

**American Literature Summer Reading Assignment**  
***The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

**DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS**

Using any edition of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, complete the full assignment below by the time you report to class for the first day of the school year.

**Please SKIP the introduction titled, "The Custom House."**

**Please BEGIN reading with Chapter 1, "The Prison-Door."**

If you are an auditory learner and need to listen to an audio copy of the book, you may; you will, however, still need to follow along with a print version in order to obtain and to write down the necessary quotes.

**Assignment Part I. Notes on light and darkness**

Write notes—a **brief quote AND commentary**—on the following aspects of light and darkness:

1. When, where, and how does Hawthorne use light and darkness throughout the novel as a tool of contrast?
2. What is Hawthorne's purpose for the use of light? And darkness?
3. What aspects of each major character are revealed by the use of light and darkness?

**Write the page number of each note you take.**

**Assignment Part II. Notes on the letter A (the scarlet letter)**

Take notes—**brief quote AND commentary**—on each of the following aspects of the scarlet A (see below):

1. What does the scarlet A symbolize at the beginning of the novel? This is NOT a simple one-word answer. (Do not just write "adultery." That would be terribly incomplete.) What meaning does the symbol carry?
2. What does the scarlet A symbolize at the end of the novel? (Again, NOT a simple one-word answer.)
3. What does the scarlet A mean to the various characters, including Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl?
4. How do various characters react to the scarlet A?  
What influence (bad or good) does the scarlet A have in the community?

You are NOT limited to these questions, but this should spark your thinking.

**Write the page number of each note you take.**

**You should have several pages of hand-written or typed notes.**