

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

# The Scarlet Letter

## Chapter 5

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 5. Answers begin on the answer key page.

## PLOT & EVENT

**1. Where does Hester Prynne take up residence following her release from prison?**

- A. In a room situated above the town's central marketplace
- B. In an abandoned thatched cottage on the outskirts of the peninsula
- C. In a secluded dwelling deep within the surrounding native forest
- D. In a newly partitioned wing of the colonial prison house

## PLOT & EVENT

**2. For which specific ceremonial article of clothing is Hester's needlework never requested?**

- A. The burial shrouds of departed infants
- B. The official ruffs worn by the Governor
- C. The white veils intended for brides
- D. The ceremonial bands of ordained clergymen

## CHARACTER

**3. What conscious rationale does Hester construct to justify remaining in the Puritan settlement rather than fleeing?**

- A. She is bound by a strict legal decree forbidding her from exiting the colony.
- B. She seeks to publicly shame the father of her child until he comes forward.
- C. She believes that enduring daily shame at the scene of guilt will purge her soul.
- D. She fears that the forest inhabitants would subject her to harsher physical torment.

## CHARACTER

**4. Why does Hester deliberately refrain from praying for the people who verbally abuse and mistreat her?**

- A. She fears that, despite her good intentions, words of blessing might twist into a curse.
- B. She believes her status as an outcast strips her prayers of divine attention.
- C. She refuses to practice any religious devotions established by the Puritan church.
- D. She harbors too much active resentment toward the townspeople to wish them well.

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**5. How does the narrator contrast Hester's personal clothing with that of her daughter, Pearl?**

- A. Hester wears silk garments, whereas she dresses her child in coarse, somber wool.
- B. Hester dresses in matching somber gray robes with her daughter to emphasize their shared fate.
- C. Hester alters her garments to hide the letter, while sewing a duplicate letter on Pearl.
- D. Hester dresses herself in the coarsest, somber fabrics, while adorning Pearl in fantastic, ingenious attire.

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**6. Why had the small thatched cottage where Hester settles been abandoned by its previous occupant?**

- A. It was abandoned by an earlier settler because the soil was too sterile for cultivation.
- B. It was erected by the magistrates as a permanent outpost for watching prisoners.
- C. It stood in the center of the marketplace to keep Hester in constant public view.
- D. It was built amidst rich arable land that Hester was required to farm for the town.

**MICRO-DETAIL**

**7. What superstitious rumor did the common folk ('the vulgar') circulate about the scarlet letter?**

- A. It was sewn from forbidden threads brought across the ocean from Europe.
- B. It was red-hot with infernal fire and could be seen glowing alight at night.
- C. It possessed the supernatural power to blind anyone who stared directly at it.
- D. It was permanently branded into Hester's flesh by an emissary of the devil.

**ANALYTICAL**

**8. How does the narrator characterize Hester's internal conflict regarding her needlework and its aesthetic beauty?**

- A.** It suggests Hester uses needlework exclusively to mock Puritan simplicity and court vanity.
- B.** It demonstrates that Hester's artistic abilities decline rapidly under the pressure of social isolation.
- C.** It reveals Hester channels her deep, repressed passion into embroidery, yet rejects that aesthetic joy as sin.
- D.** It indicates Hester views her needlework merely as mechanical labor devoid of personal meaning.

**ANALYTICAL**

**9. What is the primary effect of comparing Hester's presence in the community to 'a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside'?**

- A.** It underscores Hester's profound alienation, remaining physically close to society while severed from its moral communion.
- B.** It indicates that the Puritan townspeople have entirely forgotten Hester's former identity and presence.
- C.** It foreshadows Hester's literal physical death and return as a vengeful spirit haunting the settlement.
- D.** It emphasizes that Hester has secretly renounced her physical body to practice witchcraft.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*Walking to and fro, with those lonely footsteps, in the little world with which she was outwardly connected, it now and then appeared to Hester,—if altogether fancy, it was nevertheless too potent to be resisted,—she felt or fancied, then, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense. She shuddered to believe, yet could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts.*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**10. Based on the excerpt, what troubling new psychological faculty does Hester believe the scarlet letter has bestowed upon her?**

- A.** It makes her doubt the reality of her own guilt by convincing her that sin is an illusion.
- B.** It creates a comforting sense of community by allowing her to openly converse with fellow sinners.
- C.** It gives her an intuitive, distressing perception of the unacknowledged guilt lurking in others.
- D.** It blinds her to the judgment of others by granting her complete emotional indifference.

**READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER**

*There dwelt, there trode the feet of one with whom she deemed herself connected in a union, that, unrecognized on earth, would bring them together before the bar of final judgment, and make that their marriage-altar, for a joint futurity of endless retribution. Over and over again, the tempter of souls had thrust this idea upon Hester's contemplation, and laughed at the passionate and desperate joy with which she seized, and then strove to cast it from her.*

**PASSAGE ANALYSIS**

**11. What deeper, unacknowledged motivation for remaining in Boston is revealed in the excerpt?**

- A.** A desire to extract financial support from the child's father through quiet proximity
- B.** An intense, forbidden attachment to her partner in sin and the prospect of their ultimate spiritual union
- C.** A determination to openly accuse her former companion before the magistrates at the next assembly
- D.** A hope that the community will officially sanction their marriage once their penance is complete

## Answer key

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

|              |             |             |             |              |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>1. B</b>  | <b>2. C</b> | <b>3. C</b> | <b>4. A</b> | <b>5. D</b>  |
| <b>6. A</b>  | <b>7. B</b> | <b>8. C</b> | <b>9. A</b> | <b>10. C</b> |
| <b>11. B</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. In an abandoned thatched cottage on the outskirts of the peninsula

Hawthorne specifies that Hester establishes herself in an abandoned thatched cottage located on the outskirts of the town within the verge of the peninsula.

### 2. C. The white veils intended for brides

Although Hester's embroidery is commissioned for magistrates, funerals, and babies, society draws a strict line at wedding veils to avoid sully the purity of marriage with her sin.

### 3. C. She believes that enduring daily shame at the scene of guilt will purge her soul.

Hester reasons that because New England was the scene of her guilt, remaining there to undergo daily punishment and martyrdom will ultimately cleanse her soul.

### 4. A. She fears that, despite her good intentions, words of blessing might twist into a curse.

Hester patient endures abuse, but refrains from prayer because she worries her blessings might involuntarily transform into curses against her persecutors.

### 5. D. Hester dresses herself in the coarsest, somber fabrics, while adorning Pearl in fantastic, ingenious attire.

Hester chooses the plainest, coarsest materials of somber hue for herself, while Pearl is dressed with fanciful and fantastic ingenuity.

### 6. A. It was abandoned by an earlier settler because the soil was too sterile for cultivation.

The text notes the cottage had been abandoned because the surrounding soil was too sterile for farming and its location was isolated from social activity.

**7. B. It was red-hot with infernal fire and could be seen glowing alight at night.**

The common people claimed the letter was not made of ordinary cloth and dye, but burned with infernal fire and glowed in the dark.

**8. C. It reveals Hester channels her deep, repressed passion into embroidery, yet rejects that aesthetic joy as sin.**

Hawthorne notes Hester possesses an innate taste for the gorgeously beautiful and finds an outlet for her passion in needlework, but her Puritan conscience causes her to reject that pleasure as sinful.

**9. A. It underscores Hester's profound alienation, remaining physically close to society while severed from its moral communion.**

The ghost simile emphasizes that while Hester lives among and interacts with the Puritans, she is completely cut off from their emotional life and shared human sympathies.

**10. C. It gives her an intuitive, distressing perception of the unacknowledged guilt lurking in others.**

The passage states Hester feels the letter gives her a shuddering, sympathetic knowledge of the secret sins hidden within the hearts of outwardly pure community members.

**11. B. An intense, forbidden attachment to her partner in sin and the prospect of their ultimate spiritual union**

The excerpt reveals that beneath her conscious penance, Hester lingers because her lover lives there, clinging to the desperate belief that their bond will unite them at final judgment.

## 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.