

Gatewood's Classroom
Scarlet Letter Summary Activities

Directions: Type and double-space responses to each of the following prompts. Use a MLA header.

I. Analyze a character from the *Scarlet Letter*. In your response, you need to do the following things:

Round/Flat because...(Use supporting examples/actions/scenes/quotes)

Dynamic/Static because...(Use supporting examples/actions/scenes/quotes)

Balance elements of characterization (looks/dress/words/actions/thoughts/feelings/

reactions/interactions/settings)—What do these things reveal about character?

Use text/quotes—Embed quotes within your sentences—Do not let quotes stand alone—Looking for lots of text support

Cite information from an additional source which discusses the character—You can use our state's databases if

you want—Also, you can check out Literary Criticism reference books in library

<http://www.kslib.info/librarians/eor.html>

(look in middle column under “books” category for database options)

Relate character to overall themes of the book—How does character fit into the storyline or reinforce main ideas?

At the end of the response, cite your source in MLA format

II. Read the following Psalm from the Bible. Note: *Maschil* means a meditative or didactic (teaching) psalm, and *Selah* means a pause to reflect.

“Psalm 32”

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

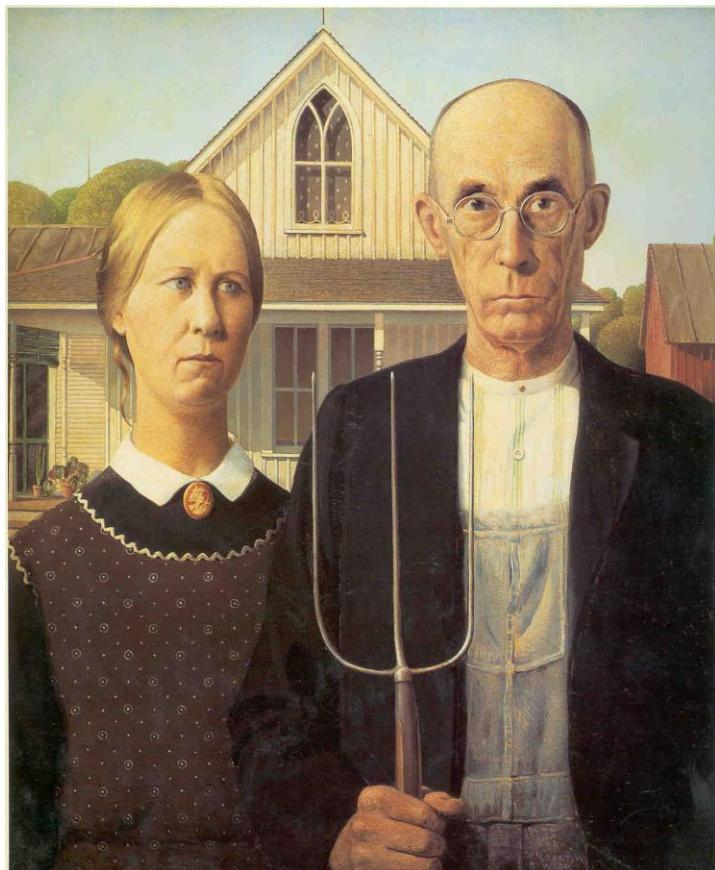
11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Then read Dimmesdale's final speech from *The Scarlet Letter*.

“People of New England!” cried he, with a voice that rose over them, high, solemn, and majestic--yet had always a tremor through it, and sometimes a shriek, struggling up out of a fathomless depth of remorse and woe--“ye, that have loved me!--ye, that have deemed me holy!--behold me here, the one sinner of the world! At last--at last!--I stand upon the spot where, seven years since, I should have stood, here, with this woman, whose arm, more than the little strength wherewith I have crept hitherward, sustains me at this dreadful moment, from groveling down upon my face! Lo, the scarlet letter which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it! Wherever her walk hath been--wherever, so miserably burdened, she may have hoped to find repose--it hath cast a lurid gleam of awe and horrible repugnance round about her. But there stood one in the midst of you, at whose brand of sin and infamy ye have not shuddered!” . . . “It was on him!” he continued, with a kind of fierceness; so determined was he to speak out the whole. “God's eye beheld it! The angels were forever pointing at it! (The Devil knew it well, and fretted it continually with the touch of his burning finger!) But he hid it cunningly from men, and walked among you with the mien of a spirit, mournful, because so pure in a sinful world! --and sad, because he missed his heavenly kindred! Now, at the death-hour, he stands up before you! He bids you look again at Hester's scarlet letter! He tells you, that, with all its mysterious horror, it is but the shadow of what he bears on his own breast, and that even this, his own red stigma, is no more than the type of what has seared his inmost heart! Stand any here that question God's judgment on a sinner! Behold! Behold, a dreadful witness of it!”

In both passages, the speaker discusses his relationship, as a sinner, with his God. Compare and contrast the diction, tone, and theme of both passages?

III. Grant Wood's *American Gothic* caused a stir in 1930 when it was exhibited for the first time at The Art Institute of Chicago and awarded a prize of 300 dollars. The Iowa native, then in his late 30s, was enchanted by a cottage he had seen in the small southern Iowa town of Eldon. Its Gothic Revival style, indicated by the upper window designed to resemble a medieval pointed arch, inspired the painting's title. Some believe that Wood used this painting to satirize the narrow-mindedness and repression that has been said to characterize Midwestern culture, a culture descended from the early European settlers of the east. Explain why or why not you feel this painting is *satirical*. Reference specific details of the painting in support of your response.



IV. A website anonymously posts people's secrets because the webmaster feels that sometimes people just need to express secrets, even if it is to nobody in particular, just to feel better. People submit a notecard with their secret and an accompanying design, photo, visual, or artwork. Each notecard is a totally unique and spontaneous expression of the individual, a way to communicate the private, suppressed, or hidden. Create your own "secret" notecard of an outrageous, traumatic, sinful, silly, sad, weird, or whatever secret about yourself which no one else knows. The secrets may be posted on the board in the classroom.