**The Scarlet Letter Essay**

* Should be 1-1.5 pages in length
* Typed MLA Format
* Introduction Paragraph, Body Paragraph, Conclusion Paragraph should all be included in your paper!

**Choose one to write on:**

**# 1 Analyze how Hawthorne’s novel represents the ideals of Romanticism and advocates for personal freedom and individualism.**

**#2 Analyze how Hawthorne develops the idea of public vs private personas through one of the three main adult characters.**

**Due the Day of your seminar**

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| Intro and Thesis: A central idea guides the paper. The thesis is analytical in nature. | 5 |  |
| Evidence: Proper textual support is provided. Support clearly relates to thesis. Support is carefully chosen and integrated into sentences. | 10 |  |
| Analysis and explanation: Novel is analyzed for major themes. Explanation of quotes is provided and shows their relation to the thesis. | 5 |  |
| Grammar and mechanics: Writing is free of grammar errors. Writing is fluid and lacks awkward sentence construction. | 2.5 |  |
| MLA: Formatted according to MLA guidelines. | 2.5 |  |
| Total | 25 | Formal Points |

Seminar Prep

**Directions:** Take thoughtful, organized notes on three of the following topics for our Socratic seminar. Make sure to take a clear, well-defined, and well-supported stance in each response. You may connect personal experiences, hypothetical scenarios, and other first-hand accounts to justify your response; however, you must support responses with textual evidence from *The Scarlet Letter* to earn full credit in the seminar.

1. Public punishment of criminals is more effective than private, isolated punishment in deterring other people from committing the same crimes.

2. The novel is symbolically set in a Puritanical society. How does Hawthorne criticize the values of this society to advocate his Romantic views on individualism, freedom and nature.

3. Hawthorne would’ve been well aware of the transcendentalist writings of Thoreau and Emerson, both of whom advocated that an individual most be free from social influences in order to be truly free. In your opinion, is it possible for any of the characters in the novel to fulfill the transcendentalist ideal, to be truly an individual?

4. Who deserves the most blame for the events of *The Scarlet Letter*. Which character is most at fault for what happens in the novel? Is there something else that can be blamed?

5. Critics have commented that Hawthorne’s narrator seems to be of two minds. Sometimes this narrator seems to adopt an opinion that the characters must repent for and atone for what they have done. At other times, the narrator seems to adopt the opinion that Dimmesdale’s and Hester’s actions are understandable given the circumstances, and that love such as theirs represents something truly sacred. Where does the narrator stand, or is he of two minds? Where do you stand on the issue?

6. Sin cannot be washed away completely; it leaves a permanent mark. Is this idea valid? Was it true in TSL? In modern society?