



# The Scarlet Letter

## Punishment and Guilt in Colonial Boston

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In the world of *The Scarlet Letter*, religion and government are one and the same, and Hawthorne uses many words to describe and reflect the culture's system of justice. First, use a dictionary to learn the meaning of the words below as they are used in context on the pages shown in parentheses. Summarize what you learn in five to eight words. Then answer the questions to categorize the words into parts of speech. Finally, use some of the words as you answer the Big Question below. Participate in a class discussion that explores everyone's responses.

magistrate (43):

*a judge in a lower court*

infamy (43)

ignominy (46)

corrupt (48)

repentance (57)

transgress (58)

vengeance (63)

retribution (64)

banish (71)

malice (80)

intolerant (87)

depravity (93)

diabolical (106)

piety (107)

self-abasement (110)

abomination (119)

remorseful (120)

tribunals (136)

penitence (159)

penance (186)

repugnance (208)

stigma (211)

Which four words are used as adjectives?

Which two words are used as verbs?

What part of speech are all the other words?

Big Question: What are the dangers of religion and government being one and the same?

RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

L.11-12.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11-12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

L.11-12.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

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.

## Answer Key

Which four words are used as adjectives?

*corrupt, intolerant, diabolical, remorseful*

Which two words are used as verbs?

*transgress, banish*

What part of speech are all the other words?

*nouns*