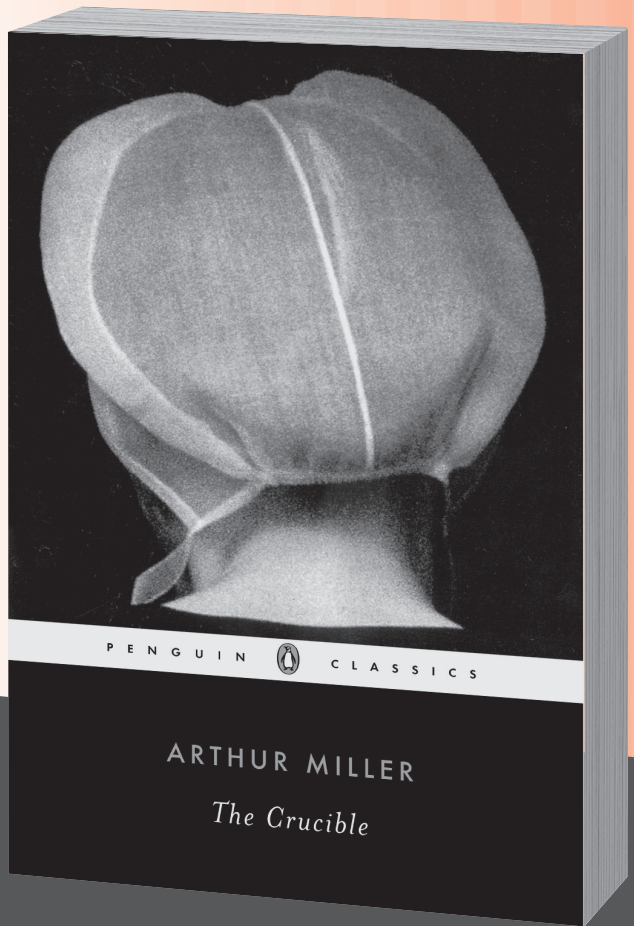


TEACHER'S GUIDE

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE PENGUIN CLASSICS EDITION OF

# THE CRUCIBLE

BY ARTHUR MILLER



BY LAURA REIS MAYER

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## INTRODUCTION

When Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in 1953, his intent was to hold a mirror to his own society, deeply embroiled in the hysteria of the McCarthy era. The play's setting, the 1692 Salem witch trials, echoes the same accusations, fear, and ruination characteristic of mid-century America's Red Scare. And yet, while over sixty years have passed since the play's opening night, its plot is far from anachronistic even today.

On the surface, perhaps, times have changed. Witchcraft in the twenty-first century seems a topic of fascination rather than fear. We need look no further than the literary and silver screen hero Harry Potter. Current popular TV shows such as *Supernatural* and *Coven* return to Salem and rewrite its tragic ending. Lady Gaga is even planning a 2016 musical release entitled *1692*, based on the Salem witch trials. Yet have we really come that far? In our post-9/11 society, fear-mongering and scapegoating are all too real. Accusers are rewarded with airtime, arguments are often made black and white, and contrition must be immediate and public in our debates over terrorism, religious fanaticism, immigration, and racial violence.

What makes the witch trials so compelling, not only in 1950's America but also today? Why are we, like Arthur Miller, so drawn to the tragic hero John Proctor? What is it about his time period and human nature that cultivated such fear and allowed hysteria to grow out of control? And perhaps most importantly, what lessons can we learn in 21st-century America? What is *The Crucible* telling students today?

*The Crucible* provides multiple rich opportunities to address the Common Core State Standards for reading literary texts. In this guide, each of Miller's four acts serves as the anchor piece for a "text set" of non-fiction and literary titles, providing multi-leveled access to the complexities of Miller's play. Discussion questions and key quotations are provided to elicit student response. Activities integrate Common Core skills such as evaluating claims, citing text evidence, drawing inferences, determining multiple themes, and analyzing rhetoric, purpose, and point of view. These skills promote critical analysis of Miller's work while facilitating the engagement characteristic of today's classrooms.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

### LEADERS

**Reverend Samuel Parris** (power hungry, paranoid minister)

**Reverend John Hale** (expert on witchcraft)

**Judge Hathorne** (presider over trials with Danforth)

**Deputy Governor Danforth** (head of the General Court)

### THE ACCUSERS

**Betty Parris** (Rev. Parris's daughter)

**Ruth Putnam** (Thomas and Ann's daughter)

**Abigail Williams** (the Proctors' former servant; Rev. Parris's niece)

**Susanna Walcott** (friend of Abigail)

**Mercy Lewis** (the Putnams' servant)

**Mary Warren** (the Proctors' current servant)

## THE ACCUSED

**John Proctor** (farmer)

**Elizabeth Proctor** (John's wife)

**Rebecca Nurse** (woman, 72, revered by the town)

**Francis Nurse** (Rebecca's husband)

**Giles Corey** (villager, 83, involved in many court cases)

**Martha Corey** (Giles's wife)

**Goody Osburn** (town midwife, one of the first accused)

**Sarah Good** (one of the first accused)

## OTHER TOWNSPEOPLE

**Tituba** (the Parris's slave from Barbados)

**Ann Putnam** (wife of Thomas, haunted by dreams and thoughts of death)

**Thomas Putnam** (deeply embittered, wealthy landowner)

**Ezekiel Cheever** (clerk of court)

**Herrick** (town Marshall)

**Hopkins** (jailer)

## BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

The following activities can be used to build background knowledge in history, literature, and language.

1. Introduce students to the McCarthy era by creating a “stations” learning experience. Explain to the class that, by the end of the period, students will be able to answer this question: How did specific people, events, and other factors contribute to the Red Scare and its culture of fear in America in the 40s and 50s? Split students into small groups and station groups at various points around the room, designated by labeled wall posters. Each station represents a topic significant to the McCarthy era. Stations are set up with an image, audio clip, video, or short text that groups can quickly research and discuss before jotting summary notes of what they learned from the resources at the particular station on the poster. When groups have had sufficient time at a station, they can move clockwise to the next one where they will examine the resources and add to what has been noted on the poster. Though not every station must be visited by each group, students will eventually return to their original station, read their classmates' notes, and synthesize them into a clearly written summary statement that demonstrates how this person, event, or factor contributed to the Red Scare and its culture of fear. One representative from each station can read this summary statement to the class. Stations might include:

- Senator Joseph McCarthy
- House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)
- Hollywood Blacklisting
- Cold War
- J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI
- Ethel and Julius Rosenberg
- Army-McCarthy Hearings
- Edward R Murrow and the “See It Now” broadcasts

Sample texts to be used at stations include:

<http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/joseph-mccarthy>

<http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare>

<http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/huac>

<http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/hollywood-ten>

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/edwardrmurrowtomccarthy.htm>

<http://www.biography.com/people/ethel-rosenberg-21168459>

[http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Have\\_you\\_no\\_sense\\_of\\_decency.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Have_you_no_sense_of_decency.htm)

2. Direct students to the “Witchcraft in Salem” page of the engaging U.S. History website: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/3g.asp>. Ask students to read at least one link, take one of the two instant feedback quizzes, and complete the National Geographic interactive feature entitled “Witchcraft Hysteria.” Instruct each student to devise a critical thinking question based on their exploration. Critical thinking question stems can be found at <http://www.teachthought.com/learning/25-question-stems-framed-around-blooms-taxonomy/>. As a class, create a bulleted list of these questions. Post them on the wall to set a class purpose for reading Miller’s text.
3. Ask students to read the introduction by Christopher Bigsby found in the Penguin Classics edition of *The Crucible* (pp. vii-xxv). Students might read the introduction as a whole or in shorter sections, such as the excerpts from Miller’s writings found on pages x, xi-xii, and xv-xvi. With Miller’s excerpts, students may be given a guiding question, such as, “Why did Arthur Miller feel compelled to write *The Crucible*?” “How did the times he lived in impact the playwright’s writing choices?” Ask students to look for possible answers as they read, making clear that some of these will be directly stated and others must be inferred. In either case, ask students to cite words and phrases that lead them to their answers.
4. Ask students to read Arthur Miller’s famous *New York Times* essay, “Tragedy and the Common Man” at <https://www.nytimes.com/books/00/11/12/specials/miller-common.html>. Ask students to make marginal notations on Miller’s claims as well as the evidence he provides. Discuss as a class. Review the definitions of *tragedy* and *tragic hero* with students and, on the whiteboard or document camera, construct a visual that illustrates the differences between heroes and *tragic* heroes. Ask students to come up with examples of modern-day or literary tragic heroes. They may answer Lance Armstrong, Tiger Woods, Oedipus or Dr. Faustus. Explain to students that John Proctor in *The Crucible* has become an iconic American tragic hero. Ask them to look for evidence of his flaw, his greatness, and his ultimate fall while reading Miller’s play.
5. Show students the trailer from *The Crucible*, the 1996 film starring Daniel Day Lewis, Joan Allen, and Winona Ryder at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUIAxTxrnCc>.

After an initial viewing, ask students to select a one-word descriptor for the tone of the film. Students might select from a list of possible tones such as the one available at <http://valenciacollege.edu/east/academicsuccess/eap/documents/tonewords.pdf>.

Answers might include “inflammatory,” “foreboding,” “ominous,” or “wrathful.” Next, ask students to watch a second time and select words and phrases that support their choice of tone. Students may select “I am but God’s finger,” “in a world ruled by fear,” “condemned,” “confess,” “accused,” or “vengeance.” Tell students to keep their tone words and evidence from the film trailer in mind as the class reads *The Crucible* and evaluate whether the written text and film are similar or different in tone.

## WHOLE-PLAY ACTIVITIES

These comprehension strategies and drama activities may be used throughout all four acts of the play as students build on their analysis of plot, theme, characterization, and style.

1. Because dramas are oral by nature, consider a multi-faceted approach to reading *The Crucible* with students. Some scenes might be read while others might be viewed on film or listened to on audio recording. To prepare for the oral reading of this complex text and its challenging language, provide an “expert read-aloud.” Play an excerpt from an audiobook recording of *The Crucible*, Act I: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aly8LgIYoy8>. Then invite students to experience the text through the integrated approach of Reader’s Theater, which allows student to perform while reading. No props or costumes are used. After assigning parts, ask students to read their lines silently, consider their assigned character’s motivation, and make notes of words and phrases they want to emphasize. Students might partner up and practice before the class reads as a whole. When it is time for the performance, students face the class and consult their notes as they read. For more about Reader’s Theater see <http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/programs/whatisrt.htm>.
2. College- and career-ready standards ask students, rather than teachers, to determine themes and central ideas and to analyze their development and interaction over time. With this in mind, ask students to start a “themes tracker” for themes they uncover in *The Crucible*. As students read and begin noticing a theme developing, direct them to create a new entry in their tracker. Possible themes for Miller’s play might be “authority and rebellion,” “public vs. private conscience,” and “freedom vs. order.” Students can track these themes digitally or by hand. Students might share their themes and central ideas with each other and add new entries from classmates’ ideas. If students need help getting started, choose one theme and model how to track its development from act to act, as demonstrated in the example below. Alternatively, ask students to use different color highlighters to identify themes as they read. Marginal notes can be used to analyze how themes are developing.

Theme	Text Citation	Analysis
Authority and Rebellion	“We must tell the truth, Abby! You’ll only be whipped for dancin’, and the other things!” (Mary Warren, Act I, p. 18).	The girls, by dancing in the forest, have rebelled against the strict expectations of their Puritan village. Corporal punishment is the norm.
	“Mr. Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house” (John Proctor, Act I, p. 28)	Proctor rebels against Parris’s greed and the misuse of church funds.
	“It tells me that a minister may pray to God without he have golden candlesticks upon the altar” (John Proctor, Act II, p. 62).	As Proctor comes under scrutiny for his failed attendance at church, he repeats his explanation with further evidence. Not only does the minister demand the deed to the parsonage, he also spends the townspeople’s hard-earned donations on expensive decor for the church. Puritans are supposed to be plain folk. Proctor’s rebellion is tied to the hypocrisy he sees.

3. Invite students to “backchannel” their notices and wonderings while reading *The Crucible*. The backchannel facilitates total-class participation and provides quiet students with a platform to establish their voice. As they read each act, ask students to generate questions about the text. Questions might focus on background information, clarification, or interpretation. They could also be about diction, imagery, structure, or point of view. Questions can be submitted on sticky notes to a “parking lot” poster or via social media platforms such as Twitter, GotoMeeting.com, or Backchannel Chat. Teachers might choose to address the questions during a “hotseat” break or allow peers to answer them during class. Online, the teacher can also use the backchannel to pose questions, assign quick-writes, and post digital media that deepens understanding of the text at hand. For information about back channeling, see the following article: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/13/education/13social.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/13/education/13social.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)
4. Remind students that when they read a dramatic text, words and literary components are only part of the picture. A major consideration in a play is its use of stage space. Ask students to “stage” a scene they have just read. After reading, invite students to a cleared space at the front or middle of the classroom. With one student acting as director, characters are placed in position. For instance, in Act III, a student portraying Danforth might sit behind a desk to represent a judge’s bench. A group of girls representing the accusers can huddle together, pointing at an imaginary object on the ceiling. When the director yells “freeze!” the actors remain still as in a frozen tableau. Take a picture, quickly upload it to the computer, and project the image on the whiteboard. Ask students: How does staging a scene contribute to our understanding of Miller’s structure and meaning?

## ACT ONE

### SUMMARY

The play opens in the home of the Reverend Samuel Parris, where his ten-year-old daughter, Betty, is lying unresponsive in bed. Multiple visitors stop by, including the household slave, Tituba, and the minister’s niece, Abigail. Reverend Parris discovered Tituba, Abigail, Betty, and several other girls dancing in the forest the previous night. Parris has consulted with the local doctor to no avail and has sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, a witchcraft expert. Reverend Parris is concerned for his reputation, especially when Thomas and Ann Putnam report that their daughter Ruth is similarly afflicted. When farmer John Proctor appears, Abigail reveals that the two have been previously involved. Meanwhile, Proctor is intent on criticizing Reverend Parris, associating the minister with greed and overuse of authority. Townspeople argue over land rights and loyalty to the church until Reverend Hale appears. The minister from Beverly suspects Tituba and the girls of casting spells as well as dancing. When Hale demands a reckoning from Tituba, the frightened slave woman names Goody Good and Goody Osburn as traffickers with the Devil. Abigail and the revived Betty join in the accusations, naming four more townspeople. And so it begins...

### TEXT SET

- “Examination of Tituba.” <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/salemwitchtrials/people/titubawindow.html> (primary document)
- Gates, Henry Louis. “The Black Witch of Salem.” [http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2014/04/who\\_was\\_tituba\\_the\\_black\\_witch\\_of\\_salem.1.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2014/04/who_was_tituba_the_black_witch_of_salem.1.html) (article)
- “Tituba and the Children” <http://historyofmassachusetts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Tituba-and-the-Children-Illustration-by-Alfred-Fredericks-published-in-A-Popular-History-of-the-United-States-circa-1878.jpg> (illustration)

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Act I of *The Crucible* provides students with an excellent opportunity to unpack the structure and meaning of a complex text. The close-reading process focuses on excerpts, or “chunks,” of text, promoting interpretation that is deep rather than wide and fostering critical thinking skills through writing and speaking. Choose a scene or short excerpt from Act I. Scenes that work well for close reading include the scene with Mercy, Abby, and Betty (pp. 17-19), Hale's interview with Tituba (pp. 41-44), and the reunion between Abigail and John Proctor (pp. 20-22).

Ask students to perform multiple reads. After each read, one of the following questions can be discussed with a partner or group and answered in writing. After the first read, students answer the question: “What is happening in the text?” (plot). In the second read students address the question: “What is this text beginning to be about?” (What central ideas are beginning to emerge? What seems to be the author's purpose?) Finally, after the third read, students focus even closer to answer: “Which words and phrases contribute to the text's meaning and tone?” For all three questions, students must return to the text and cite evidence. For more information on close reading, view the following Douglas Fisher video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5w9v6-zUg3Y>

2. Ask students to draw inferences by analyzing the setting. As students begin reading the play, direct them to highlight key words and phrases that illustrate setting and then write marginal notes that draw inferences about the setting and its impact on meaning and tone. Readers should look for patterns in the setting. Challenge students to move beyond easily identifiable settings such as “Salem, Massachusetts”; “1692”; and “home of Reverend Samuel Parris.” More complex setting highlights could include “unnatural things,” “rumor of witchcraft is all about,” and “in the forest.” In the margins, students might write “the combination of unnatural things, witchcraft, and the forest, which is mentioned repeatedly, indicates a foreboding tone associated with the woods.” Or, students might note the prevalence of praying and hymns and infer that religion will play a large role in the plot. Encourage students to look for patterns of words or images that contribute to an analysis of setting. These student findings can be shared on the whiteboard or on a class poster.
3. Tituba is most often considered a minor character in *The Crucible*. Yet as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., points out in his article “The Black Witch of Salem,” she is the character who “started it all.” Project on the whiteboard or screen the 19th-century illustration *Tituba and the Children* by Alfred Fredericks. Ask students to study it quietly and draw a quick sketch of the image in order to analyze each component. Ask students to write a summary of what they see, starting with the most prominent image and concluding with seemingly minor details. Then ask students to write a short analysis that draws inferences about what the illustration means or represents. Discuss: What is the most prominent component of the illustration? How is Tituba depicted by the artist? What does the placement and stance of the children in the corner convey? Now ask students to read Gates's article about the real Tituba. Discuss the distinctions Gates makes between the real slave and the character in Miller's play. Why might the playwright have made these alterations? As an extension, ask students to read Tituba's actual court testimony. Talk about how the testimony echoes Reverend Hale's questioning in Act I, and where it differs. Again, why might Miller have made the choice to either alter or mimic Tituba's story?
4. Ask students to discern the impact of structural choices by analyzing examples of author's notes in Act I. Ask students to identify the places in Act I where Miller is speaking to his reading audience and direct them to draw a box around each set of author's notes. Read and talk about one or more of these sections as a whole class or in small groups. Discuss: Why does



Miller choose to insert these notes throughout Act I? How do the notes contribute to the overall meaning? How does Miller hope to impact the reader's experience? What is his point of view? Where in his notes does this seem most clear? Later, after reading, students can come back to these boxed author's notes and connect them to specific action and events in the play.

5. Challenge students to turn the “play text” of *The Crucible* into a “performance text” by reading like an actor or director. In other words, ask students to read a scene with performance, not just plot, in mind. As they read, invite students to choose one character and complete a stick figure analysis to determine that character's motivation. (The stick figure analysis template is available at: [http://my.hrw.com/la\\_2010/na\\_lit/nsmedia/ebook\\_gr9/write\\_smart/assets/data/launch\\_files/IGO/Stick\\_Figure\\_pdf.pdf](http://my.hrw.com/la_2010/na_lit/nsmedia/ebook_gr9/write_smart/assets/data/launch_files/IGO/Stick_Figure_pdf.pdf)). Writing directly on the stick figure, students make notes on the character's strengths and weaknesses, hopes, feelings, history, and future. After completing the analysis, students can write a brief summary describing how this interpretation might impact choices in speech, movement, and expression for this character. Now students are ready to read the scene again, this time as an actor in “performance” mode. This activity works for each of the acts or selected scenes.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Arthur Miller, the Salem tragedy developed from a paradox (p. 6). How might you summarize his explanation of that paradox?
2. What does Miller mean by “land-lust” (p. 7)?
3. How might Reverend Parris be characterized? Use textual evidence to explain your answer.
4. Why does the playwright interrupt the action on page 13 to provide background on Thomas Putnam? How might the reader's thinking be different without Miller's notes?
5. To what is Miller referring when he says, “It is another trait we inherited from them” (p. 19)?
6. Discuss the juxtaposition of Abigail and Proctor's conversation with the psalm being sung in the room below (p. 22).
7. Miller says that for us to understand what happened to Rebecca Nurse, “we must look to the fields and boundaries of that time” (p. 24). What does he mean? How does this claim connect to his earlier comment about “land-lust?”
8. What does the playwright mean when he refers to the “political inspiration of the Devil” (p. 32)?
9. Explain the irony in Abigail's claim: “I never sold myself! I'm a good girl! I'm a proper girl!” (p. 40).
10. How might Tituba's “confession” be characterized (p. 44)? Why does she confess?

## KEY QUOTATIONS

1. “The Salem folk believed that the virgin forest was the Devil's last preserve, his home base and the citadel of his final stand.” (p. 5)
2. “They believed, in short, that they held in their steady hands the candle that would light the world.” (p. 5)
3. “There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more.” (p. 27)
4. “I like not the smell of this ‘authority.’” (p. 29)
5. “I've heard you to be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you'll leave some of it in Salem.” (p. 35)

## ACT TWO

### SUMMARY

Eight days later, John Proctor returns home from a day in the fields. His wife Elizabeth is concerned he has come home late and questions him about his whereabouts. It is clear that trust has not been fully restored since John's affair with Abigail. Elizabeth relates that their new servant, Mary Warren, has joined the other girls from the woods and now reports to court, where the girls "scream and howl and fall to the floor," accusing townspeople of witchcraft. Elizabeth urges John to go to the clerk of court, Ezekiel Cheever, and disclose what Abigail told him, that the girls have not been bewitched. Mary Warren returns home and gives Elizabeth a poppet doll she sewed in court. Mary relates that the accused will hang, except Sarah Good, who has confessed. Realizing that the proceedings have taken a serious turn, Elizabeth asks John to speak directly to Abigail. Meanwhile, Reverend Hale appears on the doorstep, questioning John about his absences in church and his knowledge of the Ten Commandments. Proctor recites all but one, which his wife provides—adultery. Two more visitors appear in the form of Francis Nurse and Giles Corey, who report their wives have been charged with witchcraft. When Ezekiel Cheever joins the group, he asks to see any poppets Elizabeth owns. He examines the doll Mary had just given her and finds a needle. Cheever reports that Abigail has been stabbed with a needle that evening and provides a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest. Insisting Mary go with him to court the next day and tell the truth, John vows to save his wife from paying for his sins.

### TEXT SET

- Edwards, Jonathan. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=etas> (sermon)
- Flanagan, Caitlin. "Hysteria and the Teenage Girl." [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/opinion/sunday/adolescent-girl-hysteria.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/opinion/sunday/adolescent-girl-hysteria.html?_r=0) (opinion article)
- "School Baffled by 12 Girls' Mystery Symptoms." [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9RPs\\_ysYgE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9RPs_ysYgE) (television news clip)
- "Warrant for the Arrest of Elizabeth Proctor." [http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/ASAL\\_WA.HTM](http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/ASAL_WA.HTM) (primary document)

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Prior to reading Act II, skim and select significant vocabulary to review with students. Choose general academic, or "tier two" terms, which are words that are likely to appear in multiple texts or that have different meanings in specific contexts, such as in the Puritan culture. Tier two words are more likely to be found in complex texts like *The Crucible* but less likely to be defined by context clues. For this reason, students will benefit from direct instruction prior to reading. When selecting words from Act II of *The Crucible*, consider the following questions:
  - Are students likely to see the word in other texts and disciplines?
  - Does the word relate to other words the student knows or has been learning?
  - Will the word be useful in student writing?
  - Does the word have significance in the text?
  - Does the context fail to provide enough information for inferring meaning?

Depending on the answers to these questions, decide whether to simply tell students the meaning, whether the word is worthy of more instruction, or whether the word does not need to be addressed. An excellent rubric that helps teachers select tier two words from complex text, as well as more information about tier two words, can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-Jm2dtB1gxPc3ByQ0w5dVZLSW8/view?usp=sharing>.

2. In order to understand the religious fervor and the culture of fear and hysteria evident in Miller's play, ask students to read Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=etas>

Explain that the text is a sermon written and delivered during the Puritan era. Ask students to jot down words and phrases which strike them as important or as characteristic of the overall tone of the text. Students might select "anger," "wrath," "torments," "misery," "flames of hell," "wickedness," "burns," or "damnation." Next, project the text on the whiteboard. Invite students to walk to the board and circle one of the words or phrases they chose during reading. Then direct students to come up and write notes in the margins beside a classmate's word. Annotations might answer one of these questions: Why is the circled word or phrase significant? What impact might it have on the audience? What was the author's purpose in choosing this word or phrase? Allow time and silence for students to read, write, and reflect on their classmates' thinking. Afterwards, ask the class to identify patterns they see in their circled words and their annotations. As a class, decide: What is Edward's purpose? How can the overall tone of the text be characterized? The discussion should include Edward's use of fear as a persuasive tool. Ask students: How does reading "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" impact your understanding of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*?

3. Hold a "Say Something" paired-reading of the *New York Times* article "Hysteria and the Teenage Girl." Students take turns reading an excerpt of the text out loud, stopping to "say something" to their partner about the text. The comment might be a summary, question, or inference. The process is repeated until the reading is complete. Afterwards, ask partners to discuss the following: What are the author's claims? What evidence does she provide? How are the cases she cites similar to or different from those of the afflicted girls in *The Crucible*? As an extension, show the class the *Today* show clip "School Baffled by 12 Girls' Mystery Symptoms." Ask the class: How does reading this contemporary opinion article and watching the modern news clip impact our reading of Miller's drama about 1692 Salem, Massachusetts?
4. Divide the class into small groups and provide each group with a packet containing the primary document "Warrant for the Arrest of Elizabeth Proctor," the Cornell University Law School explanation of "probable cause" found at [https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/probable\\_cause](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/probable_cause), and the following set of directions:
  - Read Elizabeth's warrant and write a short summary in modern language.
  - Draw a two-column chart identifying (1) the charges and (2) the evidence provided.
  - Read the Cornell University Law School's explanation of "probable cause."
  - Add a third column to your chart labeled "probable cause." Place a check next to each piece of evidence that meets the criteria for probable cause.
  - Discuss as a group: Using our current law, did the marshal have sufficient evidence and probable cause to arrest Elizabeth Proctor?
  - How does reading this warrant impact your understanding of Miller's concerns about the mid-20th century Red Scare?

Charge	Evidence	Probable Cause

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the language in John and Elizabeth Proctor's opening dialogue. Explain what is said versus what is meant. What is left unsaid?
2. Mary Warren tells John Proctor, "The Devil's loose in Salem...we must discover where he's hiding!" (p. 56). Explain the multiple meanings Miller may have intended here.
3. Mary tells Elizabeth and John, "Four judges and the King's deputy sat to dinner with us but an hour ago. I—I would have you speak civilly to me, from this out" (p. 57). What impact have the girls' accusations had? Explain the nature of the relationship between the accusers and officials as well as between accusers and townspeople.
4. Upon examination for not attending church, John exclaims, "I nailed the roof upon the church, I hung the door" (p. 62). Explain Proctor's argument.
5. When Hale fails to halt Elizabeth's arrest, Proctor cries, "Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!" (p. 73). Why does John Proctor use this biblical allusion? Explain the irony in doing so.

## KEY QUOTATIONS

1. "Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer!" (p. 53)
2. "But the proof, the proof!" (p. 55)
3. "Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven." (p. 68)
4. "Is the accuser always holy now?" (p. 73)
5. "I'll tell you what's walking Salem—vengeance is walking Salem." (p. 73)

## ACT THREE

### SUMMARY

As Act III opens in the Salem Meeting House, Martha Corey is at the center of an irrational court argument aiming to prove she is a witch though there is no evidence. Giles Corey declares his wife's innocence, while Francis Nurse and John Proctor offer Mary Warren's testimony as proof that the girls have been deceiving the court. Despite the signed statement of several landowners who testify to the character of the accused, and regardless of Giles's claim that Thomas Putnam is crying witchcraft to gain land, Governor Danforth refuses to admit that he has been fooled by a group of young girls. He threatens Mary with jail and demands that a pregnant Elizabeth call her husband a lecher in open court. When Elizabeth refuses to disclose the affair, Abigail remains a heroine and pits the girls against Mary Warren. Mary folds, John declares God to be dead, and Reverend Hale denounces the proceedings and quits the court. Unfortunately, his enlightenment has come too late.

## TEXT SET

- “Army McCarthy Hearings.” <http://www.history.com/speeches/army-mccarthy-hearings#army-mccarthy-hearings> (audio clip)
- “Characters of the Crucible: Abigail in Court.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDvny9tFBp0> (film clip)
- “Examination of a Witch.” <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/images/mattwitch1.jpg> (painting)
- “McCarthy Questioned on Anti-Communist Investigations.” <http://www.history.com/speeches/army-mccarthy-hearings#mccarthy-questioned-on-anti-communist-investigation> (audio clip)
- “The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcriptions of the Court Records in Three Volumes.” <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/tei/swp> (transcripts)

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Review various types of logical fallacies with students. A good resource can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/659/03/>. Divide students into groups and ask each group to analyze an excerpt from the court scenes in Act III. Excerpts might include the questioning of Martha Corey (p. 77), the conversation between John Proctor and Governor Danforth (pp. 82-86), the scene with Giles Corey (pp. 88-91), or the examination of Mary Warren (pp. 98-101) or Elizabeth Proctor (pp. 104-105). Direct groups to analyze the arguments presented by the court as well as by witnesses, and identify any logical fallacies. Groups can share their findings as a whole class, ultimately answering the question: How does Miller characterize the line of reasoning used by the court in Salem? Use textual evidence to support your answer. As an extension, groups can also evaluate the reasoning in verbatim transcriptions of court records from the Salem witch trials: <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/tei/swp>. In these primary documents, students can read and analyze the court proceedings against many of the characters in Miller's play, including John and Elizabeth Proctor, Giles Corey, and Rebecca Nurse.
2. To explore the link between the Red Scare and the Salem court proceedings in Act III, ask students to analyze audio recordings of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Play first the 1953 “Meet the Press” episode where McCarthy is questioned by a panel of reporters on his new role as chair of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. Point out that this recording was made at the height of McCarthy's power, the same year *The Crucible* was produced. Discuss: What are McCarthy's claims? Is his argument clear, convincing, and engaging? What about McCarthy's manner might be appealing to the government of the United States and its citizens in 1953? Then, play the June 9, 1954 audio from the televised Army-McCarthy hearings, where Special Counsel Joseph Welch asks McCarthy, “Have you no sense of decency?” Ask students: How would you describe the tone of this interaction? How does it differ from the first audio from the previous year?
3. Using the “zoom-in” strategy where one quadrant of an image is uncovered at a time, project the 1853 Thompkins Matteson painting *Examination of a Witch* on the whiteboard. As each quadrant is uncovered, give students time to jot down a quick description of what they see as well as a quick analysis of what it means. Explain that, as more and more of the painting is unveiled, interpretations should expand and perhaps change altogether because additional textual evidence is being provided. Focusing on one excerpt at a time (in this case a painting) allows students to closely consider evidence. Items of focus from the painting may include the multiple fingers (all pointing in different directions), the disrobed

young girl, and the prone figure on the floor. By the end of the analysis, students should be able to answer the question: How does this painting affect your understanding of the trials of the accused in *The Crucible*?

4. Ask students to compare an Act III scene from Miller's 1953 play to the same scene in his 1996 film. In the courtroom, Proctor is compelled to disclose his affair in order to shed light on Abigail's motivation. He incriminates himself, accuses Abigail of revenge, and sets himself before Danforth's mercy. Knowing the tide is turning against her, Abigail distracts Danforth and the rest of the court by claiming there are spirits in the room. Re-read pages 100-103 with students and watch the film version of this same scene. Ask students to compare and contrast the treatment of source material in both texts using the chart below. Afterwards, ask students to write a comparison/contrast statement reflecting their analysis. To prompt instruction, students may be provided with sentence starters such as those that appear here:

- Both the stage and screen version of *The Crucible* \_\_\_\_\_; however, the 1953 play \_\_\_\_\_ while the 1996 screenplay \_\_\_\_\_.
- While both the stage and screen texts of *The Crucible* \_\_\_\_\_, the film takes advantage of \_\_\_\_\_ in order to \_\_\_\_\_.

Text	Methods of Characterization	Dialogue	Other Details
1953 Play			
1996 Screen Version			

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When John Proctor brings a signed deposition to court, acknowledging the girls are fabricating their affliction, Danforth immediately inquires if Proctor has shared "this story in the village" (p. 82). Why does Miller use the words "instantly" and "rapidly calculating" to describe Danforth's reaction? How is the playwright characterizing Danforth? What is being left unsaid?
2. Giles Corey provides legal documentation as proof Thomas Putnam is motivated by land greed. Yet Danforth replies, "But proof, sir, proof" (p. 89). Comment on the irony here.
3. Analyze the dynamic nature of Reverend John Hale's character as evidenced in Act III using specific textual evidence to support your answer.

4. In Miller's stage directions, the playwright describes Reverend Parris as "hardly able to contain his anger and fear" (p. 93). What is Parris angry about? What does he fear? Are his concerns similar to that of his congregation? Explain.
5. As the court becomes more illogical, witnesses become more sarcastic. Provide an example of satirical commentary by John Proctor, Giles Corey, or another character (pp. 96-97).

## KEY QUOTATIONS

1. "Is every defense an attack upon the court?" (p. 87)
2. "Witchcraft is *ipso facto*, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other." (p. 93)
3. "A man will not cast away his good name." (p. 102)
4. "You will confess yourself or you will hang!" (p. 109)
5. "I say—I say—God is dead!" (p. 111)

## ACT FOUR

### SUMMARY

It is autumn in Salem, and disorder abounds. Jailers are drinking; the accused suffer from hallucinations; cows wander the roads because their owners are in prison. Reverend Parris is shrunk and penniless. Abigail has robbed him and fled the country after hearing that a nearby town has revolted against accusations of witchcraft. Parris warns Judge Hathorne and Deputy Governor Danforth that if good citizens like Rebecca Nurse and John Proctor hang, there is the probability of a similar revolt in Salem. He entreats the judges to postpone the hangings. Maintaining that confession, not postponement, is the only route to salvation, the officers arrange for Elizabeth to talk John into confessing. She tells John that while hundreds have confessed, Rebecca Nurse will not, and Giles Corey has been pressed to death rather than forfeit his land with a confession. Proctor is torn between a false confession that will save his life and a sure death that will save his name. When Danforth demands that he implicate Rebecca and sign a public confession, John refuses. The curtain falls with a redeemed John Proctor being led to his death as his wife Elizabeth proclaims, "He have his goodness now."

### TEXT SET

- *Inferno*, Canto VI. <http://www.bartleby.com/20/106.html> (epic poem)
- "Petition of John Proctor." [http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SAL\\_E&P.HTM](http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SAL_E&P.HTM) (primary document)
- *Poetics*. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.2.2.html> (essay)

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. After reading the scene where Danforth, Hathorne, and Hale attempt to convince John Proctor to confess, distribute the primary document "Petition of John Proctor." Ask students to summarize this historical text using contemporary language and highlight points made by Proctor that are clear and convincing. Tell students to compare this document to the dramatic argument Proctor makes on pages 132-133. Then ask: What information is

presented in the primary source which does not appear in *The Crucible*? Why might Arthur Miller have chosen to portray Proctor's appeal as emotional rather than logical, as presented in the historical document? How do Miller's structural choices, including the choice to end here with John being led to his death, contribute to the play's overall meaning and impact? More information on rhetorical appeals, including a handout and video, can be found at [http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/Rhet\\_Triangle.html](http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/Rhet_Triangle.html).

- Discuss Governor Danforth's argument against postponing the hangings. Danforth proclaims, "As God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment" (p. 120). Ask students: Why does Miller choose to have Danforth use the word "perfection" here? Is "perfect punishment" an oxymoron? Explain to students that the idea of perfection in punishment was discussed by Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*. Distribute and read with students the section from Canto VI where this theory is explored. Ask students how Dante's poem impacts their understanding of the Puritan governor's statement about the Salem accused.
- Discuss the characteristics of an Aristotelian tragic hero by reviewing sections of Aristotle's *Poetics* and summarizing the main ideas with the class. Provide students with a graphic organizer and ask them to cite evidence in Act IV supporting John Proctor's character as a tragic hero. Afterwards, invite students to share their thinking. Ask: How might Proctor differ from the archetypal tragic hero? What makes John Proctor an *American* tragic hero and *The Crucible* a definitive American tragedy?

Tragic Hero Characteristics	Evidence from <i>The Crucible</i> (John Proctor as Tragic Hero)
Moment of Recognition/Catharsis	
Reversal of Fortune	
Identifiable Character	
Tragic Flaw (Hamartia)	
Punishment that Exceeds Crime	
Free Choice	

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the setting Miller describes in his stage notes (p. 112) support his intended tone? Cite specific textual evidence.
- Analyze Reverend John Hale's point of view and tone when he explains his reason for returning to Salem to Danforth: "Why, it is all simple. I come to do the Devil's work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves" (p. 121).
- Describe the development of Reverend Parris's character from the beginning of the play through Act IV. Use textual evidence to support your analysis.



4. Describe the irony in Hathorne's statement, "It is no lie, you cannot speak of lies" (p. 122).
5. Analyze the multiple meanings Miller suggests in Danforth's line: "Who weeps for these, weeps for corruption!" (p. 134).

## KEY QUOTATIONS

1. "As God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment." (p. 120)
2. "It may well be God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride." (p. 122)
3. "Is there no good penitence but it be public?" (p. 132)
4. "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! ... How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!" (133)
5. "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!" (134)

## AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

### TEXT SET

- "The Salem Award Foundation for Human Rights and Social Justice." <http://salemaward.org/swtm/about-memorial/> (website)
- "Why I Wrote *The Crucible*." [http://the\\_english\\_dept.tripod.com/miller.html](http://the_english_dept.tripod.com/miller.html) (newspaper article)
- "You Mean I'm Supposed to Stand on That?" <https://nie.washingtonpost.com/sites/default/files/HistoryandHerblock.pdf> (political cartoon, p. 19)

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Challenge students to dig into one of *The Crucible*'s overall themes by creating a "found poem." In this exercise, each student selects three significant phrases on a specific theme from the play, writes them on sentence strips, and places them on the floor. The class then collectively reads, reflects, and organizes the strips in a way that illustrates the theme's most significant analysis. For instance, the teacher might select "reputation" as the theme, and students select three phrases from the text that illustrate this theme. To view this lesson in a high school classroom, see <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/creating-found-poems-lesson>. After the activity, ask students to write an analytical thesis statement based on the textual evidence and discussion. Later, ask students to repeat the process with a self-selected theme or topic from *The Crucible*. Remind students that the thesis should contain a significant point that can be supported with the textual evidence used in the "found poem" strategy. To extend the activity, students can use the thesis to create a writing plan or complete a formal essay. For more information on developing a strong thesis, students might be directed to <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/616/02/>.
2. Explain that the 1996 screenplay starring Daniel Day Lewis, Winona Ryder, and Joan Allen was also written by Arthur Miller. Discuss: Why would the playwright agree to write the film version of his famous play more than forty years later? What events from the late twentieth century might have made the play relevant to a new audience? Ask students to read "Why I Wrote the Crucible," which was written by Miller during the production of

the film. Instruct students to highlight any claims Miller makes in the article and underline evidence he presents to support those claims. Afterwards, ask students to prepare their own argument as to why *The Crucible* is relevant today. Students should create a list of their claims as well as evidence to support each claim. Topics students might explore include current debates over marriage, race, religion, and immigration.

CLAIMS Why <i>The Crucible</i> is relevant today	EVIDENCE Examples from world or national news

- Ask students to read *The Washington Post* article “Salem Witch Trials, 60 Years After ‘The Crucible’” at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater\\_dance/salem-witch-trials-60-years-after-the-crucible/2014/02/27/50e3be48-95b3-11e3-ae45-458927ccedb6\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/theater_dance/salem-witch-trials-60-years-after-the-crucible/2014/02/27/50e3be48-95b3-11e3-ae45-458927ccedb6_story.html). The author argues that, despite Miller’s motivation to highlight the Red Scare, the play has more timely and relevant messages about power, feminism, and economics. Ask students to delineate the author’s argument with a flow map. Students should summarize each claim the author makes in a box. When they finish, ask students to develop at least one counterclaim and post it under the flowmap box that contains the argument they are countering. Students can draw their maps or use an online program such as Creately at <http://creately.com/diagram-community/examples/t/flowchart>.
- Project an image of the 1950 Herblock political cartoon entitled “You Mean I’m Supposed to Stand on That?” found at <https://nie.washingtonpost.com/sites/default/files/HistoryandHerblock.pdf> (p. 19). Explain that this was the first time the term “McCarthyism” was used. Now that students have read *The Crucible* and researched America’s mid-century Red Scare, ask them to write a short analysis of the images in the cartoon. Discuss: Why did the artist use an elephant? Who are the named figures? (Research on cell phones if needed). What is the shaky stack made of? Why? What multiple meanings can be found in the title? How might this political cartoon add to your understanding of Miller’s motivation in writing *The Crucible*? As an extension, hold a class debate about the role of media in uncovering as well as reinforcing a culture of fear, finger pointing, witch-hunting, and scapegoating, both in Miller’s time and our own.
- Invite students to explore the website for the Salem Awards Foundation for Human Rights and Social Justice. This is the foundation that sponsors the Salem Witch Trials Memorial in Salem, Massachusetts, visited by thousands every year. Direct students to record words and phrases from various pages that seem significant, particularly those that help construct a sense of the memorial’s tone. Students might mention “stark injustice of the trials,” “mute witness to the hysteria,” “dedicated by Elie Wiesel,” and “sacred space.” Ask students to compare the atmosphere of the memorial to Salem in 1692, citing specific evidence they found. Discuss why Elie Wiesel might have been asked to deliver the dedication speech and how his presence echoes Miller’s motivation to write *The Crucible*.

**WHOLE-PLAY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING TOPICS**

1. In his introduction to the play, Christopher Bigsby asserts that “a theme that connects virtually all of Miller’s plays [is] betrayal, of the self no less than of others” (xi). To what extent is this true in *The Crucible*? It is easy to point out characters who betrayed others, but who in *The Crucible* betrays himself or herself? Explain.
2. In his biography, Arthur Miller writes that “the main point of the [Washington] hearings... was that the accused make public confession...an act of contrition done not in solemn privacy but out in the public air” (x). Explain how Miller’s point is illustrated throughout *The Crucible*. In what scene or scenes is the theme most poignant? As an extension, consider ways 21st-century society perpetuates this public contrition.
3. What role do the minor characters in *The Crucible* play? Analyze the impact of Tituba, Mary Warren, Ezekiel Cheever, or another minor character and how he or she contributes to the drama’s overall structure, meaning, and aesthetic effect.
4. To what extent does the idea of “mob mentality” apply to what happened in Salem as evidenced in *The Crucible*?
5. Trace the theme of power and voice in *The Crucible*. Whose voices are heard? Why? What gives power to the voiceless? You might consider females, children, the poor, and other marginalized characters.
6. Which of the play’s events was most significant in causing the ensuing witch hunt? The girls’ dance in the woods? Abigail and John’s affair? Land-lust? Consider your own ideas and justify your thinking with support.
7. Were John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, and Giles Corey right in their refusal to implicate themselves? Why or why not?
8. At one point John Proctor calls Reverend Hale “Pontius Pilate.” To what extent is Hale responsible for turning over Elizabeth, Rebecca, and other innocent victims, even John? Is Miller setting up John Proctor as a Christ figure? Explain.
9. How might the tone of the closing scene be described? What is Miller’s purpose? Is the audience meant to feel sad? Impassioned? Hopeful? Explain.

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