

# STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

## SHORT ANSWER STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS - *The Scarlet Letter*

### Chapters 1-4

1. Identify Hester Prynne, Pearl, Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth.
2. What emblem did Hester have to wear? Why was she sentenced to wear it?
3. What information did Hester refuse to tell the officials and Mr. Dimmesdale?
4. What was the relationship between Hester and Roger Chillingworth?
5. What did Hester promise to Roger Chillingworth?

### Chapters 5-7

1. Hester is released from prison. Why doesn't she run away to a different settlement?
2. How did Hester support herself and Pearl?
3. Describe Pearl.
4. Describe Hester's feelings towards Pearl.
5. Why did Hester go to see Governor Bellingham?
6. What did Hester and Pearl see in the breastplate of the armor? What is the significance of the exaggeration?

### Chapters 8-10

1. Mr. Wilson asks Pearl, "Canst thou tell me, my child, who made thee?" What is Pearl's answer? Why did she say that?
2. What convinced the Governor to let Hester keep Pearl?
3. How did Roger Chillingworth become Dimmesdale's medical advisor?
4. Who is the leech? Why is he called that in the title of the chapter?
5. Why did Mr. Dimmesdale rush from the room to end the conversation he had with Roger Chillingworth?

### Chapters 11-13

1. What does Rev. Dimmesdale's congregation think of him? Why is that ironic?
2. Where did Mr. Dimmesdale go at midnight? Why?
3. What did Pearl ask Mr. Dimmesdale?
4. What "sign" did the meteor make in the sky?
5. Where had Mr. Wilson, Hester, Pearl and Roger Chillingworth been that night, that they would all be walking by the scaffolding at midnight?
6. What was the other view of Hester?

### Chapters 14-17

1. What did Hester tell Roger Chillingworth when they met on the peninsula?
2. Why do Hester and Pearl go to the forest?
3. When Mr. Dimmesdale finds out that Roger Chillingworth is out for revenge, he knows his religious career in Boston will be at an end and his life will be miserable. What does Hester suggest?

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Chapters 18-21

1. What did Hester have to do by the brook before Pearl would come across?
2. Mr. Dimmesdale kissed Pearl. What did she do in response?
3. How did Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale's attitude change after he decided to leave Boston with Hester?

Chapters 22-24

1. What shocking news did the commander of the Bristol ship bring Hester?
2. What did Mr. Dimmesdale tell the people of New England before he died?
3. What did the people see when Mr. Dimmesdale took off his ministerial band?
4. What happens to Hester, Pearl and Roger Chillingworth?

# PREREADING VOCABULARY WORKSHEETS

## VOCABULARY - *The Scarlet Letter*

### Chapters 1-4

#### Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery. . . .
2. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers, and present it to the reader.
3. . . . that the mildest and the severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful.
4. The age had not so much refinement, that any sense of impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale from stepping forth into the public ways. . . .
5. Those who had before known her, . . . were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped.
6. Although, by a seemingly careless arrangement of his heterogeneous garb, he had endeavored to conceal or abate the peculiarity. . . .
7. It irks me, nevertheless, that the partner of her iniquity should not, at least, stand on the scaffold by her side.
8. . . . with the scarlet token of infamy on her breast . . .

Vocabulary Worksheet *Scarlet Letter* Chapters 1-4 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 1. demeanor     | A. lessen; reduce in amount or degree             |
| ___ 2. venerable    | B. unfortunate; ill-omened                        |
| ___ 3. ignominy     | C. manner; way in which a person conducts himself |
| ___ 4. inauspicious | D. evil fame or reputation                        |
| ___ 5. impropriety  | E. worthy of reverence or respect                 |
| ___ 6. abate        | F. something improper, incorrect; not appropriate |
| ___ 7. irks         | G. dishonor; infamy; disgraceful conduct          |
| ___ 8. infamy       | H. annoys   |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 5-7

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. But there is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, . . . .
2. It was as if a new birth . . . had converted the forest-land, still so uncongenial to every other pilgrim and wanderer, into Hester Prynne's wild and dreary, but life-long home.
3. She bore on her breast . . . a specimen of her delicate and imaginative skill, of which the dames of a court might gladly have availed themselves, to add the richer and more spiritual adornment of human ingenuity to their fabrics of silk and gold.
4. . . . even the silence of those with whom she came in contact, implied, and often expressed, that she was banished . . . .
5. . . . it seared Hester's bosom so deeply, that perhaps there was more truth in the rumor than our modern incredulity may be inclined to admit.
6. We have as yet hardly spoken of the infant; that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion.
7. Pearl's aspect was imbued with a spell of infinite variety; in this one child there were many children . . . .
8. It was a look so intelligent, yet inexplicable, so perverse, sometimes so malicious, but generally accompanied by a wild flow of spirits . . . .
9. Another and far more important reason than the delivery of a pair of embroidered gloves impelled Hester, at this time, to seek an interview with a personage of so much power

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 5-7 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| ___ 9. uncongenial   | A. saturated; permeated                         |
| ___ 10. inevitable   | B. disbelief                                    |
| ___ 11. ingenuity    | C. not possible to explain                      |
| ___ 12. implied      | D. not suitable; not agreeable                  |
| ___ 13. incredulity  | E. not able to be understood; mysterious        |
| ___ 14. inscrutable  | F. unavoidable                                  |
| ___ 15. imbued       | G. compelled; urged to action by moral pressure |
| ___ 16. inexplicable | H. to express indirectly; hint; suggest         |
| ___ 17. impelled     | I. inventive skill or imagination; cleverness   |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 8-10

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. . . . this badge hath taught me . . . lessons whereof my child may be the wiser and better, albeit they can profit nothing to myself.
2. The elders, the deacons, the motherly dames, and the young and fair maidens, of Mr. Dimmesdale's flock, were alike importunate that he should make trial of the physician's frankly offered skill. Mr. Dimmesdale gently repelled their entreaties.
3. Roger Chillingworth possessed all, or most, of the attributes above enumerated.
4. . . . it truly seemed that this sagacious, experienced, benevolent old physician . . . was the very man of all mankind to be constantly within reach of his voice.
5. He groped along as stealthily, with as cautious a tread, and as wary an outlook, as a thief entering a chamber where a man lies only half asleep . . . .
6. . . . Mr. Dimmesdale . . . would become vaguely aware that something inimical to his peace had thrust itself into relation with him.
7. Why should not the guilty ones sooner avail themselves of this unutterable solace?

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 8-10 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| __ 18. albeit      | A. wise   |
| __ 19. importunate | B. not conducive; harmful; adverse              |
| __ 20. entreaties  | C. stubbornly persistent in a request or demand |
| __ 21. enumerated  | D. although                                     |
| __ 22. sagacious   | E. make use of; benefit                         |
| __ 23. wary        | F. pleas; petitions; requests                   |
| __ 24. inimical    | G. listed                                       |
| __ 25. avail       | H. cautious                                     |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 11-13

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. There were men, too, of a sturdier texture of mind than his, and endowed with a far greater share of shrewd, hard, iron, or granite understanding, which . . . constitutes a highly respectable, efficacious, and unamiable variety of the clerical species.
2. Had he told his hearers that he was altogether vile, a viler companion of the vilest, the worst of sinners, an abomination, a thing of unimaginable iniquity . . .
3. An unvaried pall of cloud muffled the whole expanse of sky from zenith to horizon.
4. We impute it, therefore, solely to the disease in his own eye and heart . . . .
5. His moral force was abased into more than childish weakness.
6. . . . society was inclined to show its former victim a more benign countenance than she cared to be favored with, or, perchance, than she deserved.
7. Thus, Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clew in the dark labyrinth of mind: now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm.
8. Finally, all other difficulties being obviated, woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change . . . .

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 11-13 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| __ 26. unamiable      | A. lowered in rank; humbled; humiliated     |
| __ 27. iniquity       | B. covering that darkens or obscures        |
| __ 28. pall           | C. not good natured; not agreeable          |
| __ 29. impute         | D. anticipated and disposed of effectively  |
| __ 30. abased         | E. sin; wickedness                          |
| __ 31. benign         | F. to attribute                             |
| __ 32. insurmountable | G. of a kind disposition; gentle or mild    |
| __ 33. obviated       | H. not capable of being climbed or overcome |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 14-17

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. Yea, indeed!--he did not err!--there was a fiend at his elbow!
2. The unfortunate physician . . . lifted his hands with a look of horror, as if he had beheld some frightful shape, which he could not recognize, usurping the place of his own image in a glass.
3. . . . I shall stoop to implore thy mercy.
4. At first, as already told, she had flirted fancifully with her own image in a pool of water, beckoning the phantom forth, and . . . seeking a passage for herself into its sphere of impalpable earth and unattainable sky.
5. "And what reason is that?" asked Hester, half smiling at the absurd incongruity of the child's observation . . . .
6. She possessed affections, too, though hitherto acrid and disagreeable, as are the richest flavors of unripe fruit.
7. Here they sat down on a luxuriant heap of moss, which, at some epoch of the preceding century, had been a gigantic pine . . . .

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 14-17 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions. If there are words for which you cannot figure out the definition by contextual clues and by process of elimination, look them up in a dictionary.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| ___ 34. err         | A. to entreat; plead; beg              |
| ___ 35. usurping    | B. harsh; caustic; bitter              |
| ___ 36. implore     | C. milestone; particular point in time |
| ___ 37. impalpable  | D. make a mistake                      |
| ___ 38. incongruity | E. not matching                        |
| ___ 39. acrid       | F. taking over                         |
| ___ 40. epoch       | G. not able to be touched              |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 18-21

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean.

1. "Hasten, Pearl; or I shall be angry with thee!" cried Hester Prynne, who, however inured to such behavior on the elf-child's part at other seasons, was naturally anxious for a more seemly deportment now.
2. But Pearl, not a whit startled at her mother's threats any more than mollified by her entreaties, now suddenly burst into a fit of passion . . . .
3. . . . the intervening space of a single day had operated on his consciousness like the lapse of years.
4. . . . my good word will go far towards gaining any strange gentleman a fair reception from yonder potentate you wot of!
5. I thank you, and can but requite your good deeds with my prayers.
6. Might there not be an irresistible desire to quaff a last, long, breathless draught of the cup of wormwood and aloes . . . .
7. It might be, on this one day, that there was an expression unseen before, nor, indeed, vivid enough to be detected now; unless some preternaturally gifted observer should have first read the heart, and have afterwards sought a corresponding development in the countenance and mien

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 18-21 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning

Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions. If there are words for which you cannot figure out the definition by contextual clues and by process of elimination, look them up in a dictionary.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 41. inured      | A. repay  |
| ___ 42. intervening | B. calmed; pacified                                     |
| ___ 43. mollified   | C. to have become used to something undesirable         |
| ___ 44. potentate   | D. one's bearing or manner; appearance                  |
| ___ 45. requite     | E. to drink heartily                                    |
| ___ 46. quaff       | F. coming between so as to hinder or modify             |
| ___ 47. mien        | G. monarch; one who holds power or position over others |

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 22-24

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text. Read the sentence. Use any clues you can find in the sentence combined with your prior knowledge, and write what you think the underlined words mean in the space provided.

1. It is not for me to talk lightly of a learned and pious minister of the World, like the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale!
2. There was a sense within her . . . that her whole orb of life, both before and after, was connected with this spot, as with the one point that gave it unity.
3. Hester's strong, calm, steadfastly enduring spirit almost sank, at last, on beholding this dark and grim countenance of an inevitable doom, which . . . showed itself, with an unrelenting smile, right in the midst of their path.
4. These . . . now thronged about Hester Prynne with rude and boorish intrusiveness.
5. . . . through the whole discourse, there had been a certain deep, sad undertone of pathos, which could not be interpreted otherwise than as the natural regret of one soon to pass away.
6. How feeble and pale he looked, amid all his triumph!
7. And now, almost imperceptible as were the latter steps of his progress, he had come opposite the well-remembered and weather-darkened scaffold . . . .
8. Surely, surely, we have ransomed one another, with all this woe!

Vocabulary - *The Scarlet Letter* Chapters 22-24 Continued

Part II: Determining the Meaning -- Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| __ 48. pious         | A. not capable of being discerned by the senses or mind                      |
| __ 49. orb           | B. deep sorrow; grief; misfortune  |
| __ 50. unrelenting   | C. devout; religious   |
| __ 51. intrusiveness | D. surrounded by; in the middle of   |
| __ 52. pathos        | E. a compass of endeavor, influence or activity; sphere                      |
| __ 53. amid          | F. coming in rudely or inappropriately; enter uninvited                      |
| __ 54. imperceptible | G. not diminishing in speed, intensity or effort                             |
| __ 55. woe           | H. a quality in something that arouses feelings of pity, sorrow, or sympathy |