



TEACHER'S PET PUBLICATIONS

LITPLAN TEACHER PACK™

for

The Scarlet Letter

based on the book by
Nathaniel Hawthorne

Written by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS - *The Scarlet Letter*

Introduction	5
Unit Objectives	8
Reading Assignment Sheet	9
Unit Outline	10
Study Questions (Short Answer)	13
Quiz/Study Questions (Multiple Choice)	19
Pre-reading Vocabulary Worksheets	29
Lesson One (Introductory Lesson)	47
Nonfiction Assignment Sheet	49
Oral Reading Evaluation Form	51
Writing Assignment 1	53
Writing Assignment 2	66
Writing Assignment 3	72
Writing Evaluation Form	55
Vocabulary Review Activities	57
Extra Writing Assignments/Discussion ?s	59
Unit Review Activities	74
Unit Tests	77
Unit Resource Materials	107
Vocabulary Resource Materials	121

A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE AUTHOR
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

HAWTHORNE, Nathaniel (1804-64). Although his friends and acquaintances included a number of noted transcendental thinkers and writers-such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott-Nathaniel Hawthorne's works show little of the optimism and self-confidence that marked transcendental philosophy. Instead, he preferred themes drawn more from a Puritan preoccupation with guilt and the natural depravity of humans.

Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804, in Salem, Mass. His family, early Puritan settlers in America, had lived in Salem since the 1600s. One of his ancestors may have been a judge in the Salem witchcraft trials. Hawthorne's father, a ship's captain, died when Nathaniel was only 4, and his mother became a virtual recluse. Hawthorne attended Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Me., where he befriended Franklin Pierce, who later became a president of the United States.

Hawthorne decided to become a writer, but until the 1840s he wrote little except for an amateurish novel, 'Fanshawe', published anonymously at his own expense in 1828. Some stories he sold to magazines were published as 'Twice Told Tales' in 1837. The publication cost of the collection was underwritten by another of his college friends, Horatio Bridge. He worked in the Boston Customhouse from 1839 to 1840, after which he spent a few months at Brook Farm, a cooperative agricultural community in West Roxbury, Mass. The Brook Farm experience was later described in 'The Blithedale Romance' (1852).

In 1842 Hawthorne married Sophia Peabody. The young couple spent the next three years in the Old Manse in Concord, where he wrote a second series of 'Twice Told Tales'. 'Mosses from an Old Manse', published in 1846, describes their happy life in Concord. In 1845 Hawthorne returned to Salem and again worked in a customhouse. Relieved of that job in 1849, he found time to write. His best-known work, 'The Scarlet Letter', was published in 1850. Moving from Salem to Lenox, Mass., Hawthorne wrote 'The House of the Seven Gables', which came out the following year. At Lenox he made the acquaintance of Herman Melville, a fellow writer whose novels show Hawthorne's influence. After a short stay in West Newton, Mass., the Hawthornes returned to Concord, where they purchased a house that had belonged to Bronson Alcott, renaming it Wayside.

In 1853 Franklin Pierce became president. He offered Hawthorne a consulship in Liverpool, England, a post that Hawthorne held until 1857. After resigning his position as consul, Hawthorne traveled in Europe, mostly in Italy. In 1860 the Hawthornes returned to their home in Concord. After 'The Marble Faun', published that year, Hawthorne wrote little. He aged rapidly and found it increasingly difficult to write. On May 19, 1864, while traveling with his friend Pierce, Hawthorne died in Plymouth, N.H.

--- Courtesy of Compton's Learning Company

INTRODUCTION - *The Scarlet Letter*

This unit has been designed to develop students' reading, writing, thinking, and language skills through exercises and activities related to *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It includes eighteen lessons, supported by extra resource materials.

The **introductory lesson** introduces students to one main theme of the novel through a group activity. Following the introductory activity, students are given a transition to explain how the activity relates to the book they are about to read. Following the transition, students are given the materials they will be using during the unit. At the end of the lesson, students begin the pre-reading work for the first reading assignment.

The **reading assignments** are approximately thirty pages each; some are a little shorter while others are a little longer. Students have approximately 15 minutes of pre-reading work to do prior to each reading assignment. This pre-reading work involves reviewing the study questions for the assignment and doing some vocabulary work for 8 to 10 vocabulary words they will encounter in their reading.

The **study guide questions** are fact-based questions; students can find the answers to these questions right in the text. These questions come in two formats: short answer or multiple choice. The best use of these materials is probably to use the short answer version of the questions as study guides for students (since answers will be more complete), and to use the multiple choice version for occasional quizzes. If your school has the appropriate machinery, it might be a good idea to make transparencies of your answer keys for the overhead projector.

The **vocabulary work** is intended to enrich students' vocabularies as well as to aid in the students' understanding of the book. Prior to each reading assignment, students will complete a two-part worksheet for approximately 8 to 10 vocabulary words in the upcoming reading assignment. Part I focuses on students' use of general knowledge and contextual clues by giving the sentence in which the word appears in the text. Students are then to write down what they think the words mean based on the words' usage. Part II nails down the definitions of the words by giving students dictionary definitions of the words and having students match the words to the correct definitions based on the words' contextual usage. Students should then have a good understanding of the words when they meet them in the text.

After each reading assignment, students will go back and formulate answers for the study guide questions. Discussion of these questions serves as a **review** of the most important events and ideas presented in the reading assignments.

After students complete reading the work, there is a **vocabulary review** lesson which pulls together all of the fragmented vocabulary lists for the reading assignments and gives students a review of all of the words they have studied.

Following the vocabulary review, a lesson is devoted to the **extra discussion questions/writing assignments**. These questions focus on interpretation, critical analysis and personal response, employing a variety of thinking skills and adding to the students' understanding of the novel.

The **group activity** which follows the discussion questions has students working in small groups to discuss symbolism in the novel. Using the information they have acquired so far through individual work and class discussions, students get together to further examine the text and to brainstorm ideas relating to the symbols used in the novel. The group activity is followed by a **reports and discussion** session in which the groups share their ideas about the symbols with the entire class so the entire class can discuss symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* based on the nucleus of information brought forth by each of the groups.

There are three **writing assignments** in this unit, each with the purpose of informing, persuading, or having students express personal opinions. The first assignment is to persuade: students write a letter to Governor Bellingham persuading him to do what they think should be done about Hester and Pearl. The second assignment is to inform: following the reports and discussion, students write a composition in which they explain symbolism in the book, based on the information given in class and the students' own personal reflections. In the third writing assignment, students express their own opinions about what it would be like to be in jail.

In addition, there is a **nonfiction reading assignment**. Students are required to read a piece of nonfiction related in some way to *The Scarlet Letter* (articles about prejudice or coming of age, trial transcripts, etc.). After reading their nonfiction pieces, students will fill out a worksheet on which they answer questions regarding facts, interpretation, criticism, and personal opinions. During one class period, students make **oral presentations** about the nonfiction pieces they have read. This not only exposes all students to a wealth of information, it also gives students the opportunity to practice **public speaking**.

The **review lesson** pulls together all of the aspects of the unit. The teacher is given four or five choices of activities or games to use which all serve the same basic function of reviewing all of the information presented in the unit.

The **unit test** comes in two formats: all multiple choice-matching-true/false or with a mixture of matching, short answer, multiple choice, and composition. As a convenience, two different tests for each format have been included.

There are additional **support materials** included with this unit. The **extra activities packet** includes suggestions for an in-class library, crossword and word search puzzles related to the novel, and extra vocabulary worksheets. There is a list of **bulletin board ideas** which gives the teacher suggestions for bulletin boards to go along with this unit. In addition, there is a list of **extra class activities** the teacher could choose from to enhance the unit or as a substitution for an exercise the teacher might feel is inappropriate for his/her class. **Answer keys** immediately follow the **reproducible student materials** in the unit. Student materials may be reproduced for use in the teacher's classroom without

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The **level** of this unit can be varied depending upon the criteria on which the individual assignments are graded, the teacher's expectations of his/her students in class discussions, and the formats chosen for the study guides, quizzes and test. If teachers have other ideas/activities they wish to use, they can usually easily be inserted prior to the review lesson.

UNIT OBJECTIVES - *The Scarlet Letter*

1. While reading Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* students will consider the issues of crime and punishment, morality vs. legality, and personal responsibility.
2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the text on four levels: factual, interpretive, critical and personal.
3. Students will define their own viewpoints on the aforementioned themes.
4. Students will gain a better understanding of Puritan theocracy and its effects on ordinary citizens.
5. Students will study the use of symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*.
6. Students will be given the opportunity to practice reading aloud and silently to improve their skills in each area.
7. Students will answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the main events and characters in *The Scarlet Letter* as they relate to the author's theme development.
8. Students will enrich their vocabularies and improve their understanding of the novel through the vocabulary lessons prepared for use in conjunction with the novel.
9. The writing assignments in this unit are geared to several purposes:
 - a. To have students demonstrate their abilities to inform, to persuade, or to express their own personal ideas
Note: Students will demonstrate ability to write effectively to inform by developing and organizing facts to convey information. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to persuade by selecting and organizing relevant information, establishing an argumentative purpose, and by designing an appropriate strategy for an identified audience. Students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively to express personal ideas by selecting a form and its appropriate elements.
 - b. To check the students' reading comprehension
 - c. To make students think about the ideas presented by the novel
 - d. To encourage logical thinking
 - e. To provide an opportunity to practice good grammar and improve students' use of the English language.
10. Students will read aloud, report, and participate in large and small group discussions to improve their public speaking and personal interaction skills.

READING ASSIGNMENT SHEET - *The Scarlet Letter*

Date Assigned	Reading Assignment (Chapters)	Completion Date
	1-4	
	5-7	
	8-10	
	11-13	
	14-17	
	18-21	
	22-24	

UNIT OUTLINE - *The Scarlet Letter*

1 Introduction	2 PVR 1-4	3 Study ?s 1-4 PVR 5-7	4 Study ?s 5-7 Writing Assignment 1 PV 8-10	5 Read 8-10 PVR 11-13
6 Study ?s 8-13 Writing Conf. Working Time PVR 14-17	7 Study ?s 14-17 PVR 18-21	8 Study ?s 18-21 PVR 22-24	9 Study ?s 22-24 Vocabulary	10 Library Assign Discussion ?s
11 Discussion	12 Group Activity	13 Writing Assignment 2	14 Game	15 Nonfiction Discussion
16 Activity: Crime And Punishment	17 Writing Assignment 3	18 Review	19 Test	

Key: P = Preview Study Questions V = Vocabulary Work R = Read

LESSON ONE

Objectives

1. To introduce the unit
2. To distribute books and other related materials

Activity #1

Divide your class into groups of four or five students. Each group's objective is to draw up a list of the ten most important laws/rules of our society (written or just understood). What ten rules, if we follow them, will keep us out of trouble?

When students have finished their work, compile a list of the ten best answers from all of the groups.

Transition: These are things we must do in our society. Let's turn back the hands of time to the 1600's. We're living in Puritan New England. What rules would we have to follow in a Puritan society?

Activity #2

Brainstorm a list as an entire class instead of in groups. Write the list on the board next to the present-day list. Compare and contrast the two lists. Discuss possible punishments today and in Puritan times for each of the various offenses. Note that the Puritans would use more corporal punishment (stocks in the town square, public ridicule, etc.)

Transition: The story we are about to read is about a woman and a man living in Boston in the 1600's who commit the sin of adultery. (Explain what that means if you think your students don't know.) The woman had an illegitimate child and was jailed for the crime/sin of adultery. She refused to tell the name of the man who fathered her child. This is the story of their lives following the woman's jail sentence.

Activity #3

Distribute the materials students will use in this unit. Explain in detail how students are to use these materials.

Study Guides Students should read the study guide questions for each reading assignment prior to beginning the reading assignment to get a feeling for what events and ideas are important in the section they are about to read. After reading the section, students will (as a class or individually) answer the questions to review the important events and ideas from that section of the book. Students should keep the study guides as study materials for the unit test.

Vocabulary Prior to reading a reading assignment, students will do vocabulary work related to the section of the book they are about to read. Following the completion of the reading of the book, there will be a vocabulary review of all the words used in the vocabulary assignments. Students should keep their vocabulary work as study materials for the unit test.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 - *Scarlet Letter*

PROMPT

At this point in your reading, you probably have some opinion about Hester's guilt, her punishment, and whether or not she should be allowed to keep Pearl.

Your assignment is to write a letter to Governor Bellingham regarding your opinion about what he should do about Hester.

PREWRITING

If you have some difficulty forming an opinion, consider some of these issues: Should she keep or give up Pearl? Was making her wear the letter "A" a fair punishment? What punishment would you have thought appropriate for Hester, if any?

DRAFTING

One way to structure your letter would be to make an **introductory paragraph** introducing yourself as a concerned citizen of Boston and stating your point. Follow that with a few paragraphs giving reasons for your point. (Each reason would be a **topic sentence**.) Fill in the paragraphs with **examples** supporting your reasons. Make a **concluding paragraph** thanking the governor for his time and his consideration of your opinions.

PROMPT

When you finish the rough draft of your paper, ask a student who sits near you to read it. After reading your rough draft, he/she should tell you what he/she liked best about your work, which parts were difficult to understand, and ways in which your work could be improved. Reread your paper considering your critic's comments, and make the corrections you think are necessary.

PROOFREADING

Do a final proofreading of your paper double-checking your grammar, spelling, organization, and the clarity of your ideas.