

# OPERA COLORADO



Abridged Version  
2016-2017

# A Letter to the Teachers

Dear Teachers,

Opera Colorado is pleased to provide engaging educational programs and performances for students across Colorado. What follows is a guide that we hope you and your students find useful, as we explore Lori Laitman's *The Scarlet Letter*. In the spirit of exploration, we have included various lessons that connect *The Scarlet Letter* with different subjects of learning. The lessons reference the new Colorado Department of Education's Academic Standards: specifically, focusing on the fourth grade expectations. This does not mean, however, that these lessons should be limited to this age group. While we would be very pleased if you used these lessons in the exact format provided, we encourage you to expand, alter, and adapt these lessons so that they best fit your students' abilities and development. After all, the teacher knows their student's needs best. We would appreciate your feedback on our teacher evaluation form found at the end of this guide, and we hope that you enjoy all that Opera Colorado has to offer!

**Thank you!**

**- Cherity Koepke -**

Director of Education & Community Engagement

**- Parisa Zaeri -**

Education & Community Engagement Assistant



## **Contact us to learn more!**

Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs department offers many more programs to assist your students as they continue to discover the world of opera. We have programs that take place at the Ellie Caulkins Opera House as well as programs that we can bring directly to your classroom. We even have opera education specialists that can teach lessons directly to your students.

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*Opera Colorado makes every effort to ensure that the information provided in this guidebook is as accurate as possible. With the exception of materials used for educational purposes, none of the contents of this guidebook may be reprinted without the permission of Opera Colorado's Education & Community Programs department. Dictionary definitions were taken from [www.Merriam-Webster.com](http://www.Merriam-Webster.com), and unless marked otherwise, educational information was gathered from [www.Wikipedia.com](http://www.Wikipedia.com). Unless otherwise noted, the materials in the Scarlet Letter guidebook were developed and compiled by Opera Colorado administrative staff: Cherity Koepke and Parisa Zaeri.*

# Table of Contents

Synopsis of Production.....	5
Meet the Composer .....	8
Meet the Librettists.....	9
Meet the Novelist .....	10
Introduction to Opera .....	11
Activity: Diagramming Differences.....	12
Activity: Compare and Contrast.....	15
Activity: Storyline Analysis .....	16
Activity: Visual Arts.....	21
Activity: Creative Writing.....	24
Activity: Logic Puzzle.....	26
Discussion: Gender Roles & Societal Oppression.....	28
Activities: Gender Equality and <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> .....	29
Discussion: Gender Equality in the Media.....	37
Dialogue Starters for Discussing Bullying.....	39
Additional Resources.....	40
Activity: Word Search.....	41
Opera Broadcasts on CPR Classical 88.1.....	42
Evaluation.....	43

# **The Scarlet Letter**

**Composed by Lori Laitman**

**Libretto by David Mason**

**Adapted from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter***

**Professional Debut- May 7, 2016**

**Opera Colorado, The Ellie Caulkins Opera House**

## **Cast of Characters**

<b><u>Role</u></b>	<b><u>Voice Type</u></b>	<b><u>Played By</u></b>
Hester Prynne, <i>a young puritan woman</i>	Soprano	Laura Claycomb
Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, <i>a young minister</i>	Tenor	Dominic Armstrong
Roger Chillingworth <i>a doctor</i>	Baritone	Malcom MacKenzie
Mistress Hibbons, <i>a witch</i>	Mezzo-soprano	Margaret Gawrysiak
John Wilson, <i>an elder minister</i>	Tenor	Kyle Erdos-Smith
Governor Bellingham	Baritone	Daniel Belcher
Pearl, <i>Hester's Young Daughter</i>	Non-singing role	
Chorus, <i>Puritans</i>		
A Sailor	Baritone	Charles Eaton
A Farmer	Tenor	Ben Werley
A Shipmaster	Baritone	William Bryan
Goodwife 1	Soprano	Emily Robinson
Goodwife 2	Soprano	Becky Bradley
Goodwife 3	Mezzo-soprano	Danielle Lombardi
The Leader	Baritone	William Bryan
The Beadle	Non-singing role	

# **A World Premiere Production for Opera Colorado**

**Music by Lori Laitman**  
**Libretto by David Mason**  
**World Premiere: May 7, 2015**

## ACT I

### Scene 1. A Meeting Place.

"One law. One law. One law. One," chants Boston's Puritan community in the opening trial scene. The public environment is cold, unforgiving and filled with fear. A tense crowd awaits the arrival and sentencing of the adulteress Hester Prynne. So shocking is the image of a young woman cradling her infant, standing isolated while awaiting judgment, that it is seared into our imaginations.

The young Reverend Dimmesdale is chosen to interrogate Hester. He's the unknown father of Hester's child but lacks the courage to confess it publicly. This struggle sparks his descent into madness.

Hester is forced to wear the scarlet letter 'A' on her breast for the rest of her life.

Newly arrived on the scene is Hester's husband, Dr. Chillingworth, who had been missing for two years. He sets out on his own obsessive course to identify his wife's lover.

### Scene 2. The Jail.

We discover Hester in prison, a dark and claustrophobic space. She is attempting to nurse her baby back to health. Dr. Chillingworth visits and heals the child. The two agree to hold the secrets of their past life together, but the Doctor insists on knowing the identity of Pearl's father. Hester refuses.

The Doctor leaves in a rage.

### Scene 2a. The Passage of Time.

The community sings of their devotion to God and marvel that only he knows the answer. The space is mysterious and infinite. It is unanchored.

### Scene 3. The Governor's Garden.

This is a rose garden of thorns and blood. The community's Elders want to separate Hester and Pearl, to violate the natural blood bond between mother and child. The Reverend intercedes on Hester's behalf, leaving the Elders stunned.

#### Scene 4. The Reverend's Study. His Nightmare.

A calm and orderly library has turned into a tortured environment: books, empty medicine bottles, blankets and pillows are strewn everywhere. The years of guilt have clouded the Reverend's mind and also weakened his heart. His conflicts remain unresolved. Reality is beginning to slip away from him as he hallucinates and returns to the scene of Hester's punishment. He sees visions of 'A' in the skies. He is further taunted by a witch who knows his secret. He's desperate to confess the truth, but cannot. He grows sicker.

### ACT II

#### Scene 1. The New England Forest.

It is here, in the wilderness outside of the town, and here under the protective forest canopy, that the lovers can finally meet. The scene is open and optimistic; even romantic. The narrowness and harshness of Puritan life has been temporarily lifted. Hester and the Reverend can breathe for the first time in years, and Dimmesdale can finally acknowledge his daughter. At Hester's urging, the family plans to escape the town. But clouds begin to crowd the scene as the Reverend learns the true identity of Dr. Chillingworth.

#### Scene 2. A Meeting Place. Election Day.

The mood is festive and bright. The town has grown and rejoices in its communal strength. Hester has booked their escape by ship. The Reverend begins to deliver his holiday sermon but his mind starts to wander. The public is stunned. He takes Hester and Pearl onto the scaffold and at the moment of his confession, he dies. The scene ends with a small circle of intense light on the united family.

### Epilogue

We now move into a completely abstracted space where the stage is time. The drama accelerates and cycles through different reflective moods. At first the community mourns the Reverend's death; then Hester looks back on her own life. Finally the community -- in the same present time as the actual audience -- comments on these lives as legend. Past and present are joined at the conclusion of the opera.

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Christian Steiner

## The Composer: Lori Laitman

*Com-po-ser: One that composes; especially, one who writes music*

Lori Laitman is one of America's most prolific and widely performed composers of vocal music. She has composed two operas, an oratorio, choral works, and over 200 songs. She has set the words of classical and contemporary poets, many among them the lost voices of poets who perished in the Holocaust. The Journal of Singing has written: "*It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music.*"

*The Scarlet Letter*, Laitman's full-length opera, will receive its professional world premiere at Opera Colorado in Denver in May 2016. The libretto, based on the Hawthorne classic, is by American poet David Mason, the current poet laureate of Colorado. Laitman's oratorio *Vedem*, another collaboration with Mason, was commissioned by Music of Remembrance and saw its world premiere in Seattle in May 2010. Naxos released a CD of the work in May 2011, about which Fanfare Magazine wrote: "*A most touching experience and one that further confirms Laitman's status as one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers.*" Laitman and Mason are currently developing *Ludlow*, a new opera based on Mason's award-winning verse novel about the 1914 Colorado mining town disaster. Excerpts will be presented at The University of Colorado's New Opera Workshop in June 2012.

Laitman graduated magna cum laude from Yale College and received her Master of Music degree from The Yale School of Music. For more information, please visit [artsongs.com](http://artsongs.com).



## The Librettist: David Mason

*Li-bret-tist: Writer of the text of a work (as an opera) for the musical theater.*

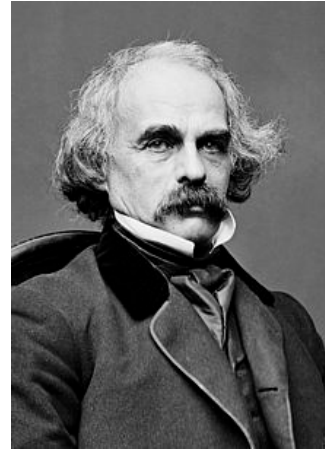


David Mason's books of poems include *The Buried Houses* (winner of the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize), *The Country I Remember* (winner of the Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award), and *Arrivals*. His verse novel, *Ludlow*, was published in 2007, and named best poetry book of the year by the Contemporary Poetry Review and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. It was also featured on the PBS News Hour. He is also author of a collection of essays, *The Poetry of Life and the Life of Poetry*, and his memoir, *News from the Village*, appeared in 2010. Mason has co-edited several textbooks and anthologies, including: *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*; *Rebel Angels: 25 Poets of the New Formalism*, *Twentieth Century American Poetry*, and *Twentieth Century American Poetics: Poets on the Art of Poetry V*. His poetry, prose and translations have appeared in such periodicals as the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New York Times*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Poetry*, *Agenda*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, the *New Criterion*, the *Yale Review*, the *Hudson Review*, the *American Scholar*, the *Irish Times*, and the *Southern Review*. Mason has also written the libretti for composer Lori Laitman's opera of *The Scarlet Letter* and her Holocaust oratorio, *Vedem*. In 2009 he won the Thatcher Hoffman Smith Creativity in Motion Prize, allowing him to adapt *Ludlow* into a new libretto for Laitman. A former Fulbright Fellow to Greece, Mason was recently named Poet Laureate of Colorado. Click [here](http://www.cpr.org/news/story/meet-david-mason-colorados-new-poet-laureate) to listen to Mason's interview with Colorado Public Radio, or go to <http://www.cpr.org/news/story/meet-david-mason-colorados-new-poet-laureate>.

# The Novelist: Nathaniel Hawthorne

*No-vel-ist: Writer of the text of a work*

Nathaniel Hawthorne (July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864):  
American novelist and short story writer.



Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in the city of Salem, Massachusetts to Nathaniel Hathorne and Elizabeth Clarke Manning. His ancestors include John Hathorne, the only judge involved in the Salem witch trials who never repented of his actions. Nathaniel later added a "w" to make his name "Hawthorne" in order to hide this relation. He entered Bowdoin College in 1821, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1824, and graduated in 1825. Hawthorne anonymously published his first work, a novel titled *Fanshawe*, in 1828. He published several short stories in various periodicals which he collected in 1837 as *Twice-Told Tales*. The next year, he became engaged to Sophia Peabody. He worked at the Custom House publishing company and joined Brook Farm, a transcendentalist community, before marrying Peabody in 1842. The couple moved to The Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, later moving to Salem, the Berkshires, and then to The Wayside in Concord. *The Scarlet Letter* was published in 1850, followed by a succession of other novels. A political appointment took Hawthorne and family to Europe before their return to The Wayside in 1860. Hawthorne died on May 19, 1864, and was survived by his wife and their three children.

Much of Hawthorne's writing centers on New England, many works featuring moral allegories with a Puritan inspiration. His fiction works are considered part of the Romantic movement and, more specifically, dark romanticism. His themes often center on the inherent evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. His published works include novels, short stories, and a biography of his friend Franklin Pierce.

## Novels

Fanshawe (1828)

The Scarlet Letter (1850)

The House of Seven Gables (1851)

The Bithedale Romance (1852)

The Marble Faun: Or, The Romance of Monte Beni (1860)

The Dolliver Romance (1863) (unfinished)

Septimus Felton; or, the Elizir of Life (published in the Atlantic Monthly, 1872)

Doctor Grimshawe's Secret: A Romance (unfinished) (1881)

# Introduction to Opera

What do you think of when you hear the term “Opera”? Do you think of people in funny hats with horns, or of singing that’s very loud and hard to understand?

While you have probably moved beyond this point, most students are familiar only with these opera stereotypes. The goal of this first exercise is to help students recognize stereotypes about opera and to move on to a greater understanding and appreciation for the art form.

In other words, to help students move from this:

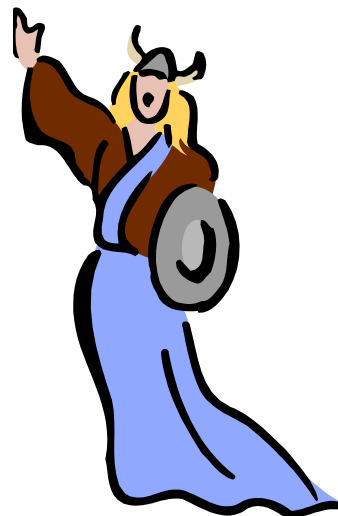


To this:



# Diagramming Differences

## Instructor Guide



### Supplies:

- Large sheets of butcher paper
- Colored pencils or markers

### Directions:

- Have students break into groups of 4 or 5. Instruct them to work together to draw what they think an opera singer looks like. Encourage them to be as detailed as possible.
- Give students 20 to 30 minutes to work on their pictures
- When they're done, have the students explain their choices to the rest of the class

### Discussion:

- Start out with a brief definition of what a stereotype is (an oversimplified standardized image of a person or group). Ask the students to identify any stereotypes in their drawings. Write these on the board.
- Next, go back through the list and write down the truth behind each stereotype (for example, if students thought that opera singers are all old, write down that opera singers can be both young and old).

### Additional Activities:

- Have the students make their own T chart compiling the two lists of stereotypes and realities.
- Have the students write a short paragraph summarizing what they've learned.
- Have the students identify stereotypes in another area they've been studying (maybe a story they've been reading in class or a topic from history) and create a T chart for it.

### Example:

Stereotype	Reality
- Opera is for old people	- Opera is for everyone
- Opera singers dress like Vikings	- Opera singers dress according to the time period of the opera
- Operas have to be serious	- Operas can be both tragic and comedic
- Operas were written a long time ago	- Operas are still being written today

## Activity: Compare and Contrast!

While the opera is more rich and varied than it is often given credit for, it is still a distinct musical form. As you've probably guessed...Opera and pop music are genres with many differences! Singers such as Renee Fleming, Denyce Graves and Joan Sutherland are much different than pop singers such as Miley Cyrus and Taylor Swift. In this activity, we will listen to different examples of famous opera excerpts and famous pop songs. Can you spot the differences?



### **EXAMPLE #1: “Wildest Dreams” by Taylor Swift**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdneKLhsWOQ>

### **EXAMPLE #2: “Sempre Libera” (Always Free) by Giuseppe Verdi sung by Natalie Dessay**

<https://youtu.be/5HDKgsXfkaA?t=2m44s>



Translation: <http://lyricstranslate.com/en/%C3%A8-strano-ah-fors%C3%A8-lui-sempre-libera-how-strange-ah-maybe-hes-one-always-free.html>

# Activity: Compare and Contrast

## Instructor Guide

### Introduction

If time permits, let your students enjoy each song in its entirety. (Make sure they are taking notes on the differences between Taylor Swift's "Wildest Dreams" and the aria "Sempre Libera" from Verdi's opera *La traviata*.)

### Lesson

Using their individual notes, have the class break into small groups. Give the groups 5 to 10 minutes to discuss the differences they are noting.

After small group discussions, hand out the attached worksheet, and give students another 10 minutes to fill them out individually. Musicians must keep keen ears, and noting differences in instrumentation, language, and style/genre of music is critical for any performer, musicologist or critic. Suggest these factors to students who may be having trouble on their worksheets.

Recommended musical factors to cover:

- 1.) Forum
  - a.) Live or recorded?
  - b.) Microphone or no microphone?
  - c.) Types of audiences?
- 2.) Language
  - a.) Italian vs. English
  - b.) Are operas and popular songs written in other languages?
- 3.) Instrumentation
  - a.) Electric or acoustic?
  - b.) Differences in singing: is it speech-like or not?
  - c.) Concert hall vs. a recording studio



### Conclusion

Listen to each song once again, and then have a class discussion, giving students time to finish their worksheets and share their ideas.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Compare and Contrast Pop and Opera Worksheet**

- 1.) After your first listening, what do you notice that is similar between each song?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.) After your fist listening, what do you notice that is different between each song?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.) Notes from small group discussion.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4.) After your second hearing, what do you notice is different concerning language, instruments used, and performance setting?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5.) Notes from class discussion.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6.) Which piece of music do you like better? Use evidence from what you are hearing to back up your answer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity: Storyline Analysis

Cut out the following scenes from *The Scarlet Letter* from the paper below and paste them onto the following page.

### Definitions:

**Exposition:** Beginning of the story where the characters and setting are introduced

**Rising Action:** Conflict arises that the characters must confront

**Climax:** The final confrontation between the characters and the conflict, the turning point

**Falling Action:** The actions that occur as a direct result of the turning point

**Resolution:** When all the actions are complete and the story draws to a (Denouement) conclusion

Dimmesdale & Hester realize Chillingworth will follow them wherever they flee in order to gain revenge.

Hester is shunned by the community but is looked after by Dimmesdale.

Chillingworth confronts Hester in her jail cell.

Dimmesdale grows ill – Chillingworth moves in to care for him.

Dimmesdale tells the community he loves Hester.

Hester refuses to reveal the name of her child's father.

Dimmesdale dies from his illness.

Chillingworth figures out that Dimmesdale was Hester's lover. Hester asks him not to tell and warns Dimmesdale.

Dimmesdale tries to punish himself for his sins.

Dimmesdale and Hester plan to leave town, but Chillingworth learns of their plans.

Hester is judged at the scaffold.



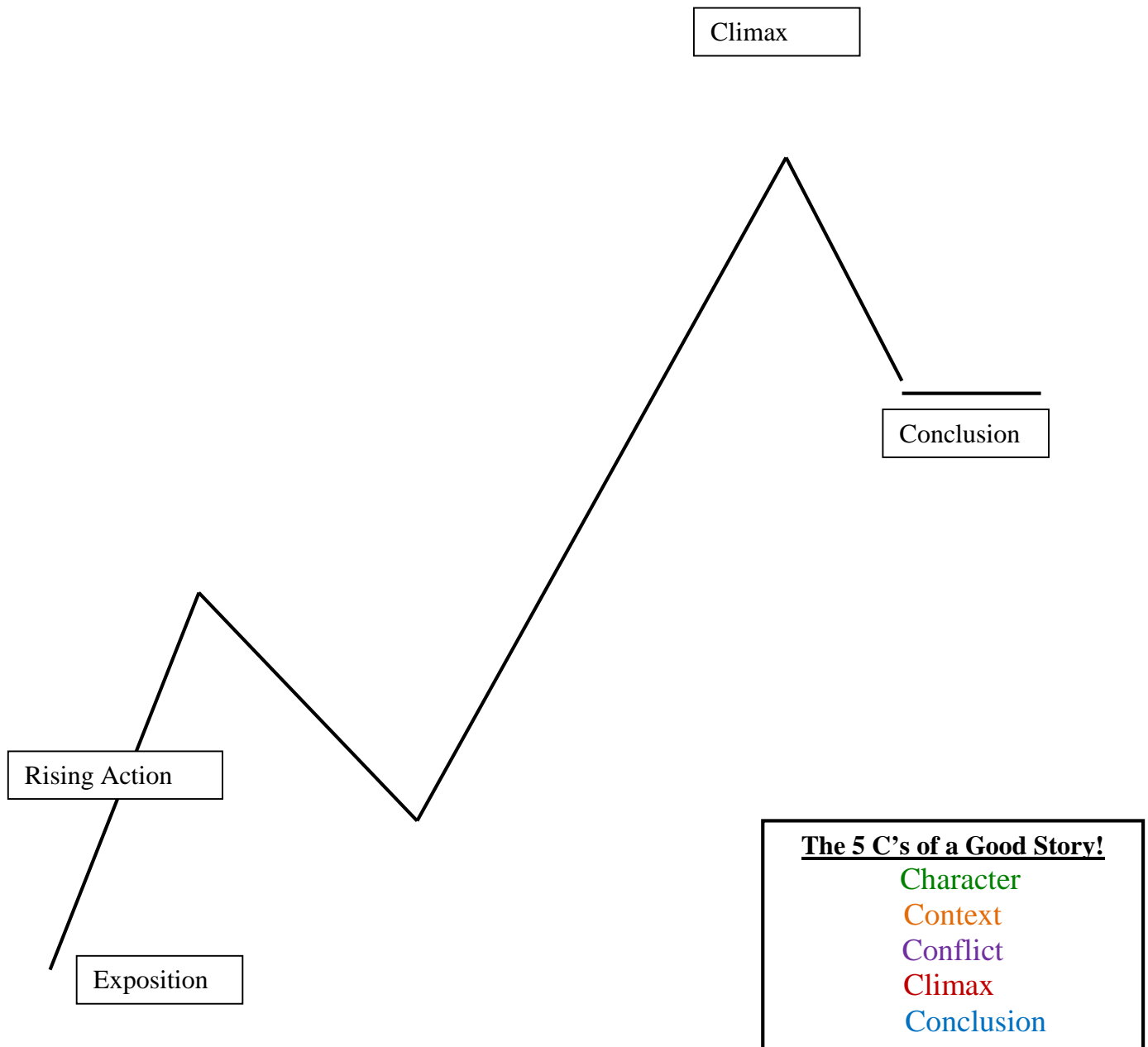
# Activity: Storyline Analysis Continued

Who are the main characters?

Where does the story take place?

When does the story take place?

Cut and paste the parts of *The Scarlet Letter* into the diagram of the story structure



# Story Analysis Worksheet | Instructor Guide

Who are the main characters?

Where does the story take place?

When does the story take place?

Cut and paste the parts of *The Scarlet Letter* into the diagram of the story structure

## Climax

Dimmesdale tells the community he loves Hester.

Dimmesdale dies from his illness.

Dimmesdale & Hester realize Chillingworth will follow them wherever they flee in order to gain revenge.

Dimmesdale and Hester plan to leave town, but Chillingworth learns of their plans.

Dimmesdale grows ill – Chillingworth moves in to care for him

Chillingworth figures out that Dimmesdale was Hester's lover. Hester asks him not to tell and warns Dimmesdale.

## Rising Action

Chillingworth confronts Hester in her jail cell.

Hester is shunned by the community but is looked after by Dimmesdale.

Dimmesdale tries to punish himself for his sins.

## Exposition

Hester refuses to reveal the name of her child's father.

Hester is judged at the scaffold.

### The 5 C's of a Good Story!

Character

Context

Conflict

Climax

Conclusion

## Activity: Storyline Analysis (Alternate Activity)

If you're looking for passion and intrigue, romance, mystery, and tragedy, it doesn't get much better than *The Scarlet Letter*. Using the worksheet on the following page, have students choose five scenes from the opera – one that illustrates each part of the story (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Draw a picture of the scene, then summarize it on the side of the paper.



### The 5 C's of a Good Story!

Character

Context

Conflict

Climax

Conclusion

### Definitions:

- Exposition – Beginning of the story where the characters and setting are introduced
- Rising Action – Conflict arises that the characters must confront
- Climax – The final confrontation between the characters and the conflict, the turning point
- Falling Action – The actions that occur as a direct result of the turning point
- Resolution (Denouement) – When all the actions are complete and the story draws to a conclusion

# Activity: Storyline Analysis

## Exposition

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## Rising Action

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## Climax

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## Falling Action

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## Resolution

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## Activity: Visual Arts

Set design is a pivotal part of any opera production. The set provides the context and background for the story and each character that makes up the story. Certain designers and directors prefer simple sets, which puts more emphasis on the opera singers themselves as seen below in Opera Colorado's 2016 production of *The Scarlet Letter*. Other directors and designers create grandiose scenes with large sets and a large chorus of singers.

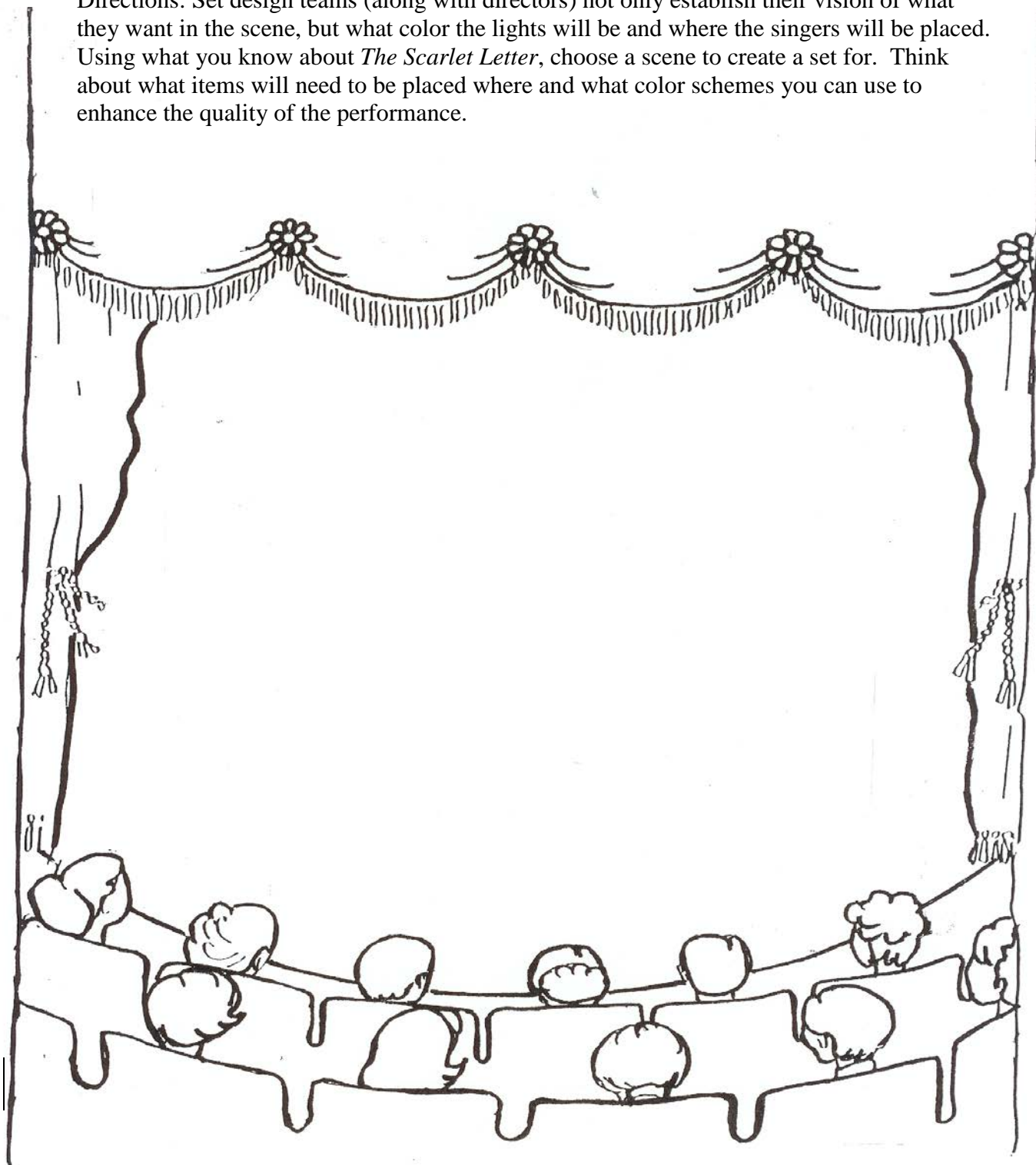




## Design Your Own Set



Directions: Set design teams (along with directors) not only establish their vision of what they want in the scene, but what color the lights will be and where the singers will be placed. Using what you know about *The Scarlet Letter*, choose a scene to create a set for. Think about what items will need to be placed where and what color schemes you can use to enhance the quality of the performance.



# Activity: Visual Arts

## Instructor Guide



### Introduction

Hand out a worksheet (on previous page) to each student and read the introductory paragraph on set design. If time permits, you may wish to show the students pictures of different opera sets. Links can be found below.

[http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/media/site36/2011/0428/20110428\\_ae29cind3~p1.jpg](http://extras.mnginteractive.com/live/media/site36/2011/0428/20110428_ae29cind3~p1.jpg)

<http://www.dallasartsrevue.com/ArtSpaces/opera/JR52038-svr-species-sets.jpg>

[http://www.operanews.com/uploadedImages/Opera\\_News\\_Magazine/2011/4\(1\)/Departments/BroadcastWalkBcst3hdl1511.jpg](http://www.operanews.com/uploadedImages/Opera_News_Magazine/2011/4(1)/Departments/BroadcastWalkBcst3hdl1511.jpg)

[http://www.operanews.com/\\_uploaded/image/article/orfeobcst2hdl14107.jpg](http://www.operanews.com/_uploaded/image/article/orfeobcst2hdl14107.jpg)

### Lesson

Allow the students 20-30 minutes to design their sets. Encourage them to be as creative and as detailed as possible. The set should also tell a story, and should reflect what is going on in the opera.

When they are finished, bring the class back together. Ask for volunteers to describe their drawings. Encourage the students to explain why they made the choices they did. The goal of this project is to allow students to see all of the thought and planning that go into set designs.

### Recommended discussion questions

#### 1.) Setting

- a.) Is the scene inside or outside? Can you tell what types of people might inhabit that space by looking at it (rich or poor, workers, a king, a family)?
- b.) What props and backdrops are necessary to convey a sense of place?

#### 2.) Color

- a.) What colors were used?
- b.) How does color and lighting affect the mood of the scene?

#### 3.) Planning

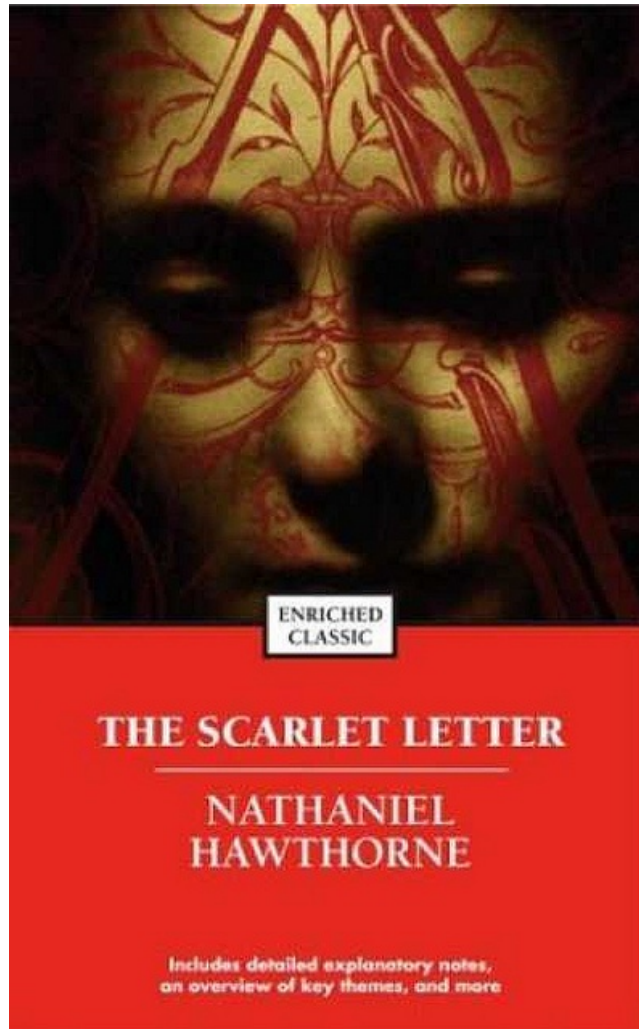
- a.) Was it difficult to include everything in the amount of space given?
- b.) What problems would set designers face in having to create a set for a big theater (directing audience attention to the appropriate spot, time of making such big sets)?  
What problems would designers face in having to create a set for a little theater (consolidation, utilizing every inch, not making it too crowded).

### Additional Activities

Set design can also be a fun way to teach math skills. For an additional challenge, try placing certain parameters on what the students can draw (ex. There must be a building 3 cm high and 2 cm wide, there must be a prop 7 cm from the left side of the stage and 3 cm from the bottom).

## Activity: Creative Writing

When writing a story, an author has to consider many things. Like a good detective, an author must consider who, what, when, where, and why – who the characters are, what the plot line is, when and where the story takes place, and why the characters behave the way they do (or, in other words, the setting, characters, conflict, and resolution). In this exercise, students will practice manipulating the setting and characters of the story.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/umhblibrary/5367642905/7-24-12>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Activity: Creative Writing Worksheet



*The Scarlet Letter* takes place near Boston, Massachusetts in 1642. Imagine instead that it took place in America today. Think about the various details of the plot and setting that would have to change. For example: Where would Hester be from? What kind of job would Dimmesdale have? Where would they live? How could you rewrite the characters and setting in *The Scarlet Letter* to be contemporary while still making sure that the conflict and resolution make sense? Use the space below to outline your thoughts.

**Outline:**

# Activity: Logic Puzzles

## Instructor Guide

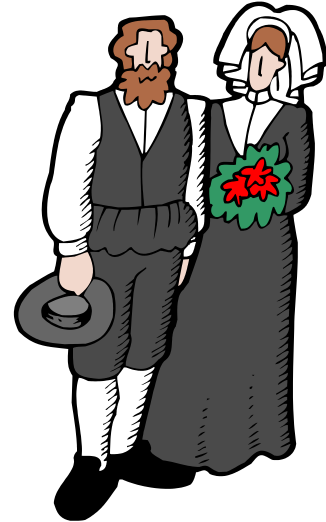
This activity is a great addition to any math lesson. It emphasizes logic and reasoning, while simultaneously encouraging students to read critically. The worksheet also includes a brief explanation about Puritanism in early America.

### Topics of Discussion

1. American history
2. Probability, logic, and reasoning.

### Instructions:

1. As a class, read the handout on the Puritans.
2. Answer any questions the students might have.
3. Give the students time to complete the worksheet.
4. Use the key provided below to check answers.



### Additional Activities

1. The information on the Puritans could also be used to launch further discussion on American history and culture, or of history and culture in general.
2. The math worksheet would be a good way to warm up at the beginning of a math class, or as a filler between subjects.

**Key: Green signifies the correct answer**

	Preaching	Reading	Cooking	Doing Laundry	House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
William								
Mary								
Jacob								
Anne								
House 1								
House 2								
House 3								
House 4								

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity: Logic Puzzles

Directions: Use the clues below to figure out which Puritan is completing which job, and which house they are in. Shade in the correct answers completely, and mark an X in all of the other boxes.

	Preaching	Reading	Cooking	Doing Laundry	House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
William								
Mary								
Jacob								
Anne								
House 1								
House 2								
House 3								
House 4								

Clues:

1. William is not doing laundry.
2. Cooking, which is Jacob's favorite activity, is not being done in an even numbered house.
3. Anne's activity is taking place in House 2.
4. Mary dislikes reading.
5. House 4 wasn't suitable for preaching, so it was moved two houses to the left.
6. Anne is preaching.
7. The house that the cooking is taking place in is only divisible by one.
8. The activity that William is doing is in the house number that equals  $2 \times 2$ .

# Gender Roles and Social Pressure in *The Scarlet Letter*

## Instructor Guide

The story of the *The Scarlet Letter* is more than a story about extremist Puritan- ideology and beliefs on adultery. First and foremost, it is about the strength shown by Hester Prynne: her courage and willingness to forgive; to move towards improving her life after suffering tragedy; and her resolve to stay true to herself despite the judgment shown to her community. Students will be able to relate to the lesson about following your own path and remaining true to your conscience, even when others disagree.

*The Scarlet Letter* is also a story about the actions of those in power and how they sometimes encourage societal oppression. In today's society, where social media can be used as a tool for widespread public denunciation and humiliation, *The Scarlet Letter* carries a message as strongly as it did in 1850. These next few activities will help you explore the topics of gender equality, societal expectations on gender, and societal judgment and oppression so that you and your students can discuss how these issues play a role in *The Scarlet Letter*, as well as their own daily lives.



# Activity: Statements About Women and Men Quiz

*From the Mekong Institute/UNESCO Training Course on “Decentralized Education Planning in the Context of Public Sector Reform” by Khon Kaen and the Gender Team at UNESCO Bangkok*

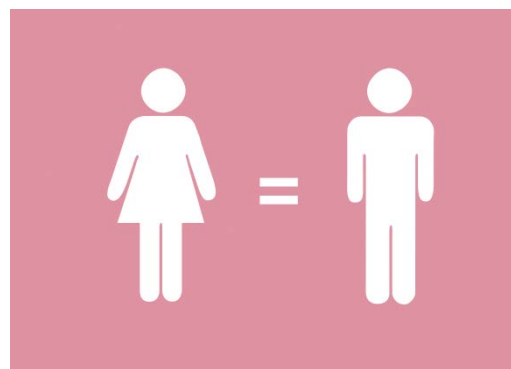
## Instructor Guide

Directions: Read and discuss the following sections with your students and be sure they answer the questions below. Students may complete the questions individually on their own sheet of paper or as a class discussion. Be sure to ask students to explain their answers.

### Part I: Sex and Gender: What is the difference?

#### Sex

- Something one is born with
- Based on biological characteristics
- Universal in description; similar for people in the same group
- Sex chooses you – you are born with your sex



[www.europeanmovement.eu](http://www.europeanmovement.eu)

#### Gender

- Something that is learned
- Based on social characteristics
- Diverse in description; culturally different for each person
- Able to change – you can choose gender after birth

#### Gender or Sex?

*Are the following statements determined by gender or sex?*

*Are there any statements you disagree with and why?*

1. Women give birth to babies, men do not. **Sex**
2. Girls are gentle; boys are tough. **Gender**
3. Women breastfeed babies; men can bottle-feed babies. **Sex**
4. Doctors are men; nurses are women. **Gender**
5. Boys don't cry. **Gender**
6. Boys are good at math and science. Girls are good at language and history. **Gender**
7. When one thinks of an engineer, one hardly ever thinks of a woman. **Gender**
8. Women work 2/3 of the world's working hours, produce 1/2 of the world's food, and yet earn only 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property. **Gender**
9. Boys' voices break at puberty, girls' do not. **Sex**
10. A girl gets expelled from school for being pregnant, while the boy who impregnated her is neither judged nor expelled. **Gender**
11. Kindergarten teachers should be women; men are not good at taking care of young children. **Gender**.

But what do **you** think?

### **More statements on gender relations from other countries**

*What do you think when you read these statements?*

*Do any of them apply to your society, culture, or family? Why?*

- Men are the front legs of an elephant and women are the hind legs.
- Men should not step into the kitchen.
- Women should walk 3 steps behind men.
- Women are flowers of the world.

#### **But also...**

- Women hold up half of the sky.
- The human race is a two-winged bird – one wing is female and the other is male. Unless both wings are equally developed, the human race will not be able to fly.

### **The Definition of Gender**

- **Gender** refers to the **roles** and **responsibilities** of men and women that are created in our families, our societies, and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity).

#### **To sum it all up...**

- Gender  $\neq$  Women/Female
- Gender = social and cultural construction or interpretation of differences between the sexes (masculinity and femininity).
- Sex = biological distinction and differences between male and female

## **Part II: Gender Parity and Gender Equality**

*What do these terms mean and why are they important?*

**Parity** requires equal proportions of girls and boys being enrolled in school.

This is a numerical concept. In other words, it is determined by numbers

**Gender Parity** requires that equal proportions of girls and boys are enrolled in school.

*Why should this be important for schools?*

### **Example of Gender Parity**

- “50% of eligible school age girls and 70% of school age boys are enrolled in school”
  - This is **gender disparity**
- “70% of girls and 70% of boys are enrolled”
  - This is **gender parity**
- The ultimate goal should be 100% enrollment for males and females!

## Gender Equality

**Gender Equality** is NOT about having the same number of men and women in all spheres and activities.

**Gender Equality** is NOT about treating men and women exactly the same.

### Gender Equality Means...

- Different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered and valued equally.
- Their rights, opportunities, and responsibilities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.
- Women and men are free to develop their personal skills and make choices without limitations set by stereotypes, or rigid gender roles and bias.
- Women and men can live equally fulfilling lives.

### Questions and Group Discussion

Based off the worksheet above, discuss these questions with your classmates. Some may not be answered fully until after you see the opera.

- Is gender equality displayed in *The Scarlet Letter*? At what moments and in what ways?
- How is gender equality **not** exemplified in the opera?
- Give examples of gender **parity** and gender **disparity** in the opera.
- How do you think *The Scarlet Letter* would read if told from the perspective of Dimmesdale or Chillingworth? How is their experience with the Scarlet Letter different from Hester's?
- Although Hester and Dimmesdale both share in the conception of their daughter, why is Hester the only person publicly punished? Do you think these are for reasons surrounding gender, sex, or both?

# Gender Equality Activity (Additional)

Adapted from *Gender Equity Activities – Education & Early Development* at [https://education.alaska.gov/tls/cte/docs/nto/gender\\_equity.pdf](https://education.alaska.gov/tls/cte/docs/nto/gender_equity.pdf) pages 2-6

## INTRODUCTION

This Gender Equity Activity Book is a student oriented selection of activities that focuses on detailed and easy to use activities for teachers and students. It is a student-focused book of easy to use activities. Included in the activities will be stereotyping, careers, sexual harassment, language, employability, classroom equality, gender and technology. Teachers will find tools for evaluations, and guidelines that will help promote gender equity in the school and work setting.

### Goals of Gender Equity Activity Book are to:

- Help students learn about the advantages of "nontraditional" career choices for female and male students.
- Promote responsibility among students regarding prejudice and inequalities in different careers by using positive action and conflict resolution.
- Help in the development of analytical and critical thinking skills of students.
- Assist teachers and students in creating an equitable classroom environment.
- Help students to recognize and challenge harassment in the classroom and work place.

This publication is for teachers and counselors who work with students in regular high schools, alternative high schools and or vocational and technical schools. It is helpful for teachers working with students who are pursuing nontraditional careers. It will also be helpful to community based organizations and after school programs who work with youth to promote nontraditional careers. This activity book can be used in existing classroom curriculum, taught as separate units in regular classrooms and/or can be used in life skills curriculum.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The activities in this booklet will attempt to demonstrate a multi-media, multidiscipline, student centered, and equitable curriculum that celebrates the diversity of the classroom while recognizing the rights, responsibilities, and personal history of the individual. "Students learn best in an environment that acknowledges respects and accommodates each learner's background, individuality and gender.



## **ACTIVITY: 1. THE OTHER GENDER IS... OPINIONS AND FEELINGS CONCERNING THE "OPPOSITE" SEX**

TIME: 100 MINUTES

SUBJECTS: ENGLISH, HEALTH, LIFE SKILLS

DESCRIPTION:

This is a student writing-based activity that explores preconceptions, attitudes, and anxieties concerning the "opposite" gender. Discussion is stimulated by student reading of personal narratives.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

#### **Short Term**

- To analyze personal and cultural attitudes toward other gender.
- To clearly and cogently express ideas and emotions in writing.
- To present written work verbally to an audience.
- To improve listening skills.

#### **Long Term**

- To develop healthy, equitable, and realistic attitudes toward the other gender.

### **MATERIALS:**

Use student's writing exercise as material for this activity.

### **PROCEDURE:**

It is best if written work is assigned as homework. If written in classroom setting, peer influence may inhibit honest and thorough effort; also, responses may be more self-conscious.

1. Ask students to discuss in writing their feelings and opinions about the "opposite" gender.
  - a. Give a required length to insure some thought and uniformity for reading time when used as a classroom activity. Example: 150 words. Students may want to consider the following questions in their essays:
    - In what ways are you different from other students in your class?
    - How are you the same as other students in your class?
    - Is friendship with the other gender different from same gender friendship? How and why?
    - Do you change your actions and activities when you're in the presence of the other gender?
    - How and why?

2. Separate students according to gender for presentation of essays. Each student reads his/her paper to the class. Have listeners respond in two ways:
  - a. Write a short response to the reader.
  - b. Offer verbal responses. Ask students to find points they agree with. Explain that responses and viewpoints need to be kept positive.
3. Bring class back together. Have students volunteer to read their essays.
  - a. Allow free discussion. Ask students to consider the following:
    - i. Was the discussion different with the whole class present?
    - ii. Why or why not?
4. At the end of the discussion, ask students for positive statements about the other gender and record them on the board under male or female headings. Point out commonalities. Ask students to list the statements that could be switched to other gender column.

**EVALUATION:**

Student writing may be assessed in terms of effort, creativity, content, and style.

Speaking and listening skills may be noted during oral presentations and subsequent discussions.

## **ACTIVITY: 2. ARE YOU “ACTING” LIKE A MAN OR A WOMAN**

**TIME:** 55 to 100 MINUTES

**SUBJECTS:** LIFE SKILLS, CAREER AWARENESS, HEALTH

**DESCRIPTION:**

This activity is designed to help students understand gender roles and expectations that are learned in our society. This is a useful introductory activity on gender roles as related to career and class choices.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Short Term

- To understand and analyze gender role stereotyping and origins.
- To examine the effects of gender role stereotyping on career choices for both males and females.
- To provide encouragement to those students who are contemplating or have chosen "nontraditional" courses or careers.

Long Term

- To challenge and minimize and/or eliminate stereotypical perceptions and actions towards the "other" gender.
- To accept and support those career and life choices made by peers, even if they may challenge gender role stereotypes.

**MATERIALS:**

1. Newsprint or large sheets of paper divided into three sections.
2. Markers.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Divide students into small groups no larger than 6 students. Groups can be gender same or mixed groups.
2. Give each group the piece of newsprint divided into three columns. On the top of the middle column either write “Act Like A Man” or “Act Like A Woman”. Ask students to make a list of what it means to act like a man or woman in this column. Each group will have a different heading.
3. On the left column, ask students to write down what people might "say" or "do" if someone does not act like a man or woman as defined in the middle column. This portion of the activity can generate a lively and graphic use of words and discussion. Remind students to be respectful.
  - a. Some instructors may want to set ground rules around language usage.
4. Divide the right column in half and ask students to list the jobs one would choose if they acted like the descriptions listed in the middle column. For example, the "traditional" female role and career choice might not include welder, construction worker..., a "traditional" male role and career choice might not include elementary teacher, nurse...

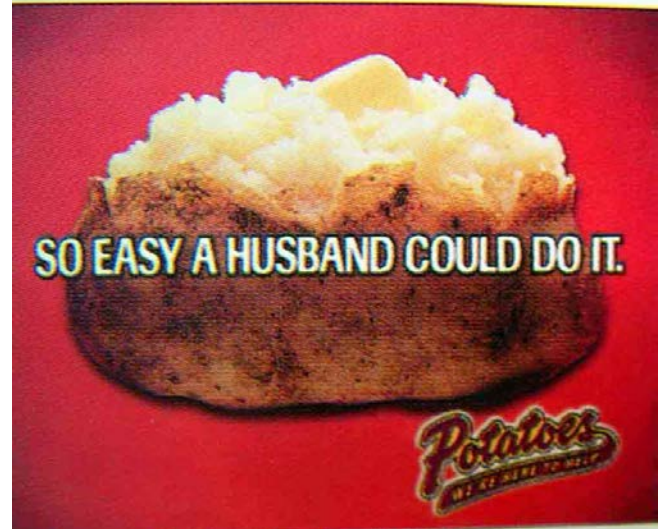
5. Hang up the lists for students to view and contemplate. Ask each group to make a few comments about their lists.
6. Assist students with analyzing these lists. Possible questions for discussion include:
  - a. How and where do we learn our perception of male and female roles?
  - b. Do these roles and descriptions limit or enhance us in life choices?
  - c. Have you or someone you know ever acted differently from how your gender is "supposed" to act?
  - d. Have you or someone you know ever stood up for a person who challenged the gender stereotypes?
  - e. What other conclusions/statements do you have about this topic?

**EVALUATION:**

Assess the overall work of the group including: contribution, discussion, and analysis.  
Use a rubric to evaluate the subjective aspects of this activity.

## Discussion: Gender Equality in the Media

- Do any of these advertisements perpetuate gender stereotypes? Which ones and how? And which gender(s) are they stereotyping?
- How do advertisements and media continue and encourage gender inequality and disparity in our lives today? Can you think of advertisements that encourage gender **equality**?



SOME MEN  
SAY MORE w  
THAN THEY EVER

Look like a girl  
Act like a lady  
Think like a man  
Work like a boss



#HappyWomensDay



HOW DOES  
HEIDI KLUM  
TUNE OUT  
THE NOISE?



Foldable Bluetooth  
Headphones

SHARPER IMAGE

got milk?

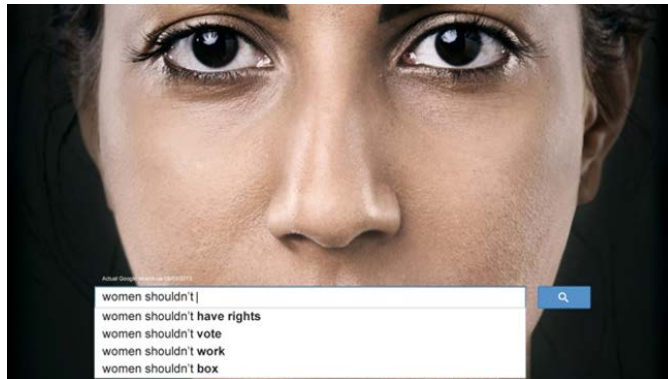
NED TO  
SAID  
MEANT.

MAN  
R HANDS.



ORG  
SYMPTOMS OF PMS.

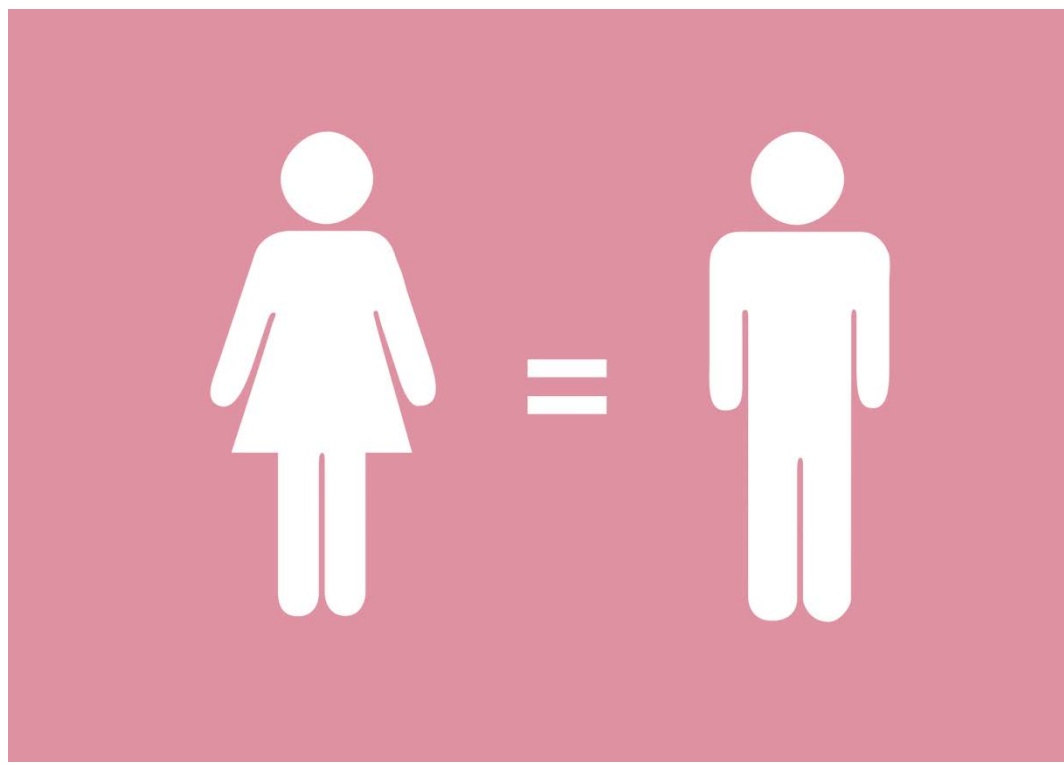
# Dialogue Starters for Conversations on Bullying and Societal Oppression



**Directions:** Use the discussion questions below to start conversations with your students. Each question relates to *The Scarlet Letter*, and how the different characters are faced with and react to bullying, social pressures, and inequality.

1. After reading the synopsis or seeing *The Scarlet Letter*, can you identify the bullies and identify the victims?
2. If you believe there are no bullies or are no victims, why do you think so?
3. What makes these certain characters bullies, or why are other characters victims? Describe character behaviors, words, and actions that confirm your reasoning.
4. What does it mean to be a bully? What does it mean to be a victim?
5. At any point in the story, is Hester Prynne judged for being a woman? Are these judgments correct, or are they misguided and based off stereotypes?
6. Besides Hester, which other characters in the story are judged or compared to stereotypes?
7. Do these judgments and/or stereotypes effect actions, speech, thoughts, behaviors of other characters? How and why?
8. How does bullying and societal oppression impact the outcome of the story?
9. Can you compare *The Scarlet Letter* to a story, movie, or song, or news story that is current today? What is similar, and what is different?
10. How does this relate to your own life?





## **Additional Resources for Gender Equality Lessons**

Continue these discussions with your students by utilizing some of the resources below. We picked websites and activities that we felt would best fit the widest range of ages and experiences, and we encourage you to adapt anything you find so it best fits your class.

- Teach Unicef, *Gender Equality*, 2015
  - <https://teachunicef.org/teaching-materials/topic/gender-equality>
- TeachingDegree.org, *Teaching Gender Equality to Teens: A Lesson Guide*, 2015
  - <http://www.teachingdegree.org/2012/12/07/teaching-gender-equality-to-teens/>
- National Education Association, *Teaching Students to Prevent Bullying*, 2015
  - <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html>
- PBS Newshour, *Bullying Education Resources*,  
[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons\\_plans/bullying-education-resources/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/bullying-education-resources/)
- Southern Poverty Law Center, *Teaching Tolerance: Bullying Basics*,  
<http://www.tolerance.org/bullying-basics>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Scarlet Letter Word Search



D	Z	Q	N	Q	I	D	E	B	F	H	A	Q	H	W
N	R	E	O	H	C	Q	L	N	R	A	T	J	Y	
L	P	R	T	T	S	I	T	T	E	R	B	I	L	V
E	U	R	S	R	C	H	H	P	D	R	Y	D	S	I
I	N	O	O	N	A	A	O	I	Z	J	B	N	R	T
O	P	R	B	U	R	E	M	S	I	N	A	D	E	O
L	S	D	O	M	L	M	C	P	H	T	Q	N	V	M
H	C	W	O	H	E	S	B	O	I	Z	Z	N	E	T
P	P	N	I	S	T	Z	U	R	M	L	E	S	R	I
Z	Y	W	D	W	L	W	U	A	R	P	G	V	E	E
E	U	A	B	L	E	P	A	F	D	E	O	X	N	L
G	L	C	W	S	T	E	M	H	N	T	T	S	D	I
E	A	D	U	L	T	E	R	Y	R	H	Q	S	E	O
Q	R	S	O	U	E	P	O	R	H	T	A	L	E	R
W	S	G	D	Y	R	J	A	Y	O	R	S	F	Y	H

### Word Bank

ADULTERY	BOSTON	COMPOSER
DIMMESDALE	HARMONY	HAWTHORNE
HESTER	LATHROP	LEITMOTIV
LIBRETTIST	OPERA	PURITANS
REVEREND	SCARLET LETTER	SIN

# Program Evaluation

Opera Colorado strives to provide quality programs that meet the needs of students and teachers across the state. Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation and give us feedback on your experience. **Opera Colorado is also interested in your students' response to the programs. We would be happy to receive any letters or artwork from them!**

Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Fanciulla del West* (dress rehearsal)  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Lucia di Lammermoor* Please circle one: (dress rehearsal / matinee)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Backstage Workshops** (Please circle one: 11/8, 11/9, 11/10, 5/8, 5/10, 5/12)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Touring Opera Performance** (Please circle one: *Barber of Seville* / *Elixir of Love*)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Opera in a Trunk** (Please name which trunk: \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **In-School Workshop** (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Other** (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Is this your first time participating in Opera Colorado's Education programs? YES / NO

If YES, what made you participate this year?

If NO, how many years have you been a participant?

Were you able to incorporate opera into your curriculum? YES / NO

If YES, please share how.

If NO, do you have suggestions?

Please estimate the percentage of your students who had never been exposed to Opera prior to this event: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe your students' initial attitude toward exposure to Opera?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7  
*negative/unwilling*      *neutral*      *positive/excited*

Did their attitude change after learning more about opera and attending the event? If so, please show on the scale:

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7  
*negative/unwilling*      *neutral*      *positive/excited*

Was the Opera Colorado Teacher Guidebook helpful in preparing your students to attend the event?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7  
*not helpful*      *very helpful*

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the priority of Arts Education in your school?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7  
*not important*      *very important*

Please share with us any additional comments you have. We especially love stories of how Opera impacted your students. Please use space on back if needed.

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**Thank you for your time and comments!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School/Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Administrator \_\_\_\_\_ Paraprofessional \_\_\_\_\_ Parent / Chaperone \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

My students are: K-2      3-5      6-8      9-12      College