

Chapters 10 – 12

Standards Focus: Motif

A **motif** is a symbol that appears time and again over the course of the story, reinforcing the themes of a novel. A motif can be an action, symbol, place, statement, or even an object. Although a theme and a motif sound like the same thing, the main difference is that a motif is something that supports the theme (the author’s message within the novel). For example, if the theme of a novel is “the truth will eventually reveal itself,” a motif from that novel might be two or three scenes that are set at night, behind which some sort of truth or secret is hidden, but is eventually revealed as day or light is seen.

Directions: To help you learn how to find and understand motifs, fill in the chart as shown in the example. First, using Chapters 1-12 of the novel, fill in the examples of the motif from the text. Then, decide what theme the motifs and examples reveal. If you need more room, continue your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Motif	Examples of the Motif	What the Motif Reveals
<p>Powerful or symbolic character names</p>	<p>Pearl was given her name because she was the “pearl of great price.” Ironically, Pearl does not have the shine and luster of a pearl, but to Hester, she is very valuable and precious. Dimmesdale’s name also carries great symbolism, as it is mentioned several times throughout Chapters 1-12. As his name would imply, his spirit and health are “dimming” as his sins continue to plague him. Chillingworth’s name is also powerful, since his character is “chillingly” cold, heartless and deceitful as he seeks his revenge.</p>	<p>Character names can be important in a novel. Hawthorne was very deliberate in the names he chose for his characters. Often, authors take special care to name their characters so that their names fit and reveal their character.</p>
<p>The Devil / Evil</p>		
<p>Clothing</p>		
<p>Dimmesdale’s hand over his heart</p>		
<p>Darkness and Daylight</p>		