

The Scarlet Letter

Nathaniel Hawthorne

How can punishment fail at its stated purpose and still change the person being punished?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Punishment produces independence
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter XIII · Another View of Hester
START	Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling to thought.
END	The scarlet letter had not done its office.
PASSAGE ID	sec-sl-02

THE MOVE

Follow a paradox across a character's development

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The punishment is supposed to enforce obedience, yet isolation gives Hester space to think outside the community's assumptions. That contradiction lets students trace a paradox through cause and effect rather than simply label Hester as rebellious.

MARK

Bracket the sentences that describe what the punishment is meant to do. Underline the sentences showing what isolation actually teaches Hester to think. Connect the intended result to the opposite result with an arrow.

NOTICE

- What behavior is the punishment supposed to produce?
- What new freedom of thought becomes possible because Hester is pushed to the edge of society?
- How can the punishment succeed socially while failing intellectually?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How can punishment fail at its stated purpose and still change the person being punished? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: How can punishment fail at its stated purpose and still change the person being punished? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The punishment fails if its purpose is obedience and conformity, because isolation gives Hester space to think beyond the community's assumptions. Yet it still changes her by reshaping her social position, habits, and ideas.
EVIDENCE	Use evidence of what the punishment is supposed to enforce and evidence of the independent thought or altered perspective produced by exclusion.
WATCH FOR	Do not answer that the punishment simply 'doesn't work.' It works in some ways and fails in the way the authorities intended most.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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How can punishment fail at its stated purpose and still change the person being punished?

START ANCHOR	Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling to thought.
END ANCHOR	The scarlet letter had not done its office.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** - Bracket the sentences that describe what the punishment is meant to do. Underline the sentences showing what isolation actually teaches Hester to think. Connect the intended result to the opposite result with an arrow.
2. **NOTICE** - What behavior is the punishment supposed to produce? What new freedom of thought becomes possible because Hester is pushed to the edge of society? How can the punishment succeed socially while failing intellectually?
3. **THINK** - Answer provisionally: How can punishment fail at its stated purpose and still change the person being punished?
4. **WRITE** - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.