

Welcome to APUSH 2022-2023.

Starting in class tomorrow we begin reading the Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne published 1850. We only have 2 weeks. We will read in small groups and have discussions. Most of the time will be reading, asking questions, discussion, note-taking and quizzes.

This will be one of your crowning high school academic achievements. The effort is worth it and it "ain't gonna be easy." However, it is one of the most academic books high schoolers are expected to read. As AP students you have the skill and the motivation. This will push you into a higher academic stratum. Time and effort and support will make all the difference.

### Historical Analysis

First and foremost, this experience is designed to enrich the academic study of United States history. The Puritans are an essential part of the "American Identity." Some people say, "**The Puritans started everything bad that developed in America.**" Some say, "**The Puritans make up the moral and democratic foundation of the United States and they created the dominate cultural influence of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.**"

The answer, as they say, is a "mixed bag," it's complex. There are no easy and simple explanations for anything as complex as a culture. The Puritans did have slavery, misogyny, classism, intolerance, religious fundamentalism, both positive and negative relations with Native Americans that ended in genocide; the Puritans also created a most sophisticated democratic local government, but with no, or limited rights for all but adult white male, head of households, property owners. They laid the foundation the American Democracy. Their values are still reflected today: honesty, hard work, profit, thrift, ethics in business, equality (all were Christians), property rights, law codes, religion, voting. The dominant protestant influence in America finds their origins in the Puritans.

The Colonists were the true pioneer/homesteaders/colonizers, coming to a "New World" where they could create a true Christian society and prepare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus. They came in small numbers at first 300, then, 20,000 came in 10 years. They flourished and multiplied and moved west. They were the first "Americans." Their culture was replicated, over and over and over all across the United States. This book will help us understand that culture.

#### Instructions:

Take the challenge and do the following:

Read 10 pages a day

**Reading** is an active process, and this is difficult language so you **must interact with the text = annotate and take notes** in the margin

**Underline** if you like but you must have a note in the margin informing why this is important to note.

**Summarize** information, developments, or ideas

**Look up vocabulary** (keep your phone handy but stay off social media and texting friends) the language is very complex, and you will need to look up words you don't know.

**Be Persistent**- set a 30 min goal of reading and understanding as much as possible.

**Think while you read**, use your imagination or ask yourself did you understand the last sentence/paragraph/page/scene/chapter.

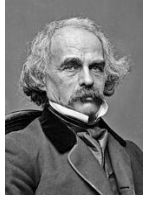
**Look for meaningful details and developments**, each page has some clear message the author wants you to see in your mind's eye.

**Read Out Loud** it will help you process the language. (Read to/with a parent/ friend, but you)

**Ask yourself questions/Ask me questions/Keep a section in notebook for questions**

\*Avoid Cliff Notes and Audio Books if you want to test your abilities. The most important thing is to practice your reading abilities, stamina, and comprehension.\*

## Bio of Hawthorne



### Early Life:

Born 1804 Salem, Massachusetts,



In **Salem** his family traces **family** lineage for **200 years**.

Patriarch was a Pioneer.

Stern, harsh, Puritan, religious zealot, soldier/legislator/ Judge

Was a “persecutor” of Quakers and his son was a persecutor of witches.

They had prominence then over time the family became nobodies.

1813 he was sickly and bedridden when he was young.

He was intensely shy and proud... with a high sense of personal merit, a respect for his ancestors...” (2)

He had a fear of being rejected in society.

Family Life

Dad was a ship captain died when NH was 4yrs

Mom was more isolated

Two sisters who ended up never marrying, “spinsters”

As a child injured and had to be limited to his bed, he read.

Winter and Autumn/Fall daily routine, morning reading or writing, lunch, more reading writing, then a talking with sister about books, then a walk till late...

Summer, early morning swim, day wandering alone by the shore...

Church on Sunday mornings.

He saw himself as completely alone but that was not accurate.

He traveled in New England and West in the summers.

He was a great observer of people... "witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity..." (3)

He did have a interest in solitude. He saw solitude as "an emotional necessity... and a ghostly punishment." (4) "I have been carried apart from the main current of life... I have secluded myself from society... I have made a captive of myself..." (4) The editor credits this time of solitude as his study period, while other writers traveled, were whalers, or crossed the continent, he studied on his own. "It was the Salem years that deepened and individualized his talent." (4)

NH was vastly talented/gifted intelligence.

Other Authors, Emerson, Longfellow, Margaret Fuller...

1821 started 4yrs Bowdoin College (Maine) at Brunswick- near Portland

1825 back in Salem, family owned a stage coach line... NH was interested in writing.

"Salem was a desert where it seemed impossible for any writer to flourish." (1)

Salem was a waterfront mostly shipping.

He started writing and no big success.

Hawthorne was caught in a generational conflict.

Older generation criticized him for being "Idle", for less piety and less productivity, for less business...

"The degenerate fellow might as well been a fiddler." (relatives criticized him for being a writer)

1839 he joined Brook Farm for 3 years. Emmerson, Thoreau, and Longfellow were there?

"Richly meditated fiction"

The editor explains that Hawthorne had this inner monologue constantly. One part was the story teller, the other part was the audience. Thus he was constantly trying to tell the story as clearly as possible, but mostly to himself.

One other fun note the editor mentions is the NH desire to remain isolated but also reveal himself, and he does this through his writing.

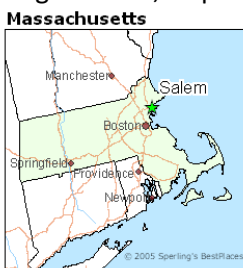
Married Sophia 1842, another shy person. Had 3 children...

1844

Forming ideas for the book

Characters start, theme's present early

Daughter Una, inspired the character of Pearl.



of his life.

NH was very thoughtful of legacy and "place"

**"This long connection of a family with one spot as its place of birth and burial, creates a kindred between the human being and the locality." (301)**

**Personal**

He had nervous energy

He was very emotional

Scarlet Letter is showing the very dark and reflects NH's perspective.

1846-1849 Worked in the Salem Customs House (taxing imported goods)

Chief Executive Officer of the Custom House, political appointee of Pres. Polk (Dem)

The Customs House of Salem, was full of old men with not enough energy or work to do.

Hawthorne was not a politician, the old men were scared of him.

He writes about Salem and New England as a "Soul and spirit of New England... a heroic enterprise..."

New "England Hardihood" motto "I'll try" (314)

### Origin of the book Scarlet Letter

Hawthorne writes that he found the idea for the Scarlet Letter in old papers he found in the Customs House. Documents were from colonial era.

"I chanced to lay my hands on a small package... But the object that most drew my attention, was... of fine red cloth... this rag of scarlet cloth... It was in the capital letter A. 3 1/4" (322)

Mr. Pue had left the package.

Spurred Hawthorne investigate the cloth.

Documents mentioned

**Hester Prynne**, a voluntary nurse... she gained from many people the reverence due to an angel." (324)

"A Do Gooder"

Hester "doing whatever miscellaneous good she might... give advice in all matters especially those of the heart." (324)

1849 he started Scarlet Letter.

Then life happened. Firstly, he was in a political fight over a job. His mom got sick and died. Wife and kids were sick, he wrote during all of that time. He was critical of his own work. (291)

Plan for his book, "Customs House" story/essays/

He lost his job because of an election and the party in power lost so he was a political appointee and lost his job.

He had a crisis of creativity because of the work in the customs house was not meaningful to him.

"Hopeless toil... I had ceased to be a writer... I became a tolerably good surveyor of customs (tax collector) (329)

"It is anything but agreeable to be haunted by suspicion that one's intellect is dwindling away."

He felt that gov jobs are stifling to ambition and self-sufficiency.

Published Scarlet Letter 1850

First mass produced best seller 2500 books in ten days.

## Background to the Puritans:

Protestant Reformation 1533, European Christians that wanted to reform the Roman Catholic church and end up breaking away completely and forming new organizations of Christian religion.

### **Calvinists Protestant sect**

English Calvinists were called **Puritans** (b/c they wanted to purify the Church in England) and the hardcore **Puritans** were called **Separatists**. These Separatists were the second group of English settlers in the New World. First group went to Virginia at Jamestown in 1607.

1620 Mayflower and Plymouth Colony is established. It was created based on highly religious culture and democratic (voting) government. They were a Christian fundamentalist religious group that wanted to create a religious utopian society. Plymouth will always be small population. In 1630 a massive migration of Puritans arrived and created another Puritan colony known as Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1630, massive migration of about 30,000 in ten years.

The setting of Scarlet Letter is about 1675 about 50 years after the first founding of Plymouth and Mass Bay.

This book is an extremely well written and excellent representation of the Puritan community values. We trace the origin of American culture from the Puritans. They were a mixed bag, meaning they were a complex community with both good and bad aspects. "... early severity of the Puritan character..." This book is a criticism of the intolerance of the Puritans. It is a huge challenge to read the language and understanding the significance. I hop you will take up this most rigorous academic challenge.

## Outline of Book

### Chapter 1 "The Prison Door" (337), 1600s.

Near Boston, 1650's

"Steeple-crowned hats"

"Utopia of human virtue and happiness"

"Cemetery and Prison"

**Anne Hutchinson** was held in this prison before she was kicked out of the settlement.

Author is talking directly to us in his narration of first person.

"... A tale of human frailty and sorrow."

### Chapter 2 "The Market Place" (339)

Setting: Boston area, June

Prison Lane

"Grim rigidity"

Whipping post"

#### **Antinomian, Quakers, witches**

"... a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical... whose character... were interfused with severest acts of public discipline..." (340)

Punishments included death

**Women** were prominent spectators at the public disciplinary actions...

Reference to **Queen Elizabeth** as "man-like"

Description of the ladies: "sun shone on broad shoulders and well developed busts, and on round and ruddy cheeks... there was a boldness... of speech among these matrons" (340)

Setting:

1. What are the Women standing around waiting, gossiping talking about?

“Reverend Master Dimmesdale”

The “town-beadle” like the sheriff.

2. Look for examples and be able to describe Hester Prynne’s personality/character
3. Why was the letter A so adorned on Hester’s dress?
4. How do the women react to the adorned letter on Hester’s dress?
5. The Beadle takes Hester to the market place. Why?
6. What was the building structure that “created the promotion of good citizenship” and what did it prevent the convict to do? (346)
7. What does the author mean when he references “Papist... and “Divine Maternity” (346)
8. Describe the person Hester is referencing in the crowd (348-349)

### Chapter 3 The Recognition (349)

Setting: Watching the scaffold in the crowd.

1. Who is the figure in the crowd that Hester notices?
2. What is the significance of the line, “... the red men were not so infrequent visitors...” (349)
3. Describe the man physically, intellectually, and emotionally. (350)
4. “I pray you good Sir, who is this woman and wherefore is she here set up to public shame?” (351)
5. What do we learn from the answer to this question? (351-2)
6. What is Hester’s punishment?
7. Who says “He will be known!” and what is this phrase referring to?
8. What does the author mean by this phrase; “She fled for refuge, as it were, to the public exposure, she dreaded the moment when its protection should be withdrawn from her.” (353)

**Governor Bellingham**

**Reverend John Wilson**, the leading Boston Clergyman makes a speech (355)

**Reverend Wilson** references the **Young Reverend Dimmesdale**.

9. Why does **Bellingham** and **Wilson** want Hester to disclose the name of the father of the child?
10. Describe the Reverend Dimmesdale physically, intellectually, and emotionally. (356)

Dimmesdale speaks (357)

“I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer! Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame, yet better were it so than to hide a guilty heart through life.... Take heed how thou deniest to him—who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it for himself...”

11. What is he saying here?

Reverend Wilson, “Woman, transgress not beyond the limits of heaven’s mercy.” (357)

Hester responds, “Never” (358)

12. Describe the Hester Prynne physically, intellectually, and emotionally. (358-59)

Wilson... “The preacher thundered remorselessly...” and the baby screamed. (359)



#### Chapter 4 “The Interview” (359)

Why did they call a doctor into see Hester in jail? (359)

What does Hester and Chillingworth talk about in jail? (362)

#### Chapter 5 Hester as the Needle (366)

Hester is released from prison.

1. What is she thinking/what will be her role in society?  
She would have to be the very example of immorality in the community. The example of sin for the mothers to teach their children about sin.
2. How does Hester adapt to the new circumstances of her freedom?
3. What other reason does Hester use to justify her staying in Boston?
4. How did Hester support herself and the child?
5. What was the only garment that she was prohibited from making or adorning?
6. How did Hester spend her money?
7. Why did she devote so much energy to the needlework?
8. How did the community abuse/harass Hester? How did Hester respond to the abuse/harassment from the community?
9. Hester learned something, or became more aware of a universal human nature from her ordeal what was it? (375)

### Chapter 6 “Pearl” (376)

1. Why did Hester name the child Pearl?
2. Describe Pearl.
3. Why was Hester fearful? (377)
4. Hester has a delusion on page 385 what was it?
5. Describe Pearl and Hester’s relationship.

### Chapter 7 The Governor’s Hall (387)

1. The author suggests that people in the Puritan community wanted to take Pearl away from Hester. What was their reasoning? (388)
2. How did Pearl respond to kids who were mean to her? (390)

### Chapter 8 The Elf-Child and the Ministers (395)

AT the governor’s mansion, Gov. Bellingham, Rev. Wilson, Rev. Dimmesdale, Chillingworth

1. What do we learn about Chillingworth and Dimmesdale in this section?
2. How does Gov. Bellingham’s behavior reflect the attitudes of a highly religious society in this passage?
3. How does Rev. Wilson test the child regarding her moral/religious tendencies and how does Pearl react/respond? (398)
4. What thoughts do you have regarding Hester’s reaction to the thought of the ministers taking Pearl away from her? (400)



1. How does Dimmesdale respond to Hester? What arguments does he use to persuade the governor?
2. What is Gov. Bellingham’s decision and why?
3. What does Pearl do to Dimmesdale? (403)
4. How does Chillingworth respond? (403)
5. Who is this Mistress Hibbins and what does she want Hester to do? (404)



## Chapter 9 The Leech (404)

Focus is Chillingworth

1. Why doesn't Chillingworth let himself be known to the community? (405)
2. How was Chillingworth perceived by the community?
3. How was Rev. Dimmesdale perceived in the community?
4. Describe Rev. Dimmesdale's health issues.
5. What was Chillingworth's plan?

## Chapter 10 The Leech and His Patient (415)

1. Chillingworth is trying to investigate the something what is it?.
2. What are Dimmesdale and Chillingworth talking about regarding men and confessions at death?
3. Dimmesdale and Chillingworth speak about a weed that Chillingworth found in the cemetery what do they talk about?
4. How does Pearl react when she sees Chillingworth at Dimmesdale's home?
5. Why does Chillingworth celebrate at the end of Chapter 10?

## Chapter 11 "The Interior of a Heart" (425)

1. How did Dimmesdale think about the positive public reputation?
2. What did Dimmesdale have in the secret locked closet and why did he have it?

## Chapter 12 The Minister's Vigil (433)

1. Who does Dimmesdale see while he's on the scaffold?
2. Dimmesdale sees things in the sky what were they?
3. Why is Dimmesdale so upset?