

Summer Reading assignment (2026)

American Literature-Mrs. N. Jayawardene

Email: njayawardene@timothychristian.org

Welcome to American Literature!!!!

In this course we will be exploring the significant literary developments in American literary history. We will determine what makes American literature distinctly American; we will examine issues which have developed from America's establishment, growth, and maturation. This course will also focus on the connection between American literature and society.

We will begin our study of American literature with *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Text is commonly considered to be a classic in American Literature and many scholars reason it to be the first "truly American novel." Although Hawthorne wrote the book in the mid-1800s, the themes addressed in the novel are timeless. People have constantly been concerned with justice, forgiveness, hypocrisy, revenge, and love. In our exploration of American literature, Hawthorne's novel will set us on a course of examining the particularly American conflict between individuality and societal expectations.

Read and annotate the following work:

-*The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne

*Must be purchased ISBN: 9781593082079

Please follow these directions to ensure success for this assignment. You will need to pace yourself to complete this assignment before school begins. Your assignment is **two-fold** and must be submitted on the relevant due dates.

1. *The Scarlet Letter* Visual Component-Due date: July 31st

1. Select a letter that has dual meaning for an important character in the novel. Think of two adjectives or nouns that begin with this letter and apply to the character. These words must convey a sense of duality, or opposition (though they need not be direct antonyms).
2. Prepare a visual with the character's name and letter in the center and your choice of significant words and supporting passages on either side and below. See the sample for arrangement guidelines. You may use the letter A, but you may not use the words "adultery/adulterer" or "angelic" with Hester Prynne.
3. If the connection between the passage and the word is obvious, you need not explain it. If a viewer needs the connection interpreted, please provide a short explanation, directly on the visual arrangement.


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Guideline for the visual component

Hester Prynne



Angelic

“The scarlet letter had the effect of the cross on a nun’s bosom. It imparted to the wearer a kind of sacredness which enabled her to walk securely amid all peril”(157).

Adulterer

“The magistrates are God-fearing Gentlemen, but merciful overmuch,—that is a truth. . . .At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead” (49).

Aesthetic

“On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold-thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore. . . .” (50).

2. Double entry journal records on every chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*-Due Date: August 30th

As you read the text, select a few phrases that you find meaningful or interesting. Write each phrase in the second column below, then write your reaction (a comment, question, connection made, or analysis) for each quote in the third column. You must write journal entries for all 24 chapters in the text.

Please use the format below to complete the task.

Chapter No. from the text	Significant quotation	My thoughts

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