

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

The Scarlet Letter

Chapter 7

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 7. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. Besides delivering Governor Bellingham's embroidered gloves, what primary motive drives Hester Prynne to visit his mansion?

- A. She wants to request financial compensation for her needlework from the colonial treasury.
- B. She has heard rumors that colonial leaders intend to remove Pearl from her custody.
- C. She wishes to confess the identity of Pearl's father directly to the magistrate.
- D. She seeks permission to leave the colony and return across the sea to England.

PLOT & EVENT

2. What happens when the Puritan children gather and threaten Hester and Pearl as they enter the town?

- A. Hester shields Pearl and hurries down a side alley to escape the crowd.
- B. Pearl charges at the group with furious gestures and screams, scattering them.
- C. The Governor's servant arrives and disperses the children with a staff.
- D. Pearl weeps and begs her mother to return immediately to their cottage.

CHARACTER

3. Why does Governor Bellingham's bond-servant allow Hester to enter the house despite his master being occupied with visitors?

- A. He recognizes her from England as a relative of Governor Bellingham.
- B. He accepts a bribe from Hester in exchange for opening the door.
- C. He is intimidated by her resolute air and mistakes the ornate letter for a sign of nobility.
- D. He fears that turning away the Governor's seamstress will result in severe punishment.

CHARACTER

4. What causes Pearl to stop screaming after weeping for a red rose in the Governor's garden?

- A. She gives in to her mother's stern demand for quiet obedience.
- B. Her lively curiosity is suddenly sparked by the sight of approaching figures.
- C. She manages to pluck a rose from the bush and is immediately pacified.
- D. She becomes frightened by the sight of Governor Bellingham's armor.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. According to the narrator, what was Governor Bellingham's original profession in England before colonial demands made him a soldier and ruler?

- A. A practicing physician
- B. A trained lawyer
- C. An ordained clergyman
- D. A merchant trader

MICRO-DETAIL

6. What material is mixed into the stucco of Governor Bellingham's house that causes it to glitter in the sun?

- A. Ground sea shells
- B. Crushed mica flakes
- C. Fragments of broken glass
- D. Gilded brass filings

MICRO-DETAIL

7. To whom does the narrator attribute the planting of the original apple trees found in the garden?

- A. Governor Winthrop
- B. Reverend Mr. Blackstone
- C. Governor Bellingham's father
- D. An unnamed Native American elder

ANALYTICAL

8. In the Governor's hall, what is the symbolic significance of Hester's reflection in the burnished breastplate?

- A. It reveals her hidden desire to take up arms against Puritan authorities.
- B. It magnifies the scarlet letter so completely that it seems to conceal her entire identity.
- C. It casts a halo around her head, emphasizing her private spiritual saintliness.
- D. It distorts her image into a double likeness that reveals Arthur Dimmesdale beside her.

ANALYTICAL

9. How does the narrator characterize Hester's motivation for dressing Pearl in a crimson velvet tunic embroidered with gold-thread?

- A. She seeks to disguise Pearl's wild temperament under aristocratic English finery.
- B. She hopes to appease the Puritan magistrates by presenting her child in dignified court dress.
- C. She morbidly re-creates the scarlet letter itself in the living form of her child.
- D. She uses the garment to signal her open defiance of traditional Christian modesty.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

Pearl, looking at this bright wonder of a house, began to caper and dance, and imperatively required that the whole breadth of sunshine should be stripped off its front, and given her to play with. "No, my little Pearl!" said her mother. "Thou must gather thine own sunshine. I have none to give thee!"

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

10. What does Hester's response to Pearl convey about her own emotional and spiritual reality?

- A. She resents Pearl for making unreasonable and childish demands.
- B. She views her own life as devoid of warmth and unable to impart joy.
- C. She believes Pearl must learn practical survival skills in the wilderness.
- D. She fears that enjoying natural beauty is an unpardonable sin.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

But the proprietor appeared already to have relinquished, as hopeless, the effort to perpetuate on this side of the Atlantic, in a hard soil and amid the close struggle for subsistence, the native English taste for ornamental gardening. Cabbages grew in plain sight; and a pumpkin-vine, rooted at some distance, had run across the intervening space, and deposited one of its gigantic products directly beneath the hall-window; as if to warn the Governor that this great lump of vegetable gold was as rich an ornament as New England earth would offer him.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

11. In this passage, how does the description of the garden underscore the tension between English tradition and colonial reality?

- A.** It shows that English horticulture failed because Puritans banned non-edible plants by law.
- B.** It contrasts an abandoned ideal of aristocratic elegance with the stubborn, practical demands of New England soil.
- C.** It demonstrates that the Governor completely rejected his heritage to embrace rustic simplicity.
- D.** It illustrates that the colonists preferred wild native plants over European agricultural imports.

Answer key

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

1. B	2. B	3. C	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. B. She has heard rumors that colonial leaders intend to remove Pearl from her custody.

Hester goes to the Governor because she learned of a design among leading Puritans to deprive her of Pearl on religious and moral grounds.

2. B. Pearl charges at the group with furious gestures and screams, scattering them.

When the children suggest throwing mud at them, Pearl fiercely rushes at them, stamping, shouting, and putting them all to flight.

3. C. He is intimidated by her resolute air and mistakes the ornate letter for a sign of nobility.

As a recent immigrant, the servant does not know the meaning of the scarlet letter and assumes Hester's decisive manner and glittering embroidery belong to a person of high rank.

4. B. Her lively curiosity is suddenly sparked by the sight of approaching figures.

Pearl ceases her outburst not out of obedience to Hester, but because her attention is captured by the gentlemen approaching along the garden path.

5. B. A trained lawyer

The text notes that Bellingham was bred a lawyer and accustomed to legal scholars like Bacon and Coke before the exigencies of the New World transformed him.

6. C. Fragments of broken glass

The walls of the Governor's house are overspread with stucco intermixed with fragments of broken glass, creating a sparkling effect in the sunlight.

7. B. Reverend Mr. Blackstone

The apple trees are described as descendants of those planted by the Reverend Mr. Blackstone, the early settler who rode a bull.

8. B. It magnifies the scarlet letter so completely that it seems to conceal her entire identity.

The convex mirror of the breastplate exaggerates the scarlet letter to gigantic proportions, symbolizing how Puritan judgment reduces Hester solely to her public emblem of sin.

9. C. She morbidly re-creates the scarlet letter itself in the living form of her child.

Hester lavishes morbid ingenuity on Pearl's outfit so that the child visibly mirrors the embroidered token on Hester's own bosom, making Pearl the letter endowed with life.

10. B. She views her own life as devoid of warmth and unable to impart joy.

Hester's remark that she has no sunshine to give highlights her profound sense of sorrow, guilt, and social isolation, leaving Pearl to seek her own light.

11. B. It contrasts an abandoned ideal of aristocratic elegance with the stubborn, practical demands of New England soil.

The intrusion of the pumpkin vine and cabbages over the failed ornamental shrubs highlights how harsh colonial survival supersedes refined English landscape traditions.

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