

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

The Scarlet Letter

Chapter 22

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.
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The quiz

The Scarlet Letter — Chapter 22. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. What message does the shipmaster instruct Pearl to convey to Hester in the market-place?

- A. The departure of the vessel has been delayed until after the Election Sermon concludes.
- B. The ship's crew refuses to allow Pearl on board without written consent from the magistrates.
- C. Chillingworth will bring Dimmesdale on board himself, so Hester need only provide for herself and Pearl.
- D. The magistrates have ordered a strict search of all departing vessels before they set sail.

PLOT & EVENT

2. During the procession toward the meeting-house, how does Arthur Dimmesdale's physical demeanor differ from his usual appearance?

- A. He walks with an unaccustomed energy and upright posture, without holding his hand over his heart.
- B. He stumbles repeatedly and leans heavily upon the arm of the venerable magistrates.
- C. He marches with an angry, defiant stride while glaring openly at the assembled townsfolk.
- D. He pauses frequently to acknowledge and bless the spectators gathered in the market-place.

CHARACTER

3. Why does Hester experience a 'dreary influence' when watching Dimmesdale pass in the procession?

- A. She fears he will openly denounce her and Pearl from the pulpit before the entire town.
- B. He appears completely detached and unreachable, making their recent forest intimacy seem like a delusion.
- C. She realizes he has secretly confided their plan of escape to Roger Chillingworth.
- D. His haughty military stride convinces her that he intends to abandon the ministry entirely.

CHARACTER

4. What claim does Mistress Hibbins make to Hester regarding Dimmesdale's hidden guilt?

- A.** She claims that the magistrates have already signed a warrant for the minister's public trial.
- B.** She asserts that the Black Man will inevitably force the minister's concealed mark to be exposed in open daylight.
- C.** She reveals that Dimmesdale made a written pact with her during a midnight meeting in the forest.
- D.** She warns that the shipmaster will refuse passage to anyone marked by the Black Man.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. According to the narrator's description of the military company escorting the procession, what distinguished this regiment?

- A.** It consisted of foreign mercenaries hired specifically for civil ceremonies.
- B.** It was composed of local gentlemen who pursued martial exercises like an association of Knights Templars.
- C.** It was made up entirely of rough seafaring mariners from the harbor.
- D.** It lacked proper armor and weaponry due to strict colonial sumptuary laws.

MICRO-DETAIL

6. What gift does the shipmaster give to Pearl after finding it impossible to catch her for a kiss?

- A.** A carved wooden seabird from his cabin
- B.** A silver compass on a leather cord
- C.** A gold chain that had been twisted around his hat
- D.** A bright crimson ribbon from his coat

MICRO-DETAIL

7. When the crowd gathers around Hester near the end of the chapter, which individual from the original prison-door scene seven years earlier is noted as absent?

- A. The stern town beadle who had led her to the pillory
- B. The youngest and only compassionate matron, whose burial-robe Hester had since made
- C. The elderly magistrate who had pronounced her original sentence
- D. The ship captain who had originally brought her to the colony

ANALYTICAL

8. How does the narrator characterize the underlying power of Dimmesdale's voice as Hester listens to the sermon from outside the church?

- A. Its power derives from aggressive intellectual argumentation and theological complexity.
- B. Its force lies in an inescapable undertone of anguish and human plaintiveness that communicates emotion beyond mere words.
- C. Its influence stems from joyous, triumphant melodies that inspire immediate celebration in the town.
- D. Its effectiveness depends on a harsh, accusatory tone that induces terror in all who hear it.

ANALYTICAL

9. What thematic effect is achieved by the closing juxtaposition of Dimmesdale in the pulpit and Hester at the pillory?

- A. It highlights the ultimate triumph of civil law over religious hypocrisy.
- B. It demonstrates that the community has entirely forgiven Hester while rejecting Dimmesdale.
- C. It sharpens the ironic divide between public veneration and shared, private guilt.
- D. It suggests that Hester and Dimmesdale have successfully escaped their past tribulations.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

These primitive statesmen, therefore,—Bradstreet, Endicott, Dudley, Bellingham, and their compeers,—who were elevated to power by the early choice of the people, seem to have been not often brilliant, but distinguished by a ponderous sobriety, rather than activity of intellect. They had fortitude and self-reliance, and, in time of difficulty or peril, stood up for the welfare of the state like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

10. In this passage, what primary quality does the narrator attribute to the early colonial magistrates?

- A. Brilliant intellectual agility and sharp wit
- B. Ponderous sobriety, fortitude, and massive moral stability
- C. A tyrannical desire to mimic European aristocratic excess
- D. Passionate, volatile emotional displays in public governance

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

During all this time, Hester stood, statue-like, at the foot of the scaffold. If the minister's voice had not kept her there, there would nevertheless have been an inevitable magnetism in that spot, whence she dated the first hour of her life of ignominy. There was a sense within her,—too ill-defined to be made a thought, but weighing heavily on her mind,—that her whole orb of life, both before and after, was connected with this spot, as with the one point that gave it unity.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

11. What does this excerpt reveal about Hester's internal relationship to the scaffold?

- A. She views the scaffold as an entirely forgotten episode that has lost all meaning.
- B. She feels an inexplicable, magnetic pull toward the structure that defined her public ignominy and unified her life.
- C. She hopes to climb the scaffold again to publicly mock the puritan magistrates.
- D. She believes the physical wood of the pillory possesses supernatural healing properties.

Answer key

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

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

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Answers explained

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

1. C. Chillingworth will bring Dimmesdale on board himself, so Hester need only provide for herself and Pearl.

The shipmaster tells Pearl that the 'black-a-visaged, hump-shouldered old doctor' (Chillingworth) promised to bring his friend aboard, advising Hester to 'take no thought, save for herself and thee.'

2. A. He walks with an unaccustomed energy and upright posture, without holding his hand over his heart.

The onlookers note that Dimmesdale exhibits remarkable energy, walking without his customary feebleness or stoop, and without resting his hand ominously upon his chest.

3. B. He appears completely detached and unreachable, making their recent forest intimacy seem like a delusion.

Hester feels an acute sense of isolation because Dimmesdale seems completely absorbed in his lofty thoughts and worldly position, utterly remote from the mutual bond they shared in the forest.

4. B. She asserts that the Black Man will inevitably force the minister's concealed mark to be exposed in open daylight.

Mistress Hibbins tells Hester that when a servant of the Black Man is shy of admitting the bond, the Black Man ensures that the secret mark is disclosed in plain sight of everyone.

5. B. It was composed of local gentlemen who pursued martial exercises like an association of Knights Templars.

The text explains that the soldiery was not made of mercenary materials but of gentlemen who sought to establish a College of Arms and practice the science of war akin to Knights Templars.

6. C. A gold chain that had been twisted around his hat

Unable to touch the darting child, the seaman removes the gold chain twisted around his hat and tosses it to Pearl, who twines it around her neck and waist.

7. B. The youngest and only compassionate matron, whose burial-robe Hester had since made

Hester recognizes the faces of the matrons who watched her emerge from prison seven years prior, except for the youngest, sympathetic woman, for whom Hester had since sewn a burial garment.

8. B. Its force lies in an inescapable undertone of anguish and human plaintiveness that communicates emotion beyond mere words.

Hawthorne highlights that regardless of volume or majesty, Dimmesdale's voice continually carries an essential cry of suffering and pathos, which speaks directly to universal human grief and guilt.

9. C. It sharpens the ironic divide between public veneration and shared, private guilt.

The contrast between the 'sainted minister' revered in the church and the shunned woman in the market-place underscores the supreme irony that both bear the exact same searing mark of sin.

10. B. Ponderous sobriety, fortitude, and massive moral stability

The narrator contrasts modern 'talent' with the primitive statesmen's 'ponderous sobriety' and 'fortitude,' describing them as stable cliffs standing against perilous tides.

11. B. She feels an inexplicable, magnetic pull toward the structure that defined her public ignominy and unified her life.

The passage emphasizes an 'inevitable magnetism' that draws Hester to the scaffold, noting that she subconsciously perceives her entire existence as centered upon this single point of ignominy.

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