

English 11 Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to American Literature!

During the next year, we will explore the growth and change in American thought over time. We will determine what makes American literature distinctly American; we will examine issues which have developed from America's establishment, growth, and maturation. This course will focus on the major trends in American literature, so you should anticipate reading from a sampling of authors from various time periods.

We will begin our study of American literature with *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. This text is a classic in the American literature canon and many scholars consider it the first "truly American novel." Although Hawthorne wrote the book in the mid-1800s, the themes addressed in the novel are timeless. People have always been concerned with justice, forgiveness, hypocrisy, revenge, and love. In particular, as relates to our study of American literature, Hawthorne's novel will set us on a course of examining the particularly American conflict between individuality and societal expectations.

Your summer assignment is two-fold. First, **read *The Scarlet Letter* and make notes** by jotting down ideas, observations, questions and connections. We would like you to pay particular attention to **events, passages, and ideas related to individuality and/or societal expectations**. You may use sticky notes, note cards, or any written method for your responses to the reading as long as you include the passage and page number in your notations; these notes will be evaluated for quality and depth of thought. You should aim for about fifteen thoughtful notes. For the second part of your summer assignment, you will complete a visual symbol for a character in *The Scarlet Letter*; the details of this assignment are attached.

On the first day of school, we will ask for your book, notes, and symbol assignment.

I look forward to working with you. Enjoy *The Scarlet Letter* and have a great summer!

Mr. Clark

English 11: American Literature
Summer Assignment 2018: Visual Component
Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*

The Scarlet Letter is one of the most widely read and recognized texts in American literature. It has entertained, mystified, and, yes, tormented high school students for generations. For your summer assignment, we do not expect you to decipher all the layers of meaning in Hawthorne's text, but we would like you to look at the letter, or **a letter**, as a literary device that works to develop character and theme. You will see that the Scarlet Letter, "A," has a multidimensional meaning for the novel's protagonist, Hester Prynne. You will prepare a small visual (8 ½ x 11) response to the text (**Important: remember that you will also be taking active reading notes and submitting them in connection with your summer reading assignment; see separate letter and rubric for more details**).

Here are the requirements for this assignment.

1. Select a letter that has a double meaning for an important character in the novel. Think of two adjectives or nouns that begin with this letter and apply to the character. These words must convey a sense of duality, or opposition (though they need not be direct antonyms).
2. Refer to the Literary Terms list that is a part of this assignment. Find a word that applies to the character or to the literature in general.
3. Prepare a visual with the character's name and letter in the center and your choice of significant words and supporting passages on either side and below. See the sample for arrangement guidelines. You may use the letter A, but you may not use the words "adultery/adulterer" or "angelic" with Hester Prynne.
4. If the connection between the passage and the word is obvious, you need not explain it. If a viewer will need the connection interpreted, please provide a short explanation, directly on the visual arrangement.

Hester Prynne



Angelic

“The scarlet letter had the effect of the cross on a nun's bosom. It imparted to the wearer a kind of sacredness which enabled her to walk securely amid all peril”(157).

Adulterer

“The magistrates are God-fearing Gentlemen, but merciful overmuch,-- that is a truth. . .At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead” (49).

Aesthetic

“On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold-thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore. . .” (50).

**Summer Reading Assignment
English 11
Grading Rubric (1)**

Name: _____

**Part 1. Passage Selections and Notes
20 Points**

_____ Exceptional; 15 passages chosen are of major significance to the conflict between individuality and societal expectations; notes are clearly written and reflect higher level thinking

_____ Good; 15 or fewer passages chosen are important to individuality vs. societal expectations conflict; notes adequately convey reader's ideas and provide some material for future discussion

_____ Acceptable; passages chosen are relevant to individuality OR societal expectations; notes convey reader's ideas

_____ Unacceptable; passages chosen are inadequate in number; and/or notes indicate a serious misunderstanding of conflict

**Summer Reading Assignment
English 11
Grading Rubric (2)**

**Part 2. Symbol
30 Points**

Letter symbol is original, creative, and relevant to the character
_____ of 5

Three topics beginning with that letter reveal the oppositional nature of the character and demonstrate a relevant characteristic of Romantic literature
_____ of 5

Includes specific, relevant, and convincing references from *The Scarlet Letter* to support each of the three topics
_____ of 10

Assignment reflects careful attention to detail including attention to instructions and careful proofreading
_____ of 5

_____ of 30
Notes and Comments:

Grade:

Romanticism

“Romantic” literature may only occasionally involve love and romance. The term refers to an artistic and intellectual movement in Europe and America of the late 18th and early 19th centuries that focused on ideas of nature, idealism, individualism, and spirituality. Here are some characteristics of Romantic literature:

adventurous	melancholic
aesthetic	moody
antimaterialistic	mystic
antimechanistic	natural
chivalrous	nature-oriented
confessional	observant
contemplative	optimistic
countrified	passionate
creative	pensive
diverse	precise
dreamlike	primitive
eccentric	revelationary
emotional	revolutionary
enthusiastic	rustic
exotic	sensitive
expansive	sentimental
fanciful	sensuous
free	simple
humanitarian	solitary
idealistic	speculative
idiosyncratic	spiritual
imaginative	supernatural
individualistic	symbolic
interpretive	transcendental
introspective	unconventional
lyric	Utopian
medieval	visionary