

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

The Scarlet Letter

Chapter 16

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 16. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. Where had Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale traveled before Hester sought to intercept him on his return path?

- A. To visit the Apostle Eliot among his Indian converts
- B. To attend an ecclesiastical council in a neighboring town
- C. To minister to a dying magistrate in the outer settlement
- D. To seek solitude and fasting in the deep wilderness

PLOT & EVENT

2. What does Hester finally tell Pearl when the child persistently questions her about the Black Man?

- A. She met him once in her life, and the scarlet letter is his mark.
- B. The story is merely an idle superstition told by foolish old women.
- C. The Black Man only visits those who wander into the forest at midnight.
- D. She has never seen him, but knows he leaves his mark upon sinners.

CHARACTER

3. Why does Hester choose to meet Dimmesdale in the open forest rather than in his study?

- A. She fears Chillingworth's interference and feels they both need the open expanse to speak freely.
- B. She knows the town magistrates have strictly forbidden her from entering the pastor's residence.
- C. She believes the clergyman's reputation would be ruined if anyone saw a woman entering his home.
- D. She intends to convince him to flee immediately into the wilderness without returning to Boston.

CHARACTER

4. According to the narrator, what missing element in Pearl's character prevents her from being fully humanized?

- A. A deep grief that would touch her nature and awaken sympathy
- B. A formal religious education under the guidance of the church
- C. The love and protective companionship of an earthly father
- D. A natural sense of fear and respect for Puritan community laws

MICRO-DETAIL

5. From whom did Pearl hear the tale about the Black Man, his iron-clasped book, and his mark?

- A. An old dame by the chimney-corner in a house where Hester watched
- B. Mistress Hibbins during a chance encounter in the marketplace
- C. A group of Puritan children playing near the edge of the woods
- D. A visiting sea captain who docked in the harbor the previous week

MICRO-DETAIL

6. After choosing to ignore the mournful brook, what wildflowers does Pearl gather?

- A. Violets, wood-anemones, and scarlet columbines
- B. Wild roses, mountain laurels, and buttercups
- C. Daffodils, white lilies, and purple clover
- D. Daisies, yellow primroses, and hemlock buds

MICRO-DETAIL

7. What physical support is Dimmesdale using as he walks alone along the secluded forest path?

- A. A wooden staff he cut by the roadside
- B. A carved cane given to him by the elders
- C. A heavy iron-tipped walking stick
- D. A birch branch stripped of its bark

ANALYTICAL

8. How does the narrator use the physical description of the dense forest to reflect Hester's psychological state?

- A. Its narrow, dark confinement represents the moral wilderness in which she has wandered.
- B. Its tangled briars symbolize the strict, unyielding laws of the Puritan magistrate court.
- C. Its absolute stillness reflects the peaceful resignation she has achieved through penance.
- D. Its impenetrable canopy represents the complete loss of her religious faith and hope.

ANALYTICAL

9. In what significant way does Pearl differ from the melancholy forest brook despite their similar origins?

- A. Pearl retains a sparkling, energetic vivacity rather than yielding to somber murmuring.
- B. Pearl refuses to enter the shade while the brook remains entirely in the darkness.
- C. Pearl seeks human companionship whereas the brook hides beneath fallen timber.
- D. Pearl openly confesses her grief while the brook conceals its sorrows under stones.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

The sportive sunlight—feebly sportive, at best, in the predominant pensiveness of the day and scene—withdrew itself as they came nigh, and left the spots where it had danced the drearier, because they had hoped to find them bright.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

10. What does the sunlight's retreat before Hester symbolize in this passage?

- A. Her lingering burden of guilt and exclusion from innocent grace
- B. Nature's active hostility and vengeance toward her transgression
- C. Her conscious preference for secrecy, shadow, and moral isolation
- D. The approaching darkness of an impending physical storm in the woods

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

There was a listlessness in his gait; as if he saw no reason for taking one step farther, nor felt any desire to do so, but would have been glad, could he be glad of anything, to fling himself down at the root of the nearest tree, and lie there passive, forevermore.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

11. What does this passage reveal about Dimmesdale's emotional and physical state when unobserved by the townspeople?

- A.** A state of profound, passive despair and total spiritual exhaustion
- B.** An active terror of divine retribution and fear of imminent death
- C.** A quiet relief and renewal found away from the settlement's scrutiny
- D.** A fierce inward struggle between public duty and secret repentance

Answer key

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

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

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. A. To visit the Apostle Eliot among his Indian converts

Hester learns in a sick-chamber that Dimmesdale had gone the day before to visit the Apostle Eliot among his Indian converts.

2. A. She met him once in her life, and the scarlet letter is his mark.

Wearied by Pearl's persistent inquiries, Hester admits that she met the Black Man once and that the scarlet letter is his mark.

3. A. She fears Chillingworth's interference and feels they both need the open expanse to speak freely.

Hester avoids his study partly out of dread of Chillingworth's interference, partly from her own inner suspicion, and partly because she feels they both need the wide world to breathe in while talking.

4. A. A deep grief that would touch her nature and awaken sympathy

The narrator observes that Pearl lacks a deep grief that would soften her hard, metallic vivacity and render her capable of human sympathy.

5. A. An old dame by the chimney-corner in a house where Hester watched

Pearl reveals she overheard the legend from an old dame sitting in the chimney-corner at a house where Hester kept vigil the night before.

6. A. Violets, wood-anemones, and scarlet columbines

The text specifies that Pearl wanders off to gather violets, wood-anemones, and scarlet columbines from the crevices of a high rock.

7. A. A wooden staff he cut by the roadside

Dimmesdale appears haggard and feeble, leaning on a simple staff he cut for himself along the wayside.

8. A. Its narrow, dark confinement represents the moral wilderness in which she has wandered.

The dark, dense primeval forest with narrow vistas corresponds directly to Hester's internal experience of wandering in a moral wilderness.

9. A. Pearl retains a sparkling, energetic vivacity rather than yielding to somber murmuring.

Although both originate from mysterious and gloomy circumstances, Pearl dances and prattles brightly rather than sighing like the melancholy stream.

10. A. Her lingering burden of guilt and exclusion from innocent grace

The sunlight withdrawing whenever Hester approaches emphasizes her separation from untainted joy and innocent warmth because of the scarlet letter.

11. A. A state of profound, passive despair and total spiritual exhaustion

The excerpt portrays Dimmesdale as so completely worn down by despondency that he lacks even the energy to wish for life or death, preferring utter passivity.

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.