Prior to the first day of school in August, all juniors enrolled in A.P. English Language and Composition at Providence Grove High School must read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and must complete the assignments which accompany the reading.

- All summer packets must be turned in on the first day of school in August.

- This is a *required* assignment which will count as 10% of the first nine-weeks grade. Low grades on this assignment could greatly affect a student’s overall course average.

- This is an *independent* assignment. Cheating or copying another student’s work may result in zeroes and/or removal from an advanced placement course.

- The PGHS media center has electronic copies of *The Scarlet Letter* available for check out if students wish to read the novel on personal technological devices. Students interested in checking out an electronic copy of *The Scarlet Letter* need to see Mrs. Snyder in the media center.
INTRODUCTORY: “The Custom-House”

1. What is the purpose of paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 in “The Custom-House” introductory? (“The pavement round about the above-described edifice . . .” through “. . . and a worthier successor wears his dignity and pockets his emoluments.”) How do these three paragraphs—and the introduction in general—contrast with the remainder of the novel (chapter 1-24)?

2. What change does the author Nathaniel Hawthorne admit to making in his telling of the story contained in Surveyor Jonathan Pue’s diary, which he found in the Custom-House attic on a rainy day? Using the format of the dialectical journal, provide the SPECIFIC PASSAGE (quoted from the text, including page number references) in which Hawthorne states the change he made to the narrative format; then provide reader analysis which explores the potential impact this change will have on the story.

CHAPTER 1: “The Prison-Door”

3. What does the wild rosebush that grows beside the prison door suggest about Nature’s sympathies toward human frailty and imperfection versus man’s sympathies toward human frailty and imperfection? Using the format of the dialectical journal, provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) which addresses Nature’s sympathies toward human frailty and 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) which addresses man’s sympathies toward human frailty.

CHAPTER 2: “The Market-Place”

4. The first women’s rights convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, two years before The Scarlet Letter was published. During this time period, suffragists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were encouraging women to challenge the firmly-established male patriarchy. Using the format of a dialectical journal, provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) from chapter 2 which illustrates Hester’s strength as the first—and one of the most important—female protagonist in American literature.

CHAPTER 3: “The Recognition”

5. Explain the allusion in the townsman’s comment to Chillingworth, “[T]hat matter remaineth a riddle; and the Daniel who shall expound it is yet a-wanting.”

CHAPTER 4: “The Interview”
CHAPTER 5: “Hester at Her Needle”
6. Hawthorne uses *The Scarlet Letter* to expose the flaws—as he saw them—in early Puritan society. Provide an example from chapter 5 of Puritan hypocrisy as portrayed by Hawthorne, and explain the hypocrisy exemplified in this example.

CHAPTER 6: “Pearl”
7. Explain the significance of Pearl’s name, using the Gospel of Matthew 13:45-46 as a basis for your response.

CHAPTER 7: “The Governor’s Hall”

CHAPTER 8: “The Elf-Child and the Minister”
8. Describe how the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale’s physical appearance has changed from earlier in the novel. Describe how the Roger Chillingworth’s physical appearance has changed from earlier in the novel. What do these exterior changes show about the interior character changes which Dimmesdale and Chillingworth have undergone?

CHAPTER 9: “The Leech”

CHAPTER 10: “The Leech and His Patient”

CHAPTER 11: “The Interior of a Heart”
9. What is ironic about Dimmesdale’s success as a minister?

CHAPTER 12: “The Minister’s Vigil”

CHAPTER 13: “Another View of Hester”
10. Compare the feelings of the general public to the feelings of the community leaders regarding Hester. Using the format of the dialectical journal, provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (*quoted from the text, including page number references*) which illustrates the general public’s view of Hester and 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE which illustrates the community leaders’ view of Hester; then provide reader analysis which explores why the groups view her differently.

CHAPTER 14: “Hester and the Physician”
11. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* is a frequently-used exemplar of Anti-Transcendental literature. Two tenets of Anti-Transcendentalism are ① the innate depravity of mankind—sin is an inescapable part of human life and ② predestination—all humans live a destined path chosen by God. Use the format of the dialectical journal to provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (*quoted from the text, including page number references*) from chapter 14 which shows the innate depravity of mankind and the belief that man can never be returned to an innocent state without the presence sin. Also use the format of the dialectical journal to provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (*quoted from the text, including page number references*) from chapter 14 which shows the doctrine of predestination and the belief that man has no choice in his actions and that life is merely the process of living out one’s fate.
CHAPTER 15: “Hester and Pearl”
12. Instead of her adultery with Dimmesdale, what is Hester coming to realize is the true sin she has committed? Frame your response in the context of the theme of Human/Civic Law versus Natural Law (question #3).

CHAPTER 16: “A Forest Walk”
13. In addition to Innate Depravity and Predestination, the Anti-Transcendentalists believed that Nature was vast and incomprehensible, a reflection of the struggle between good and evil. Using the format of the dialectical journal, provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) which shows the positive significance the forest (as an archetype for Nature) takes on in chapter 16 and 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) which shows the negative significance the forest (as an archetype for Nature) takes on in chapter 16.

CHAPTER 17: “The Pastor and His Parishioner”
14. Returning to the issue of women’s rights (question #4), use the format of a dialectical journal to provide 1 SPECIFIC EXAMPLE (quoted from the text, including page number references) of Hawthorne’s commentary on the traditional male/females roles of the time period.

15. A key question for Hawthorne and the Anti-Transcendentalists would be: Can a “polluted soul” do good for others? Using the format of the dialectical journal, provide a SPECIFIC PASSAGE (quoted from the text, including page number references) which shows Hawthorne’s answer to this question; then provide reader analysis as to why this example illustrates Hawthorne’s answer to this question.

16. Dimmesdale says, “Of penance, I have had enough! Of penitence, there has been none!” Explain how penance and penitence are different. What does this reveal about Dimmesdale’s mindset regarding the sin he committed?

CHAPTER 18: “A Flood of Sunshine”
17. In chapter 18, how does Hawthorne reinforce the idea that Nature is sympathetic to the union of Hester and Dimmesdale?

CHAPTER 19: “The Child at the Brook-Side”

CHAPTER 20: “The Minister in a Maze”
18. After Dimmesdale’s discussion with Mistress Hibbins, Hawthorne states, “Tempted by a dream of happiness, he had yielded . . . to what he knew was a deadly sin.” Why is going to Bristol, England, with Hester a worse sin than aiding Hester in committing adultery?

CHAPTER 22: “The Procession”
19. Mistress Hibbins’ dialogue illustrates again the Anti-Transcendental belief that sin is a universal human condition. Quote 1 SPECIFIC PASSAGE (quoted from the text, including page number references) from Mistress Hibbins’ dialogue in chapter 22 which shows that sin is an inescapable part of human life.

CHAPTER 23: “The Revelation”
20. Hester’s final question for her lover before his dies is, “Shall we not meet again?” Interpret Dimmesdale’s final words to Hester.

CHAPTER 24: “Conclusion”
21. Interpret Hester’s reason for returning to Boston and wearing the scarlet letter until her death: “Here had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence.” Connect you response to Dimmesdale’s comment about penance and penitence in chapter 17.
**SAMPLE DIALECTICAL JOURNAL**

The dialectical journal is a double-entry note taking system. It helps one to read critically and encourages the habit of reflective questioning. It is a place to record and explore ideas, using writing as a tool for learning.

*Below is a sample dialectical journal entry analyzing how Hawthorne uses figurative language in Chapter 5 “Hester at Her Needle” to rhetorically reinforce one of main themes of the novel.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE #</th>
<th>TEXTUAL PASSAGE</th>
<th>READER ANALYSIS</th>
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| p.77   | “Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle. To Hester Prynne it might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life. Like all other joys, she rejected it as sin. This morbid meddling of conscience with an immaterial matter betokened, it is to be feared, no genuine and steadfast penitence, but something doubtful, something that might be deeply wrong beneath.” | The passage is an example of paradox: women love sewing and to Hester sewing is “the passion of her life,” yet Hester rejects sewing as being a sin. Hester sacrifices her enjoyment of sewing for the sake of charity and punishes herself by vilifying the act of sewing. Yet ironically, Hester says that sewing for charity is no penance for her.  
**THIS ILLUSTRATES THE PARADOX HESTER FACES THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE BOOK**—her sin actually makes her stronger; she is never truly repentant because she sinned out of love (false love vs. true love) |
| p.78   | “she stood apart from moral interests, yet close beside them, like a ghost that revisits the familiar fireside”                                                                 | Shows the paradoxical nature of Hester’s position and situation in society due to her sin and the consequences of her sin  
The simile is used by Hawthorne to show that no matter how much she grows and moves on, Hester is continually reminded of her sin—she returns to where she started |