

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

The Scarlet Letter

Chapter 11

Nathaniel Hawthorne · 11 questions with a full answer key and explanations

What's inside

- **11 multiple-choice questions**, including passage analysis with the original text printed above it — the way your English class asks it.
- **Answer key** on its own page so you can take the quiz first.
- **Explanations** for every question, so a wrong answer teaches you something.
- Written from LumLysia's study edition of the book — not scraped summaries.

Took Honors English for the GPA boost, only to get crushed by Shakespearean English? Read the entire book in clear modern English—without missing the tiny details that show up on class quizzes.

Try a book free and high quality quizzes including passage analysis like in your English class.

[Read The Scarlet Letter free at lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

Start reading free →

The first 15 pages of every book are free — no card needed.

The quiz

The Scarlet Letter — Chapter 11. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. What physical action does Mr. Dimmesdale take at the very end of the chapter after a new thought strikes him?

- A. He destroys the scourge locked inside his secret closet before retiring to sleep.
- B. He dresses with meticulous care as if for public worship and slips quietly out into the night.
- C. He confronts Roger Chillingworth in his study to demand an explanation for his malice.
- D. He writes an explicit confession inside his brazen-clasped volume of divinity.

PLOT & EVENT

2. How does the congregation react when Dimmesdale repeatedly declares from the pulpit that he is an abomination and the vilest of sinners?

- A. They demand that the senior elders launch an inquiry into his hidden sins.
- B. They revere him even more deeply, believing his holy soul perceives sin where none exists.
- C. They conclude that his bodily illness has temporarily impaired his reason.
- D. They urge him to step down from the sacred desk until his health is restored.

CHARACTER

3. Why does Dimmesdale force himself to maintain habits of social familiarity with Chillingworth despite feeling a strong instinctive revulsion toward him?

- A. He relies entirely on Chillingworth's medical remedies to maintain his public duties.
- B. He fears exposing his secret if he abruptly breaks their formal living arrangement.
- C. He blames his revulsion on his own diseased heart and suppresses it as a matter of principle.
- D. He hopes Chillingworth will eventually offer him spiritual absolution.

CHARACTER

4. What characterizes Roger Chillingworth's revised method of revenge once he gains insight into the minister's secret?

- A. He plots to publicly expose Dimmesdale before the magistrates of the colony.
- B. He becomes an intimate actor within Dimmesdale's interior world, constantly manipulating his agony and terror.
- C. He quietly hastens the minister's physical demise using toxic herbal concoctions.
- D. He arranges to banish Dimmesdale from the colony alongside Hester Prynne.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. How does Dimmesdale's practice of fasting differ from the typical fasting observed by other pious Puritans?

- A. He abstains only from wine and meat rather than food altogether.
- B. He fasts secretly in darkness instead of participating in communal days of prayer.
- C. He fasts rigorously as an act of penance until he trembles, rather than to prepare for spiritual illumination.
- D. He combines his fasts with open confessions before his clerical brethren.

MICRO-DETAIL

6. During Dimmesdale's nocturnal vigils and hallucinations, what specific gesture does the vision of Hester Prynne make?

- A. She holds up a bloody scourge before his looking-glass.
- B. She points her finger first at the scarlet letter on her bosom and then at Dimmesdale's breast.
- C. She covers little Pearl's eyes to shield her from the minister's sight.
- D. She turns her back on him in imitation of his deceased mother.

MICRO-DETAIL

7. Why do the elderly members of Dimmesdale's flock instruct their children to bury them beside their pastor?

- A. They wish to honor the ancestral lineage of his renowned family.
- B. They believe his bodily suffering guarantees immediate sainthood for neighboring graves.
- C. They expect their frail young pastor to die before them and desire their bones near his holy grave.
- D. They fear evil spirits will disturb their remains unless guarded by his sanctity.

ANALYTICAL

8. What is the central paradox underlying Dimmesdale's extraordinary popularity as a preacher in Chapter 11?

- A. His intellectual scholarship diminishes even as his doctrinal rigor increases.
- B. His hidden burden of sin grants him the empathetic eloquence that convinces his flock of his supreme purity.
- C. His hatred for Chillingworth inspires sermons advocating universal forgiveness.
- D. His physical deterioration causes the elders to grant him higher ecclesiastical authority.

ANALYTICAL

9. How does the narrator describe the psychological and ontological effect of living a hypocritical life on Dimmesdale's sense of reality?

- A. It sharpens his intellect while completely deadening his capacity for religious emotion.
- B. It renders the external universe unsubstantial and reduces the deceptive individual to a mere shadow.
- C. It permanently binds his soul to Catholic penance without possibility of divine mercy.
- D. It causes his physical body to shrivel visibly under God's burning wrath.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

All that they lacked was the gift that descended upon the chosen disciples at Pentecost, in tongues of flame; symbolizing, it would seem, not the power of speech in foreign and unknown languages, but that of addressing the whole human brotherhood in the heart's native language. These fathers, otherwise so apostolic, lacked Heaven's last and rarest attestation of their office, the Tongue of Flame.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

10. In this passage, how does the narrator define the symbolic meaning of the 'Tongue of Flame' that Dimmesdale possesses but other scholarly clergymen lack?

- A. The intellectual mastery of abstruse theological doctrines and ancient texts.
- B. The capacity to communicate divine truths through the emotional language of the human heart.
- C. The miraculous ability to preach fluently in foreign and scriptural languages.
- D. The authoritative power required to rebuke and condemn unrepentant sinners.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

The minister well knew—subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was!—the light in which his vague confession would be viewed. He had striven to put a cheat upon himself by making the avowal of a guilty conscience, but had gained only one other sin, and a self-acknowledged shame, without the momentary relief of being self-deceived. He had spoken the very truth, and transformed it into the veriest falsehood.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

11. According to the passage, why does Dimmesdale regard his vague pulpit confessions as an additional sin rather than an act of genuine penance?

- A.** He deliberately uses ambiguous phrasing to misdirect the town magistrates.
- B.** He knows his vague words will be taken as humble saintliness, effectively transforming truth into falsehood.
- C.** He understands that oral confessions are invalid without the rites of the Roman church.
- D.** He realizes he has omitted the names of his co-conspirators from the confession.

Answer key

Check your answers here, then read the explanations on the next page.

1. B	2. B	3. C	4. B	5. C
6. B	7. C	8. B	9. B	10. B
11. B				

Scored it? The same quizzes are built into the LumLysia reader, chapter by chapter, with instant feedback and a practice or test mode.

Answers explained

Why the right answer is right — and what the question is really testing.

1. B. He dresses with meticulous care as if for public worship and slips quietly out into the night.

At the conclusion of Chapter 11, Dimmesdale is struck by an idea, attires himself carefully as though he were preparing for church, and steals quietly down the stairs into the night.

2. B. They revere him even more deeply, believing his holy soul perceives sin where none exists.

Rather than realizing his actual guilt, the congregation interprets his declarations of wickedness as proof of extreme sanctity, reasoning that if such a holy man sees sin in himself, they must be far worse.

3. C. He blames his revulsion on his own diseased heart and suppresses it as a matter of principle.

Because Dimmesdale cannot find an objective reason to distrust Chillingworth, he assumes his instinctive antipathy stems from his own corrupt and diseased heart, and thus forces himself to ignore it.

4. B. He becomes an intimate actor within Dimmesdale's interior world, constantly manipulating his agony and terror.

Chillingworth does not settle for a distant or public vengeance; he inserts himself directly into Dimmesdale's psyche to manipulate his guilt, fear, and suffering from within.

5. C. He fasts rigorously as an act of penance until he trembles, rather than to prepare for spiritual illumination.

The text notes that while other Puritans fast to purify the body for spiritual illumination, Dimmesdale fasts severely until his knees tremble strictly as a form of self-punishment (penance).

6. B. She points her finger first at the scarlet letter on her bosom and then at Dimmesdale's breast.

In the spectral visions that haunt Dimmesdale's vigils, Hester appears leading Pearl and explicitly points from the scarlet letter on her own chest to Dimmesdale's breast.

7. C. They expect their frail young pastor to die before them and desire their bones near his holy grave.

The elderly parishioners observe how feeble Dimmesdale is compared to their rugged infirmity, assume he will pass away before them, and ask to have their remains laid next to his.

8. B. His hidden burden of sin grants him the empathetic eloquence that convinces his flock of his supreme purity.

The chapter highlights the irony that Dimmesdale's secret guilt and anguish—his 'burden of crime'—allow his heart to vibrate in sympathy with sinful humanity, producing the very eloquence that makes the town worship him as a saint.

9. B. It renders the external universe unsubstantial and reduces the deceptive individual to a mere shadow.

Hawthorne explains that falsehood drains the substance out of the world for the untrue man; the universe becomes impalpable, and the deceitful person shrinks into a shadow whose only reality is internal anguish.

10. B. The capacity to communicate divine truths through the emotional language of the human heart.

The passage explains that the 'Tongue of Flame' symbolizes the power of addressing humanity in 'the heart's native language,' enabling a preacher to connect emotionally with ordinary human experience.

11. B. He knows his vague words will be taken as humble saintliness, effectively transforming truth into falsehood.

Dimmesdale recognizes that by confessing his general sinfulness without stating his specific crime, his audience will only revere him more; thus, he uses literal truth to achieve a deceitful result, adding to his guilt.

Keep going — the whole book, in modern English

Took Honors English for the GPA boost, only to get crushed by Shakespearean English? Read the entire book in clear modern English—without missing the tiny details that show up on class quizzes.

Try a book free and high quality quizzes including passage analysis like in your English class.

[Read The Scarlet Letter free at lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

What a LumLysia membership includes

- The complete text side by side with a clear modern translation — or modern only, your choice.
- Literary lens annotations already done for you (feminist, psychoanalytic, historical, formalist, reader-response).
- Chapter recaps and timelines so you never lose the thread.
- Quizzes for every chapter, including passage analysis, with practice and test modes.
- Quote finder, essay helper and a chat tutor that only talks about your book.

Free: the first 15 pages of every book — no card needed.

\$9.99 / month — every book, every tool, cancel anytime.

\$24.99 / semester (4 months) — the cheaper way if your class runs all term. Students with a school email get 20% off the semester pass.

Try a book free →

[Browse every book in the library · lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

Share this PDF with your class — it's free.