

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

BIBLIOSCOPIC DIALOGUE: *The Scarlet Letter*

On the lines below, write an ***interpretive question*** about this story's contribution to a discussion of the idea of ***memory*** and summarize three (3) possible answers based on the details of the story. An interpretive question is an open-ended discussion question *to which there are several possible answers that can be supported by the text.*

Interpretive Question:

How does the inclusion of “The Custom House” effect Hawthorne’s narrative?

Answer #1

By including “The Custom House” in his story, Hawthorne provides a plausible frame for his narrative. He makes himself a sort of historical journalist and lends his story authenticity.

Answer #2

With the inclusion of “The Custom House” with *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne establishes an ancestral connection between himself and the Puritan characters of his novel. This association explains both his trenchant criticism of their enterprise as well as his empathetic depiction of their piety and suffering.

Answer #3

Hawthorne’s genius inclusion of “The Custom House” in *The Scarlet Letter* affords him a grand narrative license. This license may well be termed a “blind” for his subject matter, which allows him to take direct aim at his story’s specific themes of human depravity, law, and grace.