Sample Summary:

In chapters 1-8 of Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter, the three main characters are introduced. Hester Prynne appears at the prison door carrying her illegitimate three-month old daughter, Pearl, and almost proudly wearing the scarlet “A” on the breast of her dress. The town’s people follow her to the scaffold where she faces an inquisition by the religious leaders of the town, as well as the stares and comments of the townspeople. Few of them show any sympathy for her and she refuses to name the father of her child. While standing on the scaffold, she sees her “lost” husband standing in the crowd next to a Native American. He puts his finger to his lips as if to shush Hester and keep her from identifying him. Later he shows up in the prison and provides Pearl and Hester with some sort of concoction that helps them relax. He blackmails her into keeping silent about his existence and says that he will take the name, “Roger Chillingworth.” Chillingworth then begins his plot to discover the father of Pearl. Arthur Dimmesdale is Chillingworth’s immediate suspect due to his demeanor during his questioning of Hester. He attaches himself like a leech to Dimmesdale and proceeds to act as his personal “healer.” In Chapter 5 Hester is released from prison and moves to a cottage outside of town.... YOU SHOULD GET THE IDEA NOW.
Sample Analysis:

The first eight chapters of Hawthorne’s classic novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, introduces the three main characters, as well as their conflicts and sin. Hester Prynne is greeted by jeers and condemnation by the crowd outside the prison—a sample of how the Puritan community of Boston fears the infectious sin she exemplifies. Only one small woman’s voice even tries to defend Hester, seeming to empathize with her isolation and the outcome of her moment of passion. While being “punished” on the scaffold, Hawthorne introduces Arthur Dimmesdale and the other spiritual leaders of the community. Every word Dimmesdale utters to Hester is loaded with subtext. He pleads with her to name her partner in sin while at the same time declaring himself too weak to endure the humiliation and suffering she endures. He even suggests that his silence is more painful than her public suffering displaying a hypocritical weakness in his moral character. The other man in Hester’s life—Roger Chillingworth—also shows up while she is on the scaffold, and completes the romantic triangle. Each character’s moral fiber is evident through their outward appearance or physiognomy. Hawthorne’s fascination with the effects of sin on a person’s soul as portrayed through their physicality continues throughout the first section of the novel...GET THE IDEA?