



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE SCARLET LETTER

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Item No. 201604

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I – IV**Characterization and Inference**

Objectives: Understanding character motivation
Drawing inferences

Activity

Chillingworth appears on the day of Hester's ignominy. After his initial shock, he makes a series of decisions about Hester.

Use the attached chart to list the rest of his decisions, decide his probable reasons, and indicate what textual information supports your conclusions about his reasons.

Assume the role of Hester's husband and write a letter to your closest friend, John, in England. The letter should explain your decisions. You may write in Hawthorne's style or not. That choice is up to you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I – IV**Symbolism and Imagery**

Objectives: Recognizing symbolism and imagery
Understanding ideas suggested by symbols and images

Activity

As a Romantic writer, Hawthorne is imaginative in his use of symbols and imagery. His descriptions seldom conform to reality; in fact, some of his images are supernatural.

Complete the following chart with the quotations of supernatural images associated with the scarlet letter and with Chillingworth. At the bottom of the diagram, write the idea that the symbol or imagery suggests.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters VII – VIII**Persuasive Discourse**

Objectives: Understanding persuasive discourse
Formulating a persuasive argument

Activity

Hester is intent on keeping Pearl during Chapters VII and VIII. When she seems to be losing her case, Hester successfully solicits the help of Reverend Dimmesdale. Discuss and decide your view on the issue of Hester keeping Pearl.

Complete the following diagram by responding to Dimmesdale's arguments. Reveal your position and explain your decision.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters IX – XVI**Symbolism and Themes**

Objectives: Inferring the thematic significance of a symbol
Understanding symbolism

Activity

In these chapters, Hawthorne transforms the symbolism of the letter A.

Complete the **Symbolism of the Scarlet Letter chart**. For each quotation you find, discuss the ideas relevant to the symbol. Write the ideas beneath the quotation.

At the bottom of the chart, write a sentence that states the thematic idea that is suggested to you by Hawthorne's transformation of the A. One has been completed for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XIII – XVI**Theme I**

Objectives: Recognizing the function of allusions
Understanding how character traits are revealed

Activity

Hawthorne alludes to Ann Hutchinson twice. In the first occurrence (Chapter I), he says, “As there is fair authority for believing, it [the rosebush] had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison door.” In Chapter XIII, the reader is offered the possibility that Hester “might have come down to us in history, hand in hand with Ann Hutchinson, as the foundress of a religious sect.”

Using the Internet, perform a search for a short biography of Ann Hutchinson. If you do not have Internet access, use your library or appropriate reference materials. After reviewing the information on Ann Hutchinson, list and discuss the ways in which Hester and Ann are alike. Include reasons for Hawthorne’s allusions to Ann.

Divide into groups. Each group should choose one topic from the list below and prepare a short lecture for the class. The lecture should support the topic, using specific details from the text to stress the argument. Focus on evidence that gives validity to the topic.

- Hester is no Ann Hutchinson.
- Hester: Another Ann Hutchinson.
- Hester’s opposition to Puritan ideas.
- Hester: A prophet who speaks God’s truth to the Puritans.
- Hester: A prophet who reveals what will occur as a result of Puritan ideas.
- Hester’s decision to outwardly conform to Puritan society.
- Hester’s private speculation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XIII – XVI**Inference****Objective:** Inferring meaning from a character's behavior**Activity**

Chapter XIII begins with the following:

In her late singular interview with Mr. Dimmesdale, Hester Prynne was shocked at the condition to which she found the clergyman reduced. His nerve seemed absolutely destroyed. His moral force was abased into more than childish weakness. It groveled helpless on the ground, even while his intellectual faculties retained their pristine strength, or had perhaps acquired a morbid energy, which disease only could have given them.

Dimmesdale appeals to Hester for help when, in the previous chapter, he says, "Canst thou do nothing for me?" As a result, Hester must make a decision.

Complete the following chart on Hester's decision-making process by considering her options, decisions, reasoning, and actions. Evaluate her decisions and decide what character traits she displays.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XVII – XX**Generalization and Characterization**

Objectives: Comparing and contrasting characters
Drawing generalizations

Activity

Although both Hester and Dimmesdale suffer alienation as a result of their sin, Hawthorne draws sharp distinctions between them in the way that they view their sin and the effects their sin has on them.

Complete the **Comparison Chart** that follows. Fill in each box with examples and quotations.

At the bottom of the chart, explain who—Hester or Dimmesdale—has the most sensible or sympathetic point of view.

State the thematic idea that results from the contrast between Hester's and Dimmesdale's perception of sin.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XVII – XX**Imagery**

Objectives: Visualizing imagery
Understanding how imagery can be used to create a mood in a literary text

Activity

Hawthorne includes paragraph after paragraph describing the forest, in which he contrasts the gloom and the rays of light. Until Chapter XVIII, Hester is unable to be in the light, but after Dimmesdale agrees to flee with her, Hawthorne describes a flood of sunshine that surrounds her.

Reread the descriptions of the forest and select the paragraph that appeals to you the most.

Illustrate the scene that you select.

Attach a page to your illustration that includes an explanation of the details of the scene. Also include any thematic ideas that the scene suggests to you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Poetry

Objective: Responding to literature

Activity

A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases or quotations found in the text. Go back through the chapter assigned by your teacher and make up a found poem of your own. The poem could tell the reader something about any character’s emotional state, but this is not necessary; it may have direct relevance or be totally unrelated to the action of the story, which is one of the best parts of writing a found poem.

Your poem should be at least 10 lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not deviate from Hawthorne’s actual words. You may add *and*, *a*, *the*, or alter the tense of verbs, if necessary. Move adjectives and adverbs to create different images. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the book. Below is an example taken entirely from “The Custom-House.”

In My Life

My own wife, now grizzly-bearded, a wound—struck from her barbed arrows,
Peril, adversity in my heart with much cruelty and unhappiness. It narrows,
Flinging off happiness like a sick man’s gown—the tenderness of life departed.
I used to observe, here and there, the obscure beginnings that we had started.

Excitement, triumphant and external love, secure and praiseworthy, this long connection,
Soon gone to pleasant afternoons, little matters, sadness, and mere careless affection,
Then it turned aside, the whole affair evading the particular analysis of my mind.
Butcher’s meat, a turkey, a carving knife, and soap-bubble stains, were left behind.

Never murmur at the change inanimate within me; show no surprise
But I will never burrow into the frayed glitter beneath my eyes.