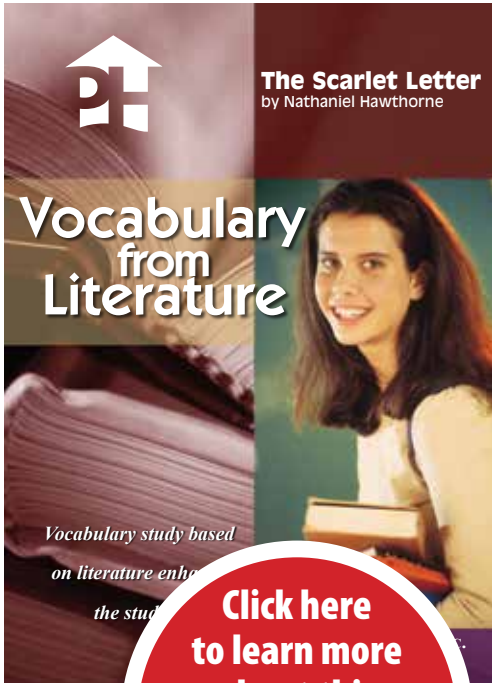




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Vocabulary From Literature

The Scarlet Letter

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Written by Julie Carroll and Elizabeth Osborne

Edited by Paul Moliken

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Vocabulary From Literature

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The Custom House

Activity I

Matching Definitions

Directions: Match each of the words below with its definition based on the context in which the word appears in the book. Use the page numbers in parentheses to locate the word. Then, look up the word in the dictionary and change any answers that are not correct.

decorous (14)
vicissitude (19)
esoteric (27)

discern (15)
vitiated (23)
fathomed (36)

propensities (32)
unmalleable (25)
effusion (30)

1. _____ limited to a small group of people
2. _____ impaired; made ineffective
3. _____ perceive; understand
4. _____ inclinations
5. _____ a pouring forth
6. _____ understood
7. _____ proper behavior
8. _____ change; reversal; fluctuation
9. _____ unchangeable

tenacity (18)
unobtrusive (35)
expatiate (23)
torpid (34)

slumberous (26)
arduous (20)
indolent (19)

inefficacious (35)
rankling (15)
contrivance (22)

10. _____ difficult
11. _____ slow; dull; static
12. _____ unable to produce a desired result; ineffective
13. _____ hardly noticeable
14. _____ sleepy
15. _____ irritating
16. _____ persistence
17. _____ to speak at length
18. _____ ingenious plan
19. _____ lazy

Vocabulary From Literature

4. But, one idle and rainy day, it was my fortune to make a discovery of some little interest. Poking and burrowing into the heaped-up rubbish in the corner; unfolding one and another document, and reading the names of vessels that had long ago foundered at sea or rotted at the wharves, and those of merchants, never heard of now on 'Change, nor very readily **decipherable** on their mossy tombstones; glancing at such matters with the saddened, weary, half-reluctant interest which we bestow on the corpse of dead activity,—and exerting my fancy, sluggish with little use, to raise up from these dry bones an image of the old town's brighter aspect, when India was a new region, and only Salem knew the way thither,—I chanced to lay my hand on a small package, carefully done up in a piece of ancient yellow parchment. This envelope had the air of an official record of some period long past, when clerks **engrossed** their stiff and formal **chirography** on more substantial materials than at present. (Pg. 30)

Synonym for **decipherable**: _____

Synonym for **engrossed**: _____

Synonym for **chirography**: _____

5. While thus perplexed,—and **cogitating**, among other hypotheses, whether the letter might not have been one of those decorations which the white men use to contrive, in order to take the eyes of Indians,—I happened to place it on my breast. (Pg. 32)

Synonym for **cogitating**: _____

6. On Hester Prynne's story, therefore, I **bestowed** much thought. It was the subject of my meditations for many an hour, while pacing to and fro across my room, or **traversing**, with a hundredfold repetition, the long extent from the front-door of the Custom-House to the side-entrance, and back again. Great were the weariness and annoyance of the old Inspector and the Weighers and Gaugers, whose slumbers were disturbed by the unmercifully lengthened tramp of my passing and returning footsteps. Remembering their own former habits, they used to say that the Surveyor was walking the quarter-deck. They probably fancied that my sold object—and, indeed, the sole object for which a sane man could ever put himself into voluntary motion—was, to get an appetite for dinner. And to say the truth, an appetite, sharpened by the east-wind that generally blew along the passage, was the only valuable result of so much **indefatigable** exercise. (Pg. 33)

Synonym for **bestowed**: _____

Synonym for **traversing**: _____

Synonym for **indefatigable**: _____

7. But the long habit of victory has made them generous. They know how to spare, when they see occasion; and when they strike, the axe may be sharp, indeed, but its edge is seldom poisoned with ill-will; nor is it their custom **ignominiously** to kick the head which they have just struck off. (Pg. 38)

Synonym for **ignominiously**: _____

The Scarlet Letter

Activity V

Roots and Prefixes

Part I

Directions: From the definition provided for each vocabulary word, figure out the meaning of the word's prefix.

WORD	DEFINITION	PREFIX	MEANING OF PREFIX
disinclined	not tending to; not wanting to	dis	
disengaged	not involved; apathetic		
exclusive	shutting all others out	ex	
exclaim	to shout out		
infirmity	lack of strength	in	
insensitive	not sensitive		
advent	a coming to; an approach	ad	
adjacent	near to		
transgress	to cross a boundary; violate a law	trans	
transport	to carry across		

Part II

Directions: Each of the following words has the prefix *auto*, meaning, "self" or "one's own." The other parts of the word are defined for you. Try to guess what each one means. Then compare your guess with the dictionary's definition.

WORD	PARTS	YOUR GUESS	DEFINITION
autobiography	bio: life graphy: writing	_____	_____
automaton	maton: one that acts	_____	_____
autogenous	genous: generating; giving birth	_____	_____
autocracy	cracy: power	_____	_____

The Scarlet Letter

6. The unhappy culprit sustained herself as best a woman might, under the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom. It was almost intolerable to be borne. Of an impulsive and passionate nature, she had fortified herself to encounter the stings and venomous stabs of public **contumely**, wreaking itself in every variety of insult; but there was a quality so much more terrible in the solemn mood of the popular minds, that she longed rather to behold all those rigid **countenances** contorted with scornful merriment, and herself the object. ...Yet there were intervals when the whole scene, in which she was the most **conspicuous** object, seemed to vanish from her eyes, or, at least glimmered indistinctly before them, like a mass of imperfectly shaped and spectral images. Her mind, and especially her memory, was **preternaturally** active, and kept bringing up other scenes than this roughly hewn street of a little town, on the edge of the Western wilderness; other faces than were lowering upon her from beneath the brims of those steeple-crowned hats. (Pg. 48-49)

Definition of **contumely**:

- A. display
- B. scrutiny
- C. scorn
- D. analysis
- E. esteem

Definition of **countenances**:

- A. people
- B. faces
- C. accusers
- D. judges
- E. lips

Definition of **conspicuous**:

- A. beautiful
- B. scorned
- C. sorrowful
- D. lighthearted
- E. striking

Definition of **preternaturally**:

- A. moderately
- B. mildly
- C. humbly
- D. abnormally
- E. unpretentiously