

“The Minister’s Black Veil” Reading Guide

1. **Context Clues:** As you find the word, define it using context clues.

Irreparably:	Preternatural:	Piety:	Imperceptible:
Bugbear: source of dread	Antipathy:	Irreproachable:	Vagaries:
Impertinence:	Fiend:	Sable:	Torpor:
Pensively:	Visage:	Mitigate:	Resolute

11. Personal Connection Questions:

1. Recall a time when someone close to you changed in a way that made him/her seem like a different person. Describe the change. Why did the change make you see the person so differently?
2. How does someone become a stranger?
3. The narrator calls the human heart “the saddest of all prisons.” What does is this mean? Is he correct? What does it suggest about our relationships with others?
4. The characters’ actions explore the role of fear in human life. Explain your view on how fear plays a role.
5. How does physical appearance impact our lives?
6. How do you see this story as Gothic?*
7. How would the story be different if we knew with certainty why Mr. Hooper was wearing the veil?
8. Is it necessary to experience trials to be a good “counselor” (or friend)? Explain.
9. How would students react if their teachers wore actual veils? Explain.

III. Comprehension Questions

1. What is an objective summary for the story?

2. What are the five most important events in the plot?

3. List 5 specific words that describe the tone of the passage:

4. How does the language reinforce the message of the parable?

5. What values, beliefs, and social constraints are revealed by the parishioners' behavior?

6. What is Hawthorne's view of human nature based off this story? How do you know?

7.: "By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim."

8. Why doesn't Mr. Hooper like to go on evening walks anymore?

9. What did Mr. Hooper avoid?

10. Why couldn't Mr. Hooper walk the streets with a peace of mind?

11. As a clergyman, what effect did Mr. Hooper have on his congregation?

12. At the bottom of page 9. Mr. Hooper is presented as a paradoxical figure. Explain one example of his ironic life.

13. Who was his nurse when he was dying?

14. Some critics believe that Mr. Hooper committed adultery. What evidence would lead them to believe this theory?

15. Why do you think they didn't take the veil off when he died?

16. Hawthorne repeatedly refers to Mr. Hooper's "faint, glimmering smile" throughout the story. What effect does his smile have on the story?

17. Explain why he "fusses" at the people before he dies.

