

## *The Scarlet Letter* Discussion Questions:

- Do you think Hester's punishment was fair and just? If not, what do you think might have been a better punishment?
- Do you think Hester felt guilty only because she had been caught and was being punished?
- Why does Roger Chillingworth want his true identity to remain hidden?
- Why does Hester's husband send her alone to the New World ahead of himself? What does this say about their relationship? Why do you think they got married in the first place? How would the story change if they had come together?
- What do you think of the Puritan community that this story takes place in? Would you want to live there? What changes would you make if you could?
- Why does Hester dress so plainly, yet clothe Pearl in the best and brightest colors?
- At one point, the community is discussing taking Pearl away from Hester to be raised in a better home. Is this right?
- Why does Roger Chillingworth get close to Arthur Dimmesdale?
- Do you think it is right for Hester to not try and explain her scarlet letter to Pearl? Is Hester a good mother?
- Who bears the scarlet letter better—Hester Prynne or Arthur Dimmesdale? Who suffers more?
- Does Hester or Arthur have stronger character? Do Hester's qualities, her fortitude, generosity, pride, and compassion, arise from necessity or would she have them even if the events of the story had not happened?
- Hester and Arthur put together a scheme to escape from the community and start over where no one knows their identity. Would this have been right? Would this have satisfied them?
- Why does Roger Chillingworth leave his fortune to Pearl?