

Obtain a copy of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Read about the Puritan Doctrine (on the next page). Then, closely read the entire novel and respond **in your own handwriting**, legibly and completely, to the following questions. Your responses should include evidence from the text.

1. **Describe the Puritan town as Hawthorne develops it in his novel. Why is this important?**
2. **Discuss Hawthorne's characterization of major characters: Hester, Pearl, Chillingworth, Dimmesdale.**
3. **Discuss the role of the scaffold as it relates to plot and theme.**
4. **Discuss the role of the forest.**
5. **Discuss the allegorical aspects of *The Scarlet Letter*.**

They should be completed for the first day of school. There will be an “in-class” summer reading essay on *The Scarlet Letter*. Clearly we view your ability to express your ideas analytically with clarity as important. Since you are in an AP class, we have high expectations in this regard. Your American Studies teachers will help you with your writing, but you must be willing to WORK.

If you have any questions regarding any of the assignments you may e-mail us at ealexander@hamden.org or mcapone@hamden.org . It would be wise to look things over now, as it is the summer; however, all emails will be checked within a few days.

Here are some links to online versions of *The Scarlet Letter*:

- <http://www.literatureproject.com/scarlet-letter/> or
- <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/33> or
- <https://www.bartleby.com/83/>

Read and understand the nine points below regarding the Puritans. It may help frame your understanding of *The Scarlet Letter*.

The Puritan Doctrine

- 1) Man was inherently (from birth) evil or “naturally depraved” because he was the product of Adam and Eve who had violated God's ordinance in the Garden of Eden.
- 2) As a result, man was born with the original sin of Adam and Eve and he had to spend his whole life attempting to cleanse himself of that sin.
- 3) A few “Elect”, “saved”, “chosen” people were born “pre-destined” to go to heaven and be with God when they died.
- 4) No one knew while he was living, if he were of the “Elect” etc. (even “visible saints”). Therefore, one had to live one’s life properly, penitently in order to live eternally with God when one died.
- 5) Since one had to live one’s life as if one were condemned to hell, the “sinner” (anyone who was without God) had to work and strive at his “calling”(the work for which God had put one on earth). Whether one was a farmer, a tender of hides, a blacksmith, etc., one had to do the best work one could and never be lazy or waste precious time.
- 6) One also had to go to church and listen to God’s emissary on earth, the minister. He would help man in his attempt to cleanse his soul before he died. Still, only in death could one be delivered into eternal life since only then would one be pure enough (without “original sin”) to live with God.
- 7) God was arbitrary. He chose whom He wanted whether man could understand His reason. Therefore, the sinner who had sinned all of his life could be pre-destined to go to heaven just as could the purest maiden.
- 8) God was omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. Because God was so all-powerful, all-knowing, and always present, mere man could never escape His watchfulness or his strength.
- 9) God was wrathful. He would avenge the sinner.