

Instant Short Story Pack



Young Goodman Brown

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1, 2, 4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1, 2, 3, 4, 6



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P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

www.prestwickhouse.com

800.932.4593

ISBN: 978-1-62019-336-5

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Item No. 310573

Objectives:

After completing the activities in this packet, the student will be able to:

- cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text (RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1),
- 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 (RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2),
- analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding...where a story is set...[and]...how the characters are introduced and developed (RL.11-12.3),
- analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4), and
- analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (RL.11-12.6).

Time:

4-5 class periods

Materials:

✓ 1 copy of each handout per student:

- **Handout #1** (4 pages) – Purpose-setting and Motivational Activities
- **Handout #2** (14 pages) – Text of Story
- **Handout #3** (1 page) – Student Questions
- **Handout #4** (12 pages) – Activities and Graphic Organizers

✓ Teacher Answer Guide

Procedure:

1. Reproduce all handouts.
2. Distribute **Handouts #1** and **#2**.
 - Allow students to read the short biography of Hawthorne (approximately 10 minutes).
 - Read and discuss the information about Hawthorne's work and ideas (approximately 20 minutes).
 - Assign the story to be read for homework (might require 2 nights' reading) OR
 - Allow students to read the story in class (might take 2 class periods).
 - Have students perform the two **As you read**...activities.
3. Distribute **Handout #3**.
4. Give students time to read the questions (approximately 5 minutes).
5. Review with students what each question is asking for and what type of information is required for a thorough answer (e.g., references to prior knowledge, quotations from the story, additional reading or research, etc.).
6. Distribute **Handout #4**.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Young Goodman Brown

“Young Goodman Brown” was first published anonymously in *New England Magazine* in April 1835. Hawthorne later included it in his collection *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). When the story first appeared, Hawthorne was still a fairly obscure writer. “Young Goodman Brown,” however, was well received by critics. Herman Melville called the work a “marvel... [as] deep as Dante.” It is now generally regarded as Hawthorne’s best short story and a classic of American fiction.

The story serves almost as a prequel to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) in the sense that it explores the psychological and physical effects of the Puritan belief system. Hawthorne was the great-great-grandson of Justice John Hathorne, the main interrogator during the Salem witch trials, so he was deeply aware of the dark history that forms the background of this story.

A frequent interpretation of “Young Goodman Brown” is that the story is an allegory for the fall of man. Like Adam and Eve in Genesis, Brown and his wife, Faith, are tempted to sin. Facing the weakness of his faith, and ultimately giving in to the temptation, Brown is made aware of the wickedness all around him. Upon realizing that everyone is a sinner, Brown becomes gloomy and distrustful.

This allegorical reading is not, however, the only interpretation of “Young Goodman Brown.” In the climactic scene, Brown encourages his wife to resist. The scene then immediately changes. Just as Brown does not know whether or not Faith sinned, Hawthorne leaves it ambiguous whether or not Brown himself yielded to the temptation. We do not see him participate in the ritual.

If Brown believes himself to be free of guilt while also knowing that he is surrounded by a community of sinners, his lifelong isolation might not be the consequence of guilt but of self-righteousness. It is from his position of moral superiority that he judges Goody Cloyse to be unfit to instruct young children, the minister’s sermons not worth listening to, and his own wife beneath him.

The message of the parable, then, might not be simply that there is no hope because all of humanity is wicked, but that the true sin is in denying one’s nature and sacrificing the benefits and joys provided by being one of a community—flawed though that community might be.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Young Goodman Brown

Lexile Measure: 1210L

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

“Dearest heart,” whispered she, softly, and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed tonight. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she’s afraid of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year.”

“My love and my Faith,” replied young Goodman Brown, “of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ’twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?”

“Then God bless you!” said Faith, with the pink ribbons; “And may you find all well when you come back.”

“Amen!” cried Goodman Brown. “Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

“Poor little Faith!” thought he, for his heart smote him. “What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Young Goodman Brown

STUDENT QUESTIONS:

1. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3) What mood does Hawthorne create to suggest the nature of Goodman Brown's errand? What words and phrases does he use to create this mood?
2. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) Explain Hawthorne's implication about the nature of evil when he has the devil say to Goodman Brown:

I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's War.
3. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1; 11-12.1) Where, according to the story, does evil originate? What clues does Hawthorne provide to support this idea?
4. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6) What is the true nature of the devil's "fit of irrepressible mirth," which is his response to Brown's calling the minister a "good old man"? How does the immediate context of this laughter suggest and support your interpretation?
5. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4; 11-12.4) To what is Hawthorne alluding when he says that, while calling Faith and Brown to participate in the ceremony, the devil's voice is "almost sad...as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race"? What theme does this allusion advance?
6. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2; 11-12.2) In what is most likely the climax of the story, Brown begs Faith to resist the devil; then, in the following paragraph, the narrator says, "Whether Faith obeyed he knew not." Why does Hawthorne allow such uncertainty? What does this ambiguity contribute to the overall meaning of "Young Goodman Brown"?

ACTIVITIES AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Young Goodman Brown*

Question 1: What mood does Hawthorne create to suggest the nature of Goodman Brown’s errand? What words and phrases does he use to create this mood?

STEP 1: Reread the opening paragraphs of the story, and record whatever clues you find that suggest the nature of Brown’s errand. Explain what each clue implies about the errand.

Sentence	Paraphrase or Explanation	Significance or Implication
“A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she’s afraid of herself sometimes.”	Faith is worried. She is afraid of what she might do while her husband embarks on this errand.	Faith believes she is capable of doing harm or wrong. She believes she needs her husband’s supervision to keep her “safe.”
“My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?”		
his heart smote him		
“Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight.”	Faith’s face looked troubled. Brown fears she suspects what he is about to do.	The word ‘warned’ implies danger, harm, or wrongdoing.