Basic Rationale
The Scarlet Letter

In 1850 Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* was a literary sensation in both the United States and in England. Today *The Scarlet Letter* is considered a classic American novel widely read by adults and adolescents alike. *The Scarlet Letter* contains the major themes of adultery and deception, but hypocrisy, society, and identity are all found within its pages.

Through Hawthorne’s depiction of Hester Prynne, numerous lessons are taught. What does it mean to be singled out of society? How does it feel? Was what Hester did a “sin”? Reverend Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl all prove to be complex characters in a supposedly simple Puritan society.

I chose *The Scarlet Letter* because it is one of the classic novels that everyone seems to have read. Since I hadn’t read it, I wanted to understand the literary discussions that always excluded me. I would teach *The Scarlet Letter* to high school juniors and seniors.

This Unit Resource Notebook (URN) will help both teachers and students successfully break down the characters and themes of *The Scarlet Letter*. The strategies and activities found in the URN will be a helpful assistance in the teaching of this classic tale.

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