

The Scarlet Letter, A Romance

In the decades since we might have read *The Scarlet Letter* as students, the text of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short novel (1850) has not changed but we have certainly changed. Reading *The Scarlet Letter* in 2023 might surprise us. Hawthorne's rich, compelling, and engaging masterwork not only left an indelible imprint on subsequent American literature, but the novel seems shockingly relevant now. We will begin with some of Hawthorne's earlier short tales that anticipate *The Scarlet Letter*, and then we will make our way through this profound "tale of human frailty and sorrow."

The Scarlet Letter Reading Schedule

Sept 7: Introduction to Nathaniel Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*

Sept 14: Hawthorne, "Endicott and the Red Cross," "Young Goodman Brown"

Sept 21: Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Birthmark"

Sept 28: Hawthorne, Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*: "The Custom House"

Oct 5 : Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, I-VIII

Oct 12: *The Scarlet Letter*, IX-XVI

Oct 19: *The Scarlet Letter*, XVII-XXIV

Oct 26: The Legacy of *The Scarlet Letter* and Hester Prynne in popular culture

NOTE ON TEXTS:

You can use any edition of *The Scarlet Letter* and the tales. I will be using the following:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings*. 2nd ed. Leland S. Person, ed. NY: W.W. Norton & Co. (2017). ISBN: 978-0-393-26489-0

Our texts are also available online through the Gutenberg Project:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/59280/59280-h/59280-h.htm>

I look forward to seeing you in September!