

English 11 (Grade-level English III)
Study Guide for Midterm

This midterm will support your understanding of *The Great Gatsby*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and Fascicle 13, even as it also addresses the skills emphasized in *They Say/I Say* and the forms of rhetorical analysis and rhetorical argument. Your exam will consist of two essays.

I. Literary analysis (45 minutes).

Prepare one of the following questions:

1. Setting. Both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Scarlet Letter* use setting to underscore actions, characterization, and theme. Consider, in *Gatsby*, a selection of telling locations; consider New York, East and West Egg, the Valley of Ashes, and even perhaps that memory of the landscape when it was first regarded by “Dutch sailors’ eyes.” In *The Scarlet Letter*, consider Boston, the woods, and/or other settings that come up. What do Fitzgerald and Hawthorne use setting to convey in their novels? What is the importance of place?
2. The role of nature. As we have discussed, American Romantics, particularly Transcendentalists, regard the American landscape, the natural world, as a conduit to the sublime. Compare and contrast the treatment of nature in *The Scarlet Letter* and in the poems of Dickinson’s Fascicle 13. How is the natural world treated in *The Scarlet Letter*—what is the text’s attitude toward it, as distinct perhaps from the Puritans’ attitude toward it? Consider the natural world as setting as well as in symbols. How is the natural world regarded in the Dickinson poems we have read? Does nature seem to have a consistent meaning, or is it seen in a consistent way?

II. Rhetorical analysis (45 minutes).

Rhetorical analysis of a passage. You will be given a passage from one of the texts we have read (“Indians,” *The Great Gatsby*, Columbus’s Journal, The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, “The Custom House,” *The Scarlet Letter*, or an Emily Dickinson poem) and asked to conduct a rhetorical analysis of it. Feel free to review the form of the rhetorical analysis via the assignment sheet for the paper you wrote.