Nathaniel Hawthorne and The Scarlet Letter

Page 10 - exercise 1

a. False - A family living in Colorado discovered a notebook, kept by Nathaniel Hawthorne, with a collection of words and ideas for his future masterpiece, The Scarlet Letter.

b. False - It was a collection of words, fragments of sentences and ideas.

c. True

d. True

e. False - While working at the Custom House in Salem, he found a mysterious package.

f. True

g. False - Surveyor Pue had written about the scarlet letter and its owner on several sheets of faded paper, which Hawthorne found in the mysterious package.

h. False - The story is about a woman who is condemned to wear the scarlet letter in the Puritan settlement of Boston, between 1642 and 1649.

i. True

Before reading

Page 11 - exercise 1

a. b. c. d. e. f. g. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

Page 12 - exercise 2

Open answer.

Page 12 - exercise 3


CHAPTER ONE

Page 16 - exercise 1

An atmosphere of gloom, sadness and severity.

Page 16 - exercise 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prison</td>
<td>weatherbeaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burial ground</td>
<td>sinister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grave</td>
<td>ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age</td>
<td>gloomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rust</td>
<td>condemned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weeds</td>
<td>dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>criminal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frailty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorrow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 16 - exercise 3

Black and gray, because in Western society they are the colors of death, mourning, old age, sadness, severity and poverty.

Page 16 - exercise 4

Yes, there are some rare kinds of flowers that are black, or that look black. Two examples are the black tulip and the rare black orchid. Because the two words are almost contradictory. When you think of a flower you think of a beautiful, cheerful color. The term “black flower” seems to be an anomaly, a mistake of nature, something ugly or evil; thus, a perfect description for a prison.

Page 16 - exercise 5

1. were surprised to find
2. was following the prisoner
3. must have been built
4. will have to have
5. had difficulty staying
6. wished he had never (not) gone
7. said not to pick

Page 16 - exercise 6

No, it isn't.

Page 17 - exercise 7

In some oriental countries white is considered a color of death.

Page 17 - exercise 8

Suggested answers:

a. red: anger, danger, love, passion, leftist political tendencies
b. pink: femininity, birth of a baby girl
c. green: nature, ecology, hope, youth, life, envy
d. yellow: warning sign, jealousy
e. purple: royalty, bad luck color for actors and actresses of the theatre
f. black: death, mourning
g. white: purity, marriage, innocence, light
h. blue: birth of a baby boy, sea, holidays, water

CHAPTER TWO

Page 25 - exercise 1

a. They were waiting for Hester Prynne to leave the prison.

b. Because they thought Hester's punishment was not severe enough.

One goodwife suggested putting the brand of a hot iron on Hester's forehead.

c. She was condemned to stand on the platform an entire morning for everyone to look at, and to wear the scarlet letter “A” all her life.

d. She remembered her childhood, her school days, her years as a young girl, her native village in England, her paternal home, her parents' faces and the pale face of a scholar.
Page 25 - exercise 2
Hester: elegant body, young, regular face, dark hair, black eyes, colorful complexion, marked brow, burning blush, tall, natural dignity, arrogant smile.
Women in the crowd: hard features, severe, grim, bitter.
Spectators: grim, solemn, severe, rigid.

Page 26 - exercise 3
Open answer.

Page 27 - exercise 4
1. a. 2. i. 3. a. 4. b. 5. d. 6. e. 7. c.

Page 27 - exercise 5
Open answer.
Possible answers:
Public punishment is generally announced to others and carried out for others to witness. This is obviously embarrassing and humiliating for the person involved. Private punishment generally involves the few people concerned. It can also involve only the "guilty" individual and his/her conscience or God.

Page 27 - exercise 6
Open answer.
Possible answer:
Yes, countries in the Middle East and Asia; particularly the Islamic countries.

Page 27 - exercise 7
Hester's mind began thinking about her past and the events connected to it.

Page 30 - exercise 1
a. False – Puritanism developed within the Church of England during the late 16th century.
b. True
c. False – Their religious beliefs influenced every aspect of their daily life.
d. True
e. False – The Massachusetts Bay Company was formed by the Puritans.
f. True
g. False – The Puritans landed in Salem and then founded Boston.

Page 31 - exercise 2
Open answer.

Page 32 - exercise 3
a. Predestination: a person was either predestined by God for eternal salvation or eternal damnation.
b. The work ethic: success in the work world was seen as a sign of God's favor, and one's predestination to salvation. It is at the root of everyday life in America, where devotion to hard work and business enterprise is looked upon very favorably.

Page 32 - exercise 4
Possible answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A productive</td>
<td>risk of becoming too materialistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual</td>
<td>risk of neglecting free time and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a productive</td>
<td>relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a strong economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general well-being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realize one's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-reliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 32 - exercises 5-8
Open answers.

Page 33 - exercise 1

Page 34 - exercise 2

Page 35 - exercise 3
1. who 2. who 3. which
5. who 6. omit 7. who 8. omit

Page 36 - exercise 4

Page 37 - exercise 5
1. D

Page 38 - exercise 6

Page 39 - exercise 7

Page 40 - exercise 1

Page 41 - exercise 2

Page 42 - exercise 3

Page 43 - exercise 1

Page 44 - exercise 2

Page 45 - exercise 3

Page 46 - exercise 4

Page 47 - exercise 5

Page 48 - exercise 6

Page 49 - exercise 1
a. She was in a state of nervous excitement.
b. He was staying in the prison as a guest, until the magistrates could meet with the Indians to decide his ransom.
c. She thought he would avenge himself on her and on her child, by giving them poison to drink.
d. It stopped crying and then fell asleep.
e. No, she hadn't.
f. Because they had both wronged each other. He knew he should never have married her because of his age and physical deformity; in this sense, he had wronged her.
g. He planned to devote himself to searching for him and finding him.
h. He did not want the dishonor of being the husband of a faithless woman and perhaps for other reasons.
i. She must not reveal Roger Chillingworth's real identity to anyone.
Before reading

Page 55 - exercise 1
1. with her shame.  
2. her grave would bear the sign of her sin.  
3. to leave the Puritan settlement.  
4. lived in the Puritan settlement.  
5. in a small thatched cottage near the seashore and far from the Puritan settlement.  
6. with the needle.  
7. contributions to charity to help the poor.

CHAPTER FIVE

Page 61 - exercise 1

Page 61 - exercise 2
1. was not allowed  
2. were brought  
3. in spite of her  
4. turned down Hester's  
5. was accused of being  
6. is not as (so) easy  
7. hand was badly

Page 63 - exercise 3A
1. d. 2. f. 3. b. 4. a. 5. c. 6. e

Page 63 - exercise 3B
1. came out at  
2. came out in the wash  
3. coming out of the wash  
4. coming out of the blue  
5. coming out of its ears  
6. came out on top  
7. came out badly

Page 64 exercises 4-7
Open answers.

The Occult and Witchcraft

Page 67 - exercise 1
1. having to do with secret, mysterious, or supernatural beliefs, events and predictions  
2. part of the occult lore  
3. occult rituals  
4. persecuted and executed witches  
5. had magic powers to cast spells, curses, and make bad things happen  
6. is still practiced today

CHAPTER SIX

Page 74 - exercise 1

Page 75 - exercise 2
1. had not been  
2. would not have married  
3. had listened  
4. would have remained  
5. would have trusted  
6. had known  
7. you had not sent  
8. would not have happened  
9. had avoided  
10. would have been  
11. had decided  
12. would not have disgraced

Page 76 - exercise 3

Page 80 - exercise 1

Before reading

Page 82 - exercise 1

CHAPTER SEVEN

Page 87 - exercise 1
a. Chillingworth had chosen the reverend as his spiritual guide, and when the reverend's health began to fail Chillingworth became his medical adviser. The physician got to know his patient very well, and after some time they shared the same house. Chillingworth was always present in the reverend's life.  
b. Because Chillingworth suspected that the reverend was hiding a terrible secret, perhaps the secret that he was desperately trying to discover: the identity of Hester's lover.  
c. He underwent a transformation—his face became ugly and evil, and a ghastly light burned in his eyes.
d. Yes, he was aware of an evil presence in his life, but he was not able to recognize his enemy.

e. Dimmesdale exploded in anger after Chillingworth’s statement that the reverend’s bodily disease was only a symptom of a spiritual ailment, which he should tell his physician about. Chillingworth remained calm with the reverend, but when Dimmesdale rushed out of the room Chillingworth was glad that such an explosion of anger had happened.

f. Because of something he had discovered on the reverend’s chest while he was sleeping.

Page 91 – exercise 2

a. The ships are unloaded with new machinery, and not by hand.

b. A new town hall is being built near the river.

c. The downtown area has been greatly expanded.

d. A new hospital was opened at the east end of town by Dr John Peabody, the surgeon.

e. It is directed by his brother, William.

f. A large area of the city is served by the hospital.

Page 92 – exercise 3

Both men were intelligent and learned. Chillingworth before his suspicions: upright, calm, learned, intelligent, scholarly, kindly, sensitive, trusted no one, meditative, thin, troubled, pale, religious.

The Word “Witch”

Page 94 – exercise 1


CHAPTER EIGHT

Page 101 – exercise 1

a. Chillingworth had a greater understanding of Dimmesdale’s soul and he manipulated the reverend as he wanted. The minister felt an evil influence in his life but he did not know its real nature. However, externally everything seemed the same, and their habits of social familiarity gave the physician a chance to perfect his revenge on his unsuspecting victim.

b. He was able to understand the sinners of his congregation, since he, too, carried a heavy burden in his heart. The anguish of his daily life kept alive his great power of communicating emotion to his congregation.

c. He told his congregation that he was vile and the worst of sinners, knowing that his vague confession would have the opposite effect on his congregation. In effect, his congregation appreciated him even more!

d. Because he had been driven by the impulses of Remorse and Cowardice: Remorse pushed him to confession, while Cowardice pulled him back.

e. He seemed surprised and pleased to see them. He immediately wanted all three of them to stand together on the platform. Hester was holding Pearl’s hand and the minister took Pearl’s other hand to form a chain that gave warmth to his half-torpid system. A bright light lit up the sky and the reverend saw an immense letter “A” marked with lines of red light.

f. He asked her if she knew him, and then told her that Chillingworth filled him with horror and that he hated him.

Page 101 – exercise 2


Page 101 – exercise 3


Page 102 – exercise 4

Open answer.

Page 103 – exercise 5

a. where b. while c. why d. who e. without f. whom g. when/why

Page 103 – exercises 6-7

Possible answers:

Famous people in literature: Dr Jekyll in Robert Louis Stevenson’s Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Don Quixote in Miguel de Cervantes’ Don Quixote de la Mancha.

A famous person in history: Adolf Hitler

Boston, Heart of the American Revolution

Page 106 – exercise 1


b. True

c. False – During the Boston Tea Party, a group of Bostonians disguised as Indians threw 342 crates of tea into Boston Harbor.

d. False – British soldiers killed five colonists during the Boston Massacre.

e. True

f. False – The first shots of the American Revolution were fired in Lexington, in April 1775.

g. True

CHAPTER NINE

Page 113 – exercise 1


Page 114 – exercise 2

a. the French  b. the blind  c. the supernatural  d. the elderly  e. young  f. the rich/the poor
Page 115 – exercise 3
Open answer.

Page 115 – exercise 4
single parent—because she had a child and no husband
community volunteer—because she helps the poor and the sick of her community

Page 116 – exercise 5
no one's business but her own

Page 116 exercise 6
a. “You both have been here before, but I was not with you. Let us stand all three together.” He was not with them because that was his own cowardly choice. At this point, standing together had no real meaning, only perhaps to experience a mock punishment.
b. “The minister knew—subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was—how his vague confession would be viewed. He spoke the truth and transformed it into a falsehood.” Dimmesdale knew that by accusing himself with symbolic language, this would be misunderstood and interpreted as an act of humility, therefore his "partial confession" served two purposes: first, he was able to speak the “truth” and lighten his conscience; second, he was able to gain an even better reputation in the eyes of his congregation. We must remember that public opinion was of utmost importance to the reverend.
c. “This child has come from the hand of God to work in many ways upon the mother’s heart. It was meant to be a blessing; the one blessing in her life! This child was meant to keep her mother’s soul alive, and to preserve her from blacker depths of sin. Therefore, it is good for this poor, sinful woman to care for the child. The child will remind her of her fall. Let us follow God’s wish.” In this scene Dimmesdale, Hester and Pearl were together for the first time since Hester had been on the scaffold three years ago. This was a moment of great hardship for Hester, and Dimmesdale knew this. It would have been an occasion for him to assume his responsibility in the matter. Yet he continued to conceal his secret and let all the shame, ignominy and humiliation fall only on Hester. Although he did intervene in her favor, he was careful to remain out of the story. Chillingworth, Reverend Wilson and the governor complimented him on his intervention!
d. Possible answers:
   At the beginning of the story he and the other town leaders questioned Hester. The reverend asked her to confess the name of her lover and have no pity for him. When she refused to reveal the name, the reverend “moved back with a long sigh”, which was most likely a sigh of relief.
e. ambition, cowardice, remorse and hypocrisy

Page 118 – exercise 1
a. False – Salem's Indian name was Naumkeag, which meant "City of Peace.”
b. True
c. False – Nearly one third of the city is designated as park land and open space.
d. True
e. False – There are seven important “witch museums” in Salem.
f. False – Jonathan Corwin was the judge during the witchcraft trials.

Before reading

Page 119 – exercise 1

Page 119 – exercise 2
a. Because she wanted to meet Reverend Dimmesdale and reveal Chillingworth’s real identity to him.
b. She told her that she met him once in her life and the scarlet letter was his mark.
c. Because they had been separated for a very long time.
d. He was shocked, furious and horrified.
e. She advised him to leave Boston and go somewhere else, where he could start a new life.
f. Open answer.

Page 121 – exercise 3
a. The minister asked Hester if she had found peace.
b. The reverend said that if he had been a man without a conscience, he might have found peace.
c. Hester said that the people revered him and that he had certainly worked well among them.
d. Hester assured him that he had a friend in her.
e. She assured him that she had always been truthful, but in that circumstance she had no choice.
f. She begged Arthur to forgive her.
g. She whispered that he would not go alone.

Page 126 – exercise 2
a. None / no
b. Nowhere
c. None / nothing
d. Nowhere / none
e. Nothing / nowhere
f. None / no one

Page 128 – exercise 4
Possible answers:
Hester: The devil tempted her to commit adultery.
Pearl: She was seen as the "child of the devil", a living sin. Even Hester believed that there might be something strange about her child.
Reverend Dimmesdale: Like Hester, he too was tempted by the devil to commit adultery. Being a Puritan minister he was more closely involved with the forces of good and evil. The presence of Chillingworth could certainly be compared to a diabolic presence in the reverend’s life.
Roger Chillingworth: The devil seemed to have possessed Roger Chillingworth. His obsession transformed him into a fiend without any human qualities. Mrs Hibbins: She practiced witchcraft.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Page 137 – exercise 1


Page 138 – exercise 2


Page 138 – exercise 3


Sentence G is not used.

Page 139 – exercise 4A

1. d 2. f 3. a 4. b 5. c 6. e

Page 139 – exercise 4B

a. looked down on  
b. look it over  
c. look alike  
d. look after  
e. look it up  
f. looked forward to

Page 140 – exercise 5

Hester

Psychological Changes: felt free, happy, hopeful, her heart was light

Physical Changes: a smile appeared on her face; her sex, youth and beauty all came back.

Reverend Dimmesdale

Psychological Changes: began to feel a strange enjoyment, a sense of exhilaration and relief; felt strangely mischievous; was tempted to do something wild or wicked; strange desire to be scornful and bitter, to ridicule all that was good and holy; felt spiteful and unkind.

Physical Changes: felt a surge of physical energy; felt strong and energetic; ate with a good appetite; showed energy during the procession.

Page 141 – exercise 6

Open answer.

Page 141 – exercise 7

Possible answers:

stomach-ache / asthma / skin rash / colitis / fainting / dizziness

Page 141 exercise 8

Open answer.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Page 148 – exercise 1

a. He paused, turned towards the scaffold, stretched out his arms and called Hester and Pearl to him.

b. He caught the minister’s arm and tried to stop him.

c. He finally confessed. He told them that at last he was on the scaffold where he should have been seven years ago with Hester. He called himself a sinner.

d. He tore away his ministerial band and most of the spectators saw that he too had a scarlet letter imprinted in his flesh. Others denied having seen anything on his breast. They also said that his dying words did not acknowledge a connection with Hester’s scarlet letter.

e. They disappeared and no one knew where they had gone.

f. She had gone to another land where she lived in great comfort and wealth.

g. She returned because Boston was the place of her sin, her sorrow and her penance. She devoted her life to comforting and counseling wretched women.

Page 148 – exercise 2


Page 150 – exercise 3A

a. He did not admit speaking to the witch.

b. I suggested giving her monetary help.

c. Hester remembered going to the forest alone.

Page 150 – exercise 3B

a. dread going  
b. adore listening  
c. avoid walking  
d. risk being/arriving  
e. start studying

Page 150 – exercise 4

Open answer.

Page 151 – exercise 5

Because he knew that he was a dying man and he wanted to take the shame upon himself, since this was the right thing to do.

Page 151 – exercise 6

There are several possible interpretations for this:

a. He wanted to remove himself from his shame by referring to another person, although he was talking about himself.

b. He wanted to continue being a subtle hypocrite, by speaking in the third person, thereby not involving himself directly.

c. He was in a very confused mental state, and he had temporarily “stepped out” of his body. In other words, the pious reverend was talking about the sinner—the two sides of the reverend’s personality.

Page 151 – exercise 7-8

Open answers.
Because Chillingworth is not seen by Hawthorne as a human being, but as an ugly weed or fiend. The expression “withered up” is very appropriate because he devoted part of his life to studying plants, herbs and weeds.

Possible answers:
St Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, Harriet Tubman, Emmeline Pankhurst, Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Open answers.

The Importance of The Scarlet Letter in American Literature

Things that changed
a. The film does not begin with the Puritan prison and Hester on the scaffold. It begins with Hester’s first meeting with Reverend Dimmesdale and their consequent intimacy.
b. Several episodes have been eliminated.
c. The ending shows Hester being rescued from the scaffold by an energetic reverend, who takes her and Pearl away from Boston to live elsewhere. They live together happily for a few years until Dimmesdale’s death.

de. Who wrote The Scarlet Letter?
e. Where and when was he born?

b. Chillingworth’s persecution, although not as intense, was similar.
c. What do you remember about his life?
d. Briefly describe the Puritans and their beliefs.
e. What is the Calvinist work ethic and how has it influenced life in the United States?
f. What were the Salem Witch Trials and when did they take place?

g. Roger Chillingworth wanted to take Pearl away from Hester.
h. Chillingworth became obsessed with Hester.
i. Hester and Dimmesdale decide to leave the Puritan community together.
j. Chillingworth discovered their plans to leave.

Possible answers:
assertive, admirable, active, adaptable, able, adept, artful, alienated, altruistic, attractive, aware, articulate, audacious, American

Possible answers:
St Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, Harriet Tubman, Emmeline Pankhurst, Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Open answers.

The film does not begin with the Puritan prison and Hester on the scaffold. It begins with Hester’s first meeting with Reverend Dimmesdale and their consequent intimacy.

Several episodes have been eliminated.

The ending shows Hester being rescued from the scaffold by an energetic reverend, who takes her and Pearl away from Boston to live elsewhere. They live together happily for a few years until Dimmesdale’s death.

a. The setting in Puritan Boston was the same.
b. Chillingworth’s persecution, although not as intense, was similar.

Exercise 10
Possible answers: assertive, admirable, active, adaptable, able, adept, artful, alienated, altruistic, attractive, aware, articulate, audacious, American

Exercise 11-12
Open answers.

Exercise 13

Things that changed

a. The film does not begin with the Puritan prison and Hester on the scaffold. It begins with Hester’s first meeting with Reverend Dimmesdale and their consequent intimacy.

b. Several episodes have been eliminated.

c. The ending shows Hester being rescued from the scaffold by an energetic reverend, who takes her and Pearl away from Boston to live elsewhere. They live together happily for a few years until Dimmesdale’s death.

Things that were the same

a. The setting in Puritan Boston was the same.

Exercise 14

Possible answers: assertive, admirable, active, adaptable, able, adept, artful, alienated, altruistic, attractive, aware, articulate, audacious, American

Exercise 1
a. Nathaniel Hawthorne.
b. He was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1804.
c. While still at college, he decided to become a writer. After graduating he studied the Puritans and their history. His first novel Fanshawe was not a success. The Scarlet Letter was his masterpiece and was published in 1850. He also wrote The House of the Seven Gables and The Blithedale Romance. In 1853 he was appointed US consul in Liverpool and Manchester, England.
d. The Puritans were a Protestant reform movement. They wanted to purify the Church of all Roman Catholic influence. They believed in predestination. They observed austere morality and, dress and behavior.
e. Devotion to work and business enterprise. It is at the root of modern American society.
f. They were trials against “bewitched” people in Salem in 1692. It caused general hysteria among the townspeople and 19 people were hanged and over 100 put in prison.