



The Scarlet Letter What They Say

Authors reveal who their characters really are not just by what they do, but also by what they say and what others say about them. Read the following quotations from *The Scarlet Letter*. Answer the four questions about each quotation. Then add another important quotation at the bottom of the worksheet. Trade your work with a partner and answer the questions about each other's added quotations.

1. "We have wronged each other . . . Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay.["] (page 63)

Who is speaking?

Roger Chillingworth

To whom?

Hester Prynne

When is this spoken?

When the two meet in the prison in Chapter IV (page 63) as Chillingworth gives Hester and Pearl medicine to calm their nerves and help them sleep.

Why is this dialogue important to the plot and/or theme?

In a rare moment of honesty and compassion, Chillingworth takes responsibility for his own part in Hester's situation, but he lies to everyone else about his identity and role.

2. "You have deeply and sorely repented. . . . Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes. Is there no reality in the penitence thus sealed and witnessed by good works?" (page 159)

Who is speaking?

To whom?

When is this spoken?

Why is this dialogue important to the plot and/or theme?

3. "Ha, tempter! Methinks thou art too late! . . . Thy power is not what it was! With God's help, I shall escape thee now!" (page 206)

Who is speaking?

To whom?

When is this spoken?

Why is this dialogue important to the plot and/or theme?

4. "Doth he love us? . . . Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?" (pages 174–175)

Who is speaking?

To whom?

When is this spoken?

Why is this dialogue important to the plot and/or theme?

5. Your additional quote:

Who is speaking?

To whom?

When is this spoken?

Why is this dialogue important to the plot and/or theme?

RL.11–12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11–12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

RL.11–12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

SL.11–12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.