

The Scarlet Letter Vocabulary

*This list is to help you with your reading of the novel. It will be your study guide for vocabulary quizzes.

Chapter 1

Utopia: place or state of political or social perfection

Allot: to divide or distribute in shares

Sepulchers: burial vaults

Ponderous: weighty

Congenial: pleasant, friendly

Inauspicious: not prosperous or promising

Chapter 2

Physiognomies: facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression

Augured: foretold

Indubitably: unquestionably

Antinomian: one who rejects a socially established morality

Heterodox: holding unorthodox opinions or doctrine

Scourged: subjected to sever criticism

Infamy: fame for something evil

Farthingale: a support worn beneath a skirt to expand it at the hip line

Rotundity: roundness

Behoof: advantage

Trow: believe

Abashed: embarrassed

Sumptuary: designed to regulate habits on moral or religious grounds

Gentility: the upper class

Evanescent: tending to vanish, like vapor

Ignominy: disgraceful or dishonorable conduct, quality, or action

Brazen: bold

Meridian: midday; noon

Iniquity: wickedness

Visage: face

Mien: appearance; aspect

Countenances: looks; expressions

Preternatural: exceeding what is natural

Remonstrance: objections

Cloister: area within a monastery

Etymologist: one who studies word derivations

Chapter 3

Furrows: wrinkles

Heterogeneous: different in kind

Abate: to put an end to or lessen

Sojourn: a temporary stay

Expound: to explain in detail

Peradventure: perhaps

Halberds: weapons consisting of a battle ax and a pike mounted on a long handle

Sagacity: shrewdness

Obstinacy: stubbornness

Fervor: intensity; passion

Lurid: gruesome; sensational

Chapter 4

Sagamores: subordinate chiefs of the Algonquin Indians

Amenable: willing to yield; agreeable

Preemptory: leaving no opportunity for denial or refusal

Alchemy: power or process of transforming something common into something precious

Paramour: lover

Chapter 5

Vivify: to make lively; to animate

Assimilate: to be absorbed into the dominant cultural tradition

Progenitors: forefathers

Plebian: of the common people

Emoluments: advantages

Contumaciously: stubbornly disobedient; rebellious

Chapter 6

Efficacy: effectiveness

Mutability: changeableness

Caprice: whim

Infantile: characteristic infants; babyish

Dearth: scarcity; lack

Gesticulation : expression through gestures

Enmity : established hatred

Chapter 7

Eminence: prominence; superiority

Pristine: uncorrupted; pure

Intrinsic: originating or situated within

Imperious: commanding; dominant

Wan: pale or sickly

Pallid: pale; dull

Extant: not destroyed or lost

Cabalistic: of an esoteric doctrine or mysterious art

Tome: volume forming part of a larger work

Relinquish: to leave behind; to give up

Subsistence: existence

Chapter 8

Behest: earnest request

Albeit: although or even if

Indefeasible: not to be annulled or made void

Mountebank - charlatan; quack

Adduced: brought forward as evidence

Vehemence: forcefulness

Chapter 9

Erudition: knowledge acquired chiefly from books

Commodiousness: spaciousness; roominess

Incantations: chants; verbal charms

Guise: manner or fashion

Sanctity: godliness or sacredness

Emissary: messenger

Chapter 10

Propagate: publicize

Abasement: a lowering in rank, office, or esteem

Sooth: truth; reality

Somniferous: hypnotic

Vestment: a robe or ceremony or office

Piety: religious faithfulness

Chapter 11

Malice: ill will

Latent: present but not visible or active; dormant

Odious: deserving of hatred

Machination: a scheming or crafty action

Chapter 12

Somnambulism: sleepwalking

Dank: cold and damp

Expiation: atonement

Defunct: dead or inactive

Scurrilous: grossly and offensively abusive

Firmament: vault of the sky; heavens

Chapter 13

Gibe: to tease with taunting words

Foliage: leaves, flowers, and branches

Imbibe: received; took in

Obviate: anticipate and make unnecessary

Ethereal: celestial; heavenly

Chasm: a marked division, separation, or difference

Acquiescing: accepting or complying passively

Chapter 14

Propinquity: nearness in place or time

Usurp: to seize by force

Chapter 15

Sere: withered

Verdure: condition of health and vigor

Sedulous: diligent; careful and busy

Petulant: insolent or rude

Precocity: the quality of exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age

Acrid: bitter

Enigma: something hard to understand or explain; mystery

Propensity: intense inclination

Asperity: harshness

Upbraided: criticized; scolded

Chapter 16

Scintillating: brilliant; shining

Scrofula: a form of tuberculosis

Loquacity: talkativeness

Cadence: rhythmic sequence or pattern

Chapter 17

Contiguity: the quality or state of being next or near to

Misanthropy: hatred or distrust of humankind

Consecration: the act of making or declaring sacred

Satiating: satisfying fully

Chapter 18

Colloquy - conversation

Choleric: bad tempered

Chapter 19

Accosting: attacking

Prattle: to babble meaninglessly

Inured: accustomed to accepting something undesirable

Mollified: soothed

Chapter 20

Vicissitude: changing circumstances

Introspection: the examination of one's own mental or emotional state

Irrefragable: not to be disputed or contested

Comport: to conduct or behave

Obeisance: a bodily gesture, such as a bow, that expresses respect

Grandma: old woman; grandmother

Potentate: one who wields controlling power

Stupefied: astonished

Gratuitous: without apparent reason or justification

Chapter 21

Quaff: drink deeply

Wormwood: something bitter and grievous; bitterness

Lees: dregs

Effervesce: to bubble; to show liveliness

Buckler: a shield worn on the left arm

Probity: moral uprightness

Animadversion: adverse and typically ill-natured or unfair criticism

Chapter 22

Clarion: trumpet-like horn

Morbid: gloomy

Necromancy: magic, sorcery

Pathos: sympathetic, pity

Indefatigable: incapable of being fatigued

Requital: something given in return or retaliation

Smite: to attack or afflict suddenly and injuriously

Surmise: to imagine or infer on slight grounds

Chapter 23

Apotheosis: elevation to divine status

Intimations: hints

Nether: situated down or below; lower

Chapter 24

Portent: something that foreshadows a coming event; omen

Nugatory: having no force; inoperative

Recluse: one who has withdrawn from society

Penitence: regret for sin or wrongdoing

Escutcheon: a protective or ornamental shield