Dimmesdale's adulterous heart.

The genre of the romance also allowed Hawthorne to embellish the relationship between humans and nature. For example, the babbling brook in the forest scene appears to sympathize with Hester and Dimmesdale and adds "this other tale to the mystery with which its little heart was already overburdened...." (p. 201). In addition, the "A"-shaped meteor which appears the night Governor Winthrop dies and Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold is interpreted as both a sign from heaven denouncing Dimmesdale as an adulterer and also as standing for "Angel" as the soul of a revered magistrate ascends into heaven, depending upon the orientation of its observer.

HAWTHORNE'S LIFE

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Massachusetts. His father and grandfather were both New England seafarers.

After his father died of yellow fever, Hawthorne (who was four years old), his mother, and sisters lived with his mother's relatives. Following his graduation from Bowdoin College, New Brunswick, Maine, in 1825, Hawthorne returned to Salem where he struggled as a short story writer for 12 years. He published *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. From 1839 to 1841, Hawthorne worked as a measurer in the Boston Custom House. In 1842, he married Sophia Peabody. *The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850, brought him recognition as an author. He published *The House of the Seven Gables* in 1851. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864, at Plymouth, New Hampshire.

HAWTHORNE'S LITERARY TIMES

Hawthorne wrote during the Romantic Period in American literature which lasted from 1830 to 1865. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edgar Allan Poe, and Walt Whitman were his literary contemporaries. *The Scarlet Letter* is considered a piece of American Romantic literature because it is set in a remote past, the Puritan era 200 years prior to Hawthorne's time, and because it deals with the interior psychology of individual characters.

HISTORICAL COMMENTARY

A religious group which migrated from England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in New England in the early 1600s, the Puritans believed in a “pure” interpretation of the Bible which did not include some of the traditional practices of the Church of England. Although the Church did not officially control the State in Puritan settlements, religion and government were closely intertwined. The ministers counseled the magistrates in all affairs concerning the settlement and its citizens. The Puritans had strict rules against the theater, religious music, sensuous poetry, and frivolous dress.

BEFORE READING

To ease students into the world of *The Scarlet Letter*, have them respond orally or in writing to one or two, not all, of the following open-ended questions.

1. Sometimes people hear about a book before actually reading it themselves. Perhaps some of your friends or relatives already have read *The Scarlet Letter*, or maybe you have heard or read about it elsewhere. If so, what have you heard about *The Scarlet Letter*?*
2. Have you ever heard someone talk about being branded with a scarlet letter or call someone a scarlet woman? What might this mean?*
3. What is adultery? Where have you heard the term?*
4. Describe any stories, plays, or novels you have read, either as a child or a teenager, which have to do with the Puritans in New England. # @
5. How would you describe the difference between a “sin of passion” and a “sin of principle?” (Hawthorne mentions these terms on page 190.) @

There are several possible follow-up activities to these responses. They can be used separately or in combination.

1. Students share their responses in small groups.*
2. Students share their responses in a whole class discussion.*
3. The teacher reads student responses and writes back to each student.*

The last two activities allow the teacher to note each student's readiness and/or expectations for the study of *The Scarlet Letter*.

THEMES

Many ideas Hawthorne explores in *The Scarlet Letter* are still important today and frequently recur in other literary works. Acquainting students with themes found in *The Scarlet Letter* before they read the novel can facilitate their engagement with the work. Activities designed to heighten awareness of a specific theme as well as including *The Scarlet Letter* in theme-centered units which include less complex literature, such as literature written for contemporary young adults, can increase student involvement, understanding, and appreciation when they later read the novel. There is a bibliography of literary works grouped by themes found in *The Scarlet Letter* at the end of this guide. The following activities relate to themes in *The Scarlet Letter*.

THEME #1: ALIENATION

Pin a label on each student's back without letting him or her see what is written on it. Most labels say “Community Member” and a few say “Ostracized.” As students mill around the room, they are not allowed to talk to each other. Instead they must use non-verbal language to communicate the social status indicated by the other students' labels. After students have guessed what their individual label says, have the “Ostracized” students discuss what it felt like to be shunned by their classmates.*

1. Have students write about a time when they felt lonely or left out.*

THEME #2: APPEARANCE VERSUS REALITY

1. Have students cite examples, either from their reading or experience, of people who were not really what they seemed to be.*
2. Have students cite examples, perhaps from recent history, of events that were not what they seemed to be. # @

THEME #3: BREAKING SOCIETY'S RULES

1. Have students list the rules society sets concerning sexual relationships. What happens when these rules are broken?*
2. Discuss historical events in which groups of people broke society's rules. What were the outcomes of these events? (Possible events to consider might be draft resistance during the Vietnam War, the Boston Tea Party, anti-nuclear protests, burning the US. flag.)

WHILE READING

Reading parts of the novel aloud can be enjoyable and instructive for students at all levels. An expressive reading of Chapter 1, "The Prison Door," acquaints students with Hawthorne's literary style. Continuing on with Chapter 2, "The Market Place," helps them enter both the external and the internal worlds of Hester Prynne.

LANGUAGE

In *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne tells the story using vocabulary and a writing style familiar to readers in 1850. The speech of the characters in the story, however, is that of Puritans in the early 1600s. Yet to many of contemporary readers, the speech of the Puritans seems more familiar than the "more modern" language of Hawthorne's time. This is because the Puritans left England around the time when the King James Version of the Bible was written. Therefore, their language is similar to Jacobean (Jacobus is the Latin word for James) English of the King James Bible.

Although the Puritan speech may seem familiar to readers of the King James Bible, the overall difficulty of the language in *The Scarlet Letter* frequently frustrates students and hinders their appreciation and enjoyment of the story. Rather than belabor the problem by explicating passages at length, encourage students to become involved with the novel's language through one or more of these activities.

1. Find a line or passage in the King James Version of the Bible that uses words or phrases characteristic of the speech of the characters in the novel. # @
2. Keep a list of interesting, impressive, and/or amusing words, phrases, or passages used by the novel's narrator or characters. Two examples of such passages occur when the townspeople call Hester a "brazen hussy" (p.61) and when the children say:

Behold, verily, there is the woman of the scarlet letter, and, of a truth moreover, there is the likeness of the scarlet letter running along by her side! Come, therefore, and let us fling mud at them! (p. 103)

Words such as "ignominy," "labyrinth," "propensity," and "precipice" may be included also.

Students share their lists in small-group or class discussions, pointing out the appeal of the words, phrases, and passages, and trying to discover what they mean. # @

3. Have students read parts of the novel aloud to appreciate the cadence of Hawthorne's language. Discuss his use of commas and length of sentences. # @
4. Devise a list of Hawthorne's "words of wisdom" which could be discussed or used as topics for writing. Here are possible passages to include in the list:
 - In our nature, however, there is a provision, alike marvelous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pang that rankles after it. (p. 62) @
 - When an uninstructed multitude attempts to see with its eyes, it is exceedingly apt to be deceived. When, however it forms its judgment, as it usually does, on the intuitions of its great and warm heart, the conclusions thus attained are often profound and so unerring, as to possess the character of truths supernaturally revealed. (p. 125) @

- Trusting no man as his friend, he could not recognize his enemy when the latter actually appeared. (p. 128) # @
- To the untrue man, the whole universe is false. (p. 142) # @
- It is remarkable that persons who speculate the most boldly often conform with the most perfect quietude to the external regulations of society. (p. 159) @
- No man for any considerable period can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true. (p. 203)*
- It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry, whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom. (p. 242) # @

CHARACTERS

The major characters in *The Scarlet Letter* may seem difficult to understand, even though, or perhaps because, Hawthorne provides so much information about them. The following activities are suggested as a means to help students discover, as they read, the complex natures, motivations, and relationships between the characters.

1. Keep a journal in which you develop profiles of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl.*
2. Keep a journal in which you respond to the actions, thoughts, and beliefs of one or more of the characters. Explain why you respond as you do. # @
3. Try to figure out who is Pearl's father before Hawthorne actually tells you. Keep a record of your guesses with your reasons.*
4. Keep a journal as if you were one of the main characters. Record your activities, thoughts, and feelings. #

AFTER READING

Before engaging in the discussions or activities that follow, provide students opportunities to respond to the book as a whole.* A class discussion about students' reactions to the novel allows them to express their initial thoughts and feelings about the work. Encouraging students to write their responses and discuss these in small groups before whole class discussions take place may make class discussions less intimidating and projects less anxiety producing. Students understand that their personal responses are valued, and they have had a chance to share and discuss them in small groups without the teacher. An effectively led class discussion about initial reactions to the book can set the stage for subsequent lively and creative expressions based on rich literary transactions with the text. Many of the topics which emerged as first responses during class discussions can be explored through the following suggestions.

SETTING

Hawthorne uses precise language to provide his readers with vivid descriptions depicting the time, place, and mood, or the setting for *The Scarlet Letter*. The images he presents can be visually represented through students' artistic interpretations of the novel's setting. Here are some suggestions for activities designed to enhance student's appreciation of Hawthorne's detailed descriptions of setting.

TIME

The time period in which the novel is set is important. The following activities are designed to acquaint students with the Puritan era in New England.

1. Create a documentary about the Puritans that traces their religious struggle in Europe, migration to the New World, and establishment of Puritan villages throughout New England. # @
2. Select characters from *The Scarlet Letter* to represent the clergy, the magistrates, and the townspeople. Have students assume the identity of these characters and take part in a panel discussion about the religious beliefs, laws, social customs, and attitudes of the Puritans of Boston during the period in which the novel is set. # @

PLACE

Boston and the adjacent forest provide distinctly different physical settings for the novel. Here are some activities designed to heighten the student's sense of place in *The Scarlet Letter*.

1. Design a miniature set for a theatrical performance of *The Scarlet Letter*. Provide rationale for the props and backdrops selected for each scene. + #
2. Based on Hawthorne's written descriptions, draw or paint a scene from *The Scarlet Letter* and explain to your classmates why you choose that particular scene. + @
3. Draw a map of the town and surrounding areas. Include both natural and man-made landmarks important to the story.*

MOOD

Hawthorne cloaks *The Scarlet Letter* in a mood of somberness and foreboding. These activities are designed to help the student understand the relationship between the mood and the story itself.

1. Take a poll in the class to determine which students expected *The Scarlet Letter* to end happily and which students expected it to end unhappily. Ask the respondents to explain their expectations. + #
2. Create or select a piece of music which captures the mood of *The Scarlet Letter*.*
3. Choose the color which reflects the predominant mood of *The Scarlet Letter*. Why is this an appropriate choice? For which scenes might different colors be appropriate? What are those colors and why are they appropriate? + #

SYMBOLISM

1. The town magistrates sentenced Hester to wear the scarlet "A" for the rest of her life so all would recognize her as an adulteress. Over time, however, newcomers did not know the history of Hester's badge and asked its significance. Some townspeople remembered its origin, but others forgot, or transformed its meaning to indicate "able" in deference to Hester's steady performance of tasks benefiting the sick and needy. Just as the scarlet letter took on new significance during Hester's lifetime, so may it hold meanings beyond those associated specifically with Hester's sin. Within the novel, the "A" might be enlarged to embrace all those who, like Hester, have been alienated or who feel alone. It might even be interpreted to symbolize America, a country born in the sin of revolution but which eventually prospered—just like Pearl.

Sometimes rich symbols like Hester's "A" take on contemporary meanings never imagined by the author. Could the scarlet letter "A" have any possible association with AIDS, or drug addicts or abortion? Explore these possible associations and/or think of other meanings the "A" could encompass. @

2. Although the "A" is the most prominent symbol in *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne uses many other symbols throughout the novel. Select one or more of the following symbols and explain its meaning within the context of the story:

black (pp. 116, 129, 132, 168) + #

the forest (pp. 175, 189) # @

the brook (pp. 178) # @

the roses (pp. 56, 112) # @

Indians (pp. 66) # @

Hester's clothing, particularly her formal cap (p. 192) # @

Pearl's clothing (pp. 102-103) # @

Pearl's name (p. 91) @

meteor (p. 149) # @

golden embroidery on the "A" (p. 60) # @

IRONY

Upon reflection it becomes apparent that Hawthorne has included a good bit of irony in *The Scarlet Letter*. The following occurrences might be explored according to their ironic aspects.

1. Roger Chillingworth is punished more than Hester. (p. 138) # @
2. Pearl is dressed as a lady of great wealth, and she eventually becomes a lady of great wealth. (p. 103) #
3. Even though Hester could have left Boston, she chooses to remain in the town where she committed and was punished for her sin. (p. 83) @
4. Pearl's name implies purity and serenity. (p. 91) @
5. The scarlet letter gains Hester respect in the community. (pp. 156-157, 190) # @
6. Dimmesdale was deceived by Chillingworth because "Trusting no man as his friend, he could not recognize his enemy when the latter actually appeared." (p. 128) @

LITERARY ALLUSIONS

The scarlet letter Hester was required to wear on her breast is frequently referred to in other literary works as well as in everyday speech. For example, the lyrics in the song "The Sadder but Wiser Girl" in *The Music Man* say "I hope, I pray for Hester to win just one more 'A.' /The sadder but wiser girl's the girl for me."

In *Where the Kissing Never Stops* by Ron Koertge, Walker's mother sarcastically answers his question about what she told the neighbors about her new job with the following:

Well, I thought of telling them the truth and saying that I was making a hundred dollars a night as an actress and a dancer in a revival of old-time burlesque, but I knew they would sew a scarlet A on my best sweater and dunk me in the river, so I said I was drowning kittens for a dollar an hour and that seemed to satisfy them. (p. 14)

1. Make a list of other literary allusions to the scarlet letter. @
2. Discuss more modern uses of the word scarlet such as Scarlett O'Hara and scarlet woman. # @

EXTENDED LEARNING

1. Write a paragraph about a recent event using Hawthorne's writing style and language. @
2. Explore parallel situations between the Reverend Dimmesdale and contemporary political or religious leaders you may have read about in the news. # @
3. Read some of Hawthorne's other novels (romance) and compare them with *The Scarlet Letter*. @
4. Read novels by Hawthorne's contemporaries and compare them with *The Scarlet Letter*. @
5. Leo Marx has written a Foreword to the Signet Classic edition. Read this and drawing upon some of the ideas which you find particularly helpful and interesting, write an introduction of your own. @
6. Read some literary criticism dealing with *The Scarlet Letter* and write a summary from at least four sources. @
7. Read Richard Armour's parody of *The Scarlet Letter* in *The Classics Reclassified* (McGraw-Hill, 1960) and write your own parody of one of the characters or situations in *The Scarlet Letter*.*

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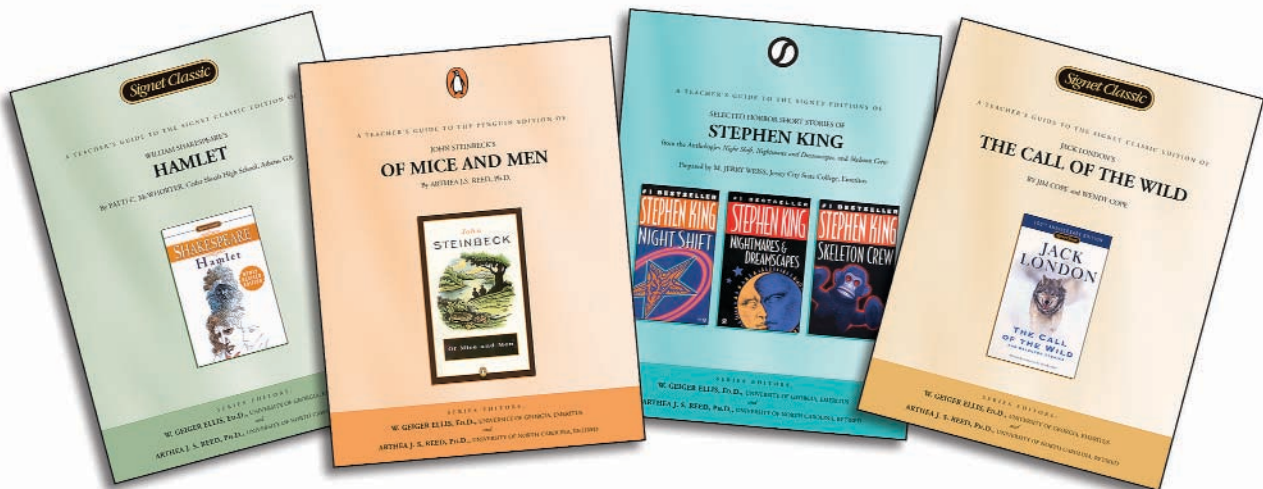
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