

11TH GRADE SUMMER READING

THE SCARLET LETTER

YOUR SUMMER READING TEST WILL BE GIVEN THE SECOND DAY OF CLASS. You may use any outside source to help with the understanding of the novel--Cliff Notes, Spark Notes, Essays-Questions found on the internet about the novel. **HOWEVER, IF YOU RELY ON THESE SOURCES ALONE--you will not do well on your test.** NOTHING will prepare you except for the reading and understanding of the actual BOOK.

The following questions should be helpful in your reading of the novel:

1. The Scarlet Letter deals with several important themes: sin, guilt, and punishment. How does the novel treat each of these? What are the sins, the guilt, the punishment of each of the main characters? Who is the most sinful? The most guilty? The most punished? Be able to reference to the novel in order to prove your point. Note, for example, Dimmesdale's assertion on page 179. How do you feel about his speech? Is it self-serving? Do you agree with him? Is Hester's not telling Dimmesdale who Chillingworth really is and what he intends a sin?
2. (This is a good one to share with your parents) Go beyond the issues of sin, guilt, punishment, presented in the novel to the larger issues in society today. Should all who sin be punished in the same way and to the same degree? Are they? If not, why not? Are some acts sinful when, in other circumstances, those same acts might not be? Give examples.... Are some punishments in society too severe for the sin they attempt to punish? Are some too lenient? Again----give examples.
3. Another theme is revenge. Make a case for Chillingworth to behave as he does. Is he justified? Would Hester feel any occasional desire for Dimmesdale, who has abandoned her and her child?
4. Hawthorne uses a number of symbols throughout the novel. For example in the opening chapter the author announces the first symbol. What is it? For what does it stand? What are other symbols? For what does each stand?
5. How does Hawthorne use the various settings of the novel to enhance its effect?
6. Foreshadowing appears frequently in this novel. Find examples.
7. The last several chapters are especially vivid. Note Hawthorne's descriptive power. Be able to give specific examples.
8. Hawthorne is writing from the perspective of some 220 years, a period in which