***The Scarlet Letter***

Directions: Each week we will meet two times. For each meeting you must read two chapters of *The Scarlet Letter*. You will pick **one**selection of questions to answer for each meeting we have. These reading responses will be your homework grades for this novel. In your responses you **must discuss** at least one of the “Essential Questions” in relation to the reading (be clear in your response as to which “Essential Question you are discussing). The “Essential Questions” will be what we focus on throughout or reading of both *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*, so it’s very important that you are thinking of these issues throughout the readings.

**Essential Questions**

How do varying levels of religious influence on governments dictate moral and ethical law?

How does a society’s definition of “sin” influence/affect the individual?

How do hypocrisy, conformity, vengeance, and forgiveness affect the characters of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible*?

How does one’s reputation affect his behavior and/or thoughts in both texts?

**Writing Prompts**

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| **Chapter** | **Questions** |
| I. *The Prison-Door* | Describe the setting, the people surrounding the prison, and any other notable imagery. Given the setting, what do you think the story will be about? What is the tone? Why do you think that? |
| II. *The Market-Place* | In this chapter, we are first introduced to the symbol “A” that is sewed onto Hester’s clothing. What do you think this “A” symbolizes? What is astonishing about the “A” on her bodice? |
| III. *The Recognition* | Who do you think the stranger is that Hester recognizes in the crowd? Why do you think he cares so much about what is going on in town? |
| IV. *The Interview* | Why does Roger Chillingworth want to know who the father is? Why does Mr. Chillngworth want Hester to keep his identity a secret? |
| V. *Hester at Her Needle* | Why does Hester decide not to leave the colony? Use both textual evidence, as well as your own opinion to answer this question. What would you do if you were in Hester’s shoes? |
| VI. *Pearl* | How does Hester “punish” her daughter? |
| VII. *The Governor’s Hall* | Why does Hester go and visit Governor Bellingham at his home? |
| VIII. *The Elf-child and the Minister* | How much time has passed since the beginning of the novel? How have the characters changed since then? |
| IX. *The Leech* | Who is “the leech” and why? Explain the metaphor implied by that title. |
| X. *The Leech and His Patient* | How do you feel about the relationship between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth? Who, if anyone, does it benefit? |
| XI. *The Interior of a Heart* | Whose heart does this chapter go into the “interior” of? What do you think Dimmesdale’s feelings are towards Hester at this point and how do we know? |
| XII. *The Minister’s Vigil* | Why does the Dimmesdale go back to the platform? What do you think has brought him to this point? |
| XIII. *Another View of Hester* | Hester reflects on the Dimmesdale’s sorrows and guilt in this chapter. Do you think that he has been aptly punished? Whose punishment is worse—Hester’s or Dimmesdale’s? |
| XIV. *Hester and the Physician* | Chillingworth is often compared to dark forces and the “Black Man” in the novel. Do you think that this is a fair depiction of him? Why or why not? |
| XV. *Hester and Pearl* | Especially in this chapter, Pearl seems to know more than what she has been told. What do you think she knows and why do you think she may know it? |
| XVI. *A Forest Walk* | Why does this scene take place in a forest? Do you think that this scene could have taken place in town? Why or why not? |
| XVII. *The Pastor and His Parishioner* | What are the major differences that Hester and Dimmesdale have about the “sin” they have committed? How have both of the characters dealt with it? |
| XVIII. *A Flood of Sunshine* | What is the significance of Hester taking off her symbol for the first time? What does this do to her character, Pearl and Dimmesdale? |
| XIX. *The Child at the Brook-Side* | What are the reactions that Dimmesdale has when he meets Pearl for the first time? How would you react to meeting a new member of your family for the first time? Write about the differences and similarities you would have with Dimmesdale’s reactions. |
| XX. *The Minister in a Maze* | Why do you think this chapter is called “The Minister in a Maze”? What is the “maze”? |
| XXI. *The New England Holiday* | What is going on in the town and how does this affect Pearl and Hester? |
| XXII. *The Procession* | What is the tone and mood of this chapter? How is it different from the rest of the novel? |
| XXIII. *The Revelation of The Scarlet Letter* | What *IS* the revelation of *The Scarlet Letter*? How do you interpret it? How has it changed throughout the course of the novel? |
| XXIV. *Conclusion* | Why does Hester return? What is the "new truth" she represents? |