

English 11 Honors

Mrs. Sarnelli / Ms. Cady

Summer Requirements

This summer you will read Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel *The Scarlet Letter*. The English Department kindly asks that you refrain from writing in the books. If you prefer to write marginalia as you read, feel free to purchase your own copy of the book. All loaned books must be returned.

Included in most editions of the book is a section entitled "The Custom House." You are NOT required to read this section.

After reading, naturally, you will be asked to write. You will write the following:

Reading Journal

A reading journal is not the same as a writing journal. Your entries will be responses to literature you are reading. Write often, using the following suggestions as a guide: write **at least 12 entries**, selecting from the following suggestions. Think independently and **write imaginatively**. Your ideas, opinions, thoughts and criticisms are important. Your journal grade will be based on the quality of your entries as well as the variety and number that you write. (A journal with 12 quality entries is preferential to a journal with 16 mediocre entries).

1. Write about a memory or experience of your own that is similar to something you read in the book.
2. Make as long a list as possible of questions that arise as you read.
3. Write a reaction to something you have read.
4. Write a brief summary, in plain language, of several pages or a chapter. Do not write a summary each time you write.
5. Become one of the characters and write a letter or poem from that character's point of view.
6. Writing as yourself, interview the main character in the book.
7. Illustrate a scene or draw a map or symbol that reflects your book.
8. Comment on the Hawthorne's technique: his choice of words or the way he tells the story. Do you admire the way he writes? Why or why not? What might you change about it?
9. Before you have finished the book, predict how you think it will end. What makes you think it will end this way?
10. Do you think the title *The Scarlet Letter* is a good one? Why or why not? What other possible titles can you come up with?
11. Imagine you are one of the characters in the story. Write a diary entry that reflects your thoughts and feelings about an event in your life.
12. Discuss a particularly memorable scene from the book and comment on its importance to the story.
13. Write a letter to the Hawthorne that begins, "I have just finished reading *The Scarlet Letter*, and I felt compelled to tell you...."
14. Find and read a review of the book and discuss your reaction to it. Obviously use quotes from the review, and include a copy of the review if possible.
15. Who else should read this book? Why? Who should never read it? Why?
16. Could you relate to any of the characters and/or events in the book? Which and why? Which characters and/or events could you not relate to? Why not?

The Reading Journal is due on the first day of school!

3-page Essay

Your essay must be based on a thesis tied to any one of following topics. Examples and quotes from the novel are required as evidence to support your thesis statement. The essay must follow the standard **MLA Format** (double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, etc.) Please be sure to save this paper on your computer/flashdrive etc. because you will be required to submit it through www.turnitin.com at the beginning of the school year.

Topics:

Describe Chillingworth's "revenge." Why does he choose to torture Dimmesdale and Hester when he could simply reveal that he is Hester's husband? What does this imply about justice? About evil?

Is *The Scarlet Letter* a feminist novel? Had Hester not been a woman, would she have received the same punishment? When Hester "protects" the main male characters, bearing all the blame herself, what is Hawthorne suggesting? How can the reader interpret her actions?

Discuss the function of physical setting in *The Scarlet Letter*. What is the relationship between the book's events and the locations in which these events take place? Do things happen in the forest that could not happen in the town? What about time of day? Does night bring with it a set of rules that differs from those of the daytime?

Explain the prison door and the rosebush, found in chapter 2, in terms of Hester and Pearl. How are they symbolic of either character?

Compare and contrast the way Hester and Dimmesdale deal with their individual guilt. Argue who is more effected by their guilt; Hester or Dimmesdale.

The 3-page Essay is due on the first day of school!

Essay Presentation

Your presentation must highlight the main points of your essay. You may present your essay by way of poster or powerpoint. You must share with the class your thesis statement and the evidence from the book that you chose to support your thesis. Be creative and thoughtful. Presentations should be 5-6 minutes long and will begin the first week of classes.

The Essay Presentations will begin the first week of school!

A few other notes:

Late assignments will not be accepted. These assignments will count as homework (Reading Journal) and test grades (3-page essay, presentation) for Term 1. Also, note that all work turned in must be your own. Copied or plagiarized work will result in an automatic zero.

Feel free to email either Mrs. Sarnelli(asarnelli@agawamteachers.org) or Ms. Cady (scady@agawamteachers.org) during the summer. We will do our best to check our email regularly and will respond as quickly as possible.

Finally, enjoy your summer and enjoy this exceptional work of American literature!