# *The Crucible*

English 11

Mrs. Forsyth

# DOCUMENTARY: SALEM WITCH TRIALS

In Search of History: The History Channel

1. From the 14th to the 16th century there were witch hunts in _____, _____, _____, and _____ which accounted for the death of 40,000 to 50,000 people.
2. The idea of witchcraft came from people's understanding of _____.
3. Superstitious villagers, "used it as a tool to get rid of _____.
4. What types of proof were used to prove that someone was a witch?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
5. When the king of England became the head of the church, witchcraft became an act of _____ that was punishable by _____.
6. In _____, the _____ moved to America to settle an ideal community and govern a colony in Massachusetts. They remained _____citizens.
7. The 'theocracy' they created had no separation between _____ and _____.
8. In _____, the witch hunt began in the village of Salem which had _____ inhabitants.
9. The Puritans feared the forest because it could conceal _____ or _____.
10. They lived in a **misogynistic** community where women were subservient to men. They believed that women would be more likely to join the _____ because they were more easily tempted.
11. Elizabeth was _____ years old and Abigail was _____ years old.
12. Tituba, a slave, was from _____.
13. What forbidden activities does Tituba do with the girls?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____

14. How did the girls react? _____

15. The first people to be accused were of _____ social class.

16. What unusual evidence was accepted at the hearings? _____

17. How did Tituba survive? _____

18. What was the next group of people to be accused? _____

19. What fed the girls' accusations? _____ and _____.

20. _____ was the date of the last executions.

    a. _____ were killed in total

    b. _____ died by hanging

    c. _____ died in prison

    d. _____ died by being pressed to death

21. The trials were ended because _____.

22. It took _____ years before the citizens of Salem repented for their actions during the witch hunt.

23. _____ was the only accuser to apologize.

Name _____ Period _____

## Standards Focus: Author Biography—Arthur Miller (1915-2005)

Known and respected for his intimate and realistic portrayal of the working class, Arthur Miller remains one of the most prolific playwrights of his time. At the peak of his career immediately following World War II, American theater was transformed by his profound ability to capture the heart of the common man and make his audiences empathize with his plight as he attempts to find his way in an often harsh and unsympathetic world.

Arthur Miller was born in 1915 in New York, into a middle-class Jewish immigrant family. His father was a clothing manufacturer and store owner who experienced significant loss after the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Miller attended Abraham Lincoln High School in Brooklyn, and was a gifted athlete and an average student. After being rejected the first time, Miller was finally accepted into the University of Michigan in 1934, where his studies focused on drama and journalism. He graduated in 1938 with a Bachelor's degree in English. Two years later, he published his first play, the relatively unsuccessful *The Man Who Had All the Luck* and married his college girlfriend Mary Slattery, with whom he later had two children, Robert and Jane.

Miller's first prominent play was *All My Sons* (1947), a tragedy about a factory owner who knowingly sold faulty aircraft parts during World War II. *All My Sons* won the Drama Critics Circle award and two Tony Awards. His 1949 play *Death of a Salesman* was also an enormous critical success, winning the Drama Critics Circle Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and several Tony Awards, including Best Play, Best Author, and Best director. To this day, *Death of a Salesman* remains his most famous and respected work.

In 1950, Miller's troubles began. After directing a production of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, Miller began getting negative attention for his very public political and social commentary. In 1953 *The Crucible* opened on Broadway, depicting a deliberate parallel between the Salem Witch Trials and the Communist Red Scare that America was experiencing at the time. This production brought more suspicion onto Miller at a very unstable time in American history, and in June of 1956, he was called to testify in front of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), for which he was found in contempt of court for his refusal to cooperate and identify names of Communist sympathizers. This ruling was later overturned by the United States Court of Appeals, but damage to his reputation had taken place nonetheless.

That same year, he divorced his wife and married actress and American icon Marilyn Monroe; however, his marriage to Monroe did not last long—they divorced in 1961. His plays *After the Fall* (1964) and *Finishing the Picture* (2004) are said to loosely depict their turbulent and unhappy marriage. After divorcing Monroe, Miller married Inge Morath, with whom he had a son, Daniel, in 1962 and a daughter, Rebecca, in 1963. There have been unconfirmed reports that Miller's son Daniel was diagnosed with Down syndrome shortly after he was born and that Miller institutionalized Daniel and never saw or spoke of him again, even in his poignant autobiography *Timebends: A Life* (1987).

Miller's other plays include *Incident at Vichy* (1965), *The Price* (1968), *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972), *The American Clock* (1980), *The Ride down Mount Morgan* (1991), *Broken Glass* (1994), and *Resurrection Blues* (2002). He also wrote a novel, *Focus* (1945), a book of short stories in 1967, several screenplays and television movies, and *Echoes down the Corridor* (2000), a collection of essays. In addition, he collaborated with Inge (who was a photographer) on several books. He received the Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1999 and the National Book Foundation's medal for his contribution to American literature in 2001.

Arthur Miller died of heart failure in February of 2005 at his Connecticut home. He was 89 years old.

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Standards Focus: Exploring Expository Writing – Arthur Miller Biography

*Directions: Use the biography of Arthur Miller on page 6 to answer the following questions. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line provided.*

1. _____ What is the author's purpose for writing this biography about Arthur Miller?
   a. To persuade the reader to read Miller's plays
   b. To describe Miller's home life while growing up
   c. To inform the reader about Miller's life and works
   d. To entertain the reader before reading Miller's plays

2. _____ Based upon the information given in paragraph 3, the reader can assume that:
   a. Miller was a talented and respected writer.
   b. Miller was appreciative of the awards he received.
   c. Miller did not use success as his motivation.
   d. Miller was paid large sums of money for his work.

3. _____ Which event happened the same year that Miller was called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee?
   a. *All My Sons* won the Pulitzer Prize.
   b. Miller's son Daniel was born.
   c. Miller married Marilyn Monroe.
   d. Miller's conviction for contempt was overturned.

4. _____ In which paragraph would it be most appropriate to insert information about Miller's connection with Elia Kazan, a friend and former member of the Communist party?
   a. paragraph 1
   b. paragraph 2
   c. paragraph 3
   d. paragraph 4

5. Read the following sentence: *His father was a clothing manufacturer and store owner who <u>experienced significant loss</u> after the Stock Market Crash of 1929.*

   _____ Which word or words would *best* replace the underlined words in the sentence above?
   a. caught a wealth of poverty
   b. wasted his money
   c. fell into poverty
   d. was made poor

6. _____ Which of the following would be *least* likely to fit in the article on page 6?
   a. A paragraph highlighting Miller's testimony to the HUAC
   b. A paragraph about Marilyn Monroe's movies
   c. A paragraph about Miller's writings in college
   d. A paragraph about the authors and playwrights who influenced Miller

7. _____ Which of the following questions would be *most* appropriate to ask Miller if you were a reporter who had been granted an interview with him?
   a. *How did your Jewish upbringing influence your work?*
   b. *Which of your three wives did you love the most?*
   c. *How much money do you make?*
   d. *Why did you get married so many times?*

Name _____ Period _____

## *The Crucible*
## Terminology to Know

Although Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in the 1950s, he wrote in the archaic language of the 1600s, giving a more authentic feel to the play. Some vocabulary may be unfamiliar to you or may be used in a way in which you do not normally see it used, but were commonly understood words of the English language in the 17th Century. As you come across these words, use the list below to aid your comprehension of the play.

**Act One**

1. hearty – well
2. bid – told
3. aye – yes
4. opened – been honest
5. nay – no
6. sport – a game
7. Goody – Mrs.
8. blink – pay no attention to
9. naught – nothing
10. mark – listen to; remember
11. clapped in the stocks – placed in the stocks (a punishment device in which the offender was secured by the hands and feet or head and hands and was left outside to be publicly humiliated or abused)
12. wintry – unfriendly
13. charge – accusation or reason
14. writ – a court order
15. pray – please
16. incubi and succubi – (plural form for incubus and succubus) male and female demons, respectively, who were believed to have intercourse with people while they were asleep
17. irons – iron restraints

**Act Two**

1. strip – cut into smaller pieces; disassemble
2. would – wish; wish to
3. bewitchin' – putting a curse on; using magic or other supernatural force against
4. fraud – lie or person who lies
5. let you – you should
6. be – were; are
7. weighty – important
8. base – immoral
9. how comes it – why is it
10. quail – show fear or apprehension
11. text – pretext; a made-up reason or excuse

**Act Three**

1. broke charity – broke trust; turned against
2. put-upon – treated badly
3. *ipso facto* – because of that very fact
4. suck a scream – accuse
5. what say you? – what do you have to say?

**Act Four**

1. with child – pregnant
2. marked – scheduled
3. bridegroom – groom or male suitor

Name _____ Period _____

# Historical Context: Witchcraft in Puritan New England

In 1650, when the Puritans left England and set off to seek religious freedom in America, the fear of witchcraft was very real. For thousands of years, Satan was blamed for any and all oddities or mysteries in life; anyone who was in opposition to the concepts or ideas of Christianity was said to be connected to Satan and his evil work, and therefore considered a heretic.

Under the duress of extreme torture, many accused heretics "confessed" to flying on poles, practicing magic, engaging in sexual misconduct, and seeing Satan in various forms. In 1487, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches) was published, and quickly became the official text for the detection and persecution of witches. The *Malleus Maleficarum* told tales of women (the weaker and less intellectual beings, according to the text) who, under the influence of the Devil, had sexual intercourse with demons, killed babies, destroyed crops, and caused general mayhem. Witches were blamed for unexpected deaths, natural disasters, sterility, sick livestock, and even strange weather. Also within the text were methods for prosecuting a witch, including stripping the accused and inspecting the body for signs such as unusual birthmarks (believed to be the Devil's mark). When the *Malleus Maleficarum* was written, the idea of witchcraft was not popularly accepted, but the text quickly convinced many of the threat and danger of witches.

Between 1500 and 1650, approximately 70,000 accused witches were executed throughout Europe—approximately eighty percent of whom were women. Those who were accused were usually social outcasts, elderly women, single mothers, widows, the disabled, the poor, husbands of the accused, and those who publicly denied the existence of witches. The most prevalent times these "witch-hunts" occurred throughout history were times of political and social strife. People wanted someone to blame for their misfortune, and would literally hunt down their scapegoats.

The accused were guilty until proven innocent. The courts of New England recognized two forms of evidence of witchcraft: either an eyewitness account or a confession. Since very few confessed of their own will, torture was used to coerce a confession. The accused was jailed, then subjected to several forms of torture to elicit a confession. Some of the torture devices included:

- **Strappado**— The accused was bound and hung by her arms, which were tied behind her back. Weights were often hung from her feet to increase the pain, and usually caused her arms to break at her shoulders.
- **Swimming**—It was believed that a witch would not sink in water. The accused was tied up and thrown into a lake or pond; a witch would float, and the innocent would sink. Many drowned as a result.
- **Ordeal by Fire**—The defendant was forced to carry or walk on hot coals. The burns were wrapped and treated. After three days, upon examination of the wounds, if there was an open sore, the defendant was found guilty.
- **Ordeal by Water**—The defendant was forced to repeatedly place her arm in a pot of boiling water. Again, if there was still evidence of the burn after three days, she was found guilty of being a witch.
- **Thumbscrews**—The accused's thumbs were place in a vice and crushed incrementally to extract a confession.
- **Pricking**—Since it was a widely held belief that witches did not bleed, those who were accused were subjected to hundreds of pin pricks or cuts, as the court diligently looked for the absence of blood.
- **The Rack**—The accused was laid on a large board of wood with her hands and feet tied. As the accusers tried to extract a confession, her arms and ankles were pulled in opposite directions, often resulting in dislocation of the limbs.

Under these various forms of torture, many falsely confessed to practicing witchcraft. After the courts had a confession, trials resumed, and the witches who were found guilty (as were all who confessed) were publicly hanged or burned at the stake.

Name _____ Period _____

# Exploring Expository Writing/Historical Context: Puritan Religion and Beliefs

Frustrated by the Church of England, early Puritans came to America to escape persecution and to establish a new sect in which God's law was held supreme. They believed that the Bible and its message were above man's law, and therefore, it was the key to salvation. Most of the dissenters settled in New England, and it was in these new colonies that they established a close-knit community governed by absolute religious faith and strict discipline.

The Puritans believed in predestination—that people were either born sinful and bound to a life in Hell, or they were destined to be saved. Nothing could be done to change one's destiny except to live a life of purity and pray that God would save them at the time of their death. Puritans believed in a life of hard work, self-discipline, and religious duty. Those who engaged in gossip, dancing, drunkenness, adultery, and other activities which were seen as the work of the Devil and a threat to the conformity of the community were subjected to public humiliation and punishment.

This strict, oppressive environment created tension in the community. Satan was ever-present in their daily lives, as death, drought, flood, and other natural disasters were blamed on Satan and his followers. As a result, Puritans became paranoid and suspicious of each other, and were often quick to place blame. This tension and paranoia created the perfect equation for the Salem Witch-hunt in 1692.

Spurred by political and social unrest in the community, and religious leaders such as Cotton Mather who wrote the book *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft and Possessions* (1689), the hysteria in Salem spread like wildfire. By the end of the trials in 1692, nineteen men and women were hanged, one man was pressed to death, and many others died in prison while awaiting trial.

*Directions: Choose the letter of the best response. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line provided.*

1. _____ What is the main purpose of the article above?
   a. to compare the Puritan ideals and beliefs to the beliefs of the Church of England
   b. to analyze the relationship between the Puritans' ideals and beliefs and the witchcraft accusations
   c. to persuade the reader to take the side of the Puritans
   d. to describe the influence Cotton Mather had on the Puritans

2. _____ During the Colonial period, fear of the Devil was prevalent. This is *most* apparent in which of the following paragraphs?
   a. paragraphs 1 and 4
   b. paragraphs 1 and 2
   c. paragraphs 2 and 3
   d. paragraphs 3 and 4

3. _____ Which of the following would probably be the *best* source of information for a research report on this topic?
   a. *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*
   b. *The Witch-hunts of Europe and America*
   c. *The Salem Herald*
   d. *Puritan History: From the Outcasts to the Accusers*

4. _____ Which of the following research questions would be *most* useful in finding out more about Puritan religion and beliefs?
   a. What holidays did the Puritans celebrate?
   b. How did the Puritans feel about the Native Americans they encountered in America?
   c. What ideals were the Puritans taught in church and school?
   d. How many Puritans left the church to join a different religion?

5. On a separate piece of paper, use the above article to summarize what life was life for the Puritans in America. Then compare the life of the Puritans to your own—are there similarities? What are the differences? Explain using examples from the article and your own life experiences.

Name _____ Period _____

## Historical Context: The Red Scare and McCarthy Trials

In 1950, Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* as a parallel between the Salem Witch trials and the current events that were spreading throughout the United States at the time. A similar "witch-hunt" was happening in the United States---and this time, the accused were those who were a part of the Communist Party or were Communist sympathizers.

Shortly after the end of World War I, a "Red Scare" took hold of the nation. Named after the red flag of the U.S.S.R. (now Russia), the "Reds" were seen as a threat to the democracy of the United States. Fear, paranoia, and hysteria gripped the nation, and many innocent people were questioned and then jailed for expressing any view which was seen as anti-Democratic or anti-American.

In June of 1940, Congress passed the Alien Registration Act, which required anyone who was not a legal resident of the United States to file a statement of their occupational and personal status, which included a record of their political beliefs. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which was established in 1938, had the job of investigating those who were suspected of overthrowing or threatening the democracy of the U.S. As the Alien Registration Act gathered the information, the HUAC began hunting down those who were believed to be a threat to American beliefs.

The HUAC established that Communist beliefs were being spread via mass media. At this time, movies were becoming more liberal, and therefore, were believed to be a threat; many felt that Hollywood was attempting to propagandize Communist beliefs. In September of 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee subpoenaed nineteen witnesses (most of whom were actors, directors, and writers) who had previously refused comment, claiming their Fifth Amendment rights. Eleven of the 17 were called to testify; only one actually spoke on the stand—the remaining ten refused to speak and were labeled the "Hollywood Ten."

After these infamous ten refused to speak, executives from the movie industry met to decide how to best handle the bad press. They decided to suspend all ten without pay. Although the initial intention was to save their box office reputation, what eventually resulted was a decade-long blacklist. Hundreds of people who worked in the industry were told to point the finger naming those who had any affiliation with the Communist party. As a result, over 200 people lost their jobs and were unable to find anyone who would hire them. The Communist witch-hunt ruined the careers of hundreds, and ruined the reputation of hundreds more.

In February of 1950, a Republican senator from Wisconsin named Joseph McCarthy claimed to have a list of over 200 card-carrying members of the Communist party. By 1951, a new flourish of accusations began and a new wave were subpoenaed to "name names"—to snitch on those who were Communists or believed to be Communist sympathizers. Later, the terms *McCarthy Trials* and *McCarthyism* were coined, which described the anti-Communist movement and trials of the 1950s.

Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in 1953, after witnessing first-hand the modern witch-hunt that had taken place in the United States. Miller wrote the controversial play as an allegory, a play which represents something much deeper. In this case, the story is about the Salem witch trials of the 1690s, but warns of history repeating these tragic events in the 1950s.

Act One Character Chart

| Character | Attribute | Evidence (quote with page number) |
|---|---|---|
| Rev. Parris (p. 3,4) | | |
| Rev. Parris (p. 3,4) | | |
| Salem villagers (p. 4-6) | | |
| Salem villagers (p. 4-6) | | |
| Salem villagers (p.4-6) | | |
| Thomas Putnam (p. 14, 15) | | |
| Thomas Putnam (p. 14, 15) | | |
| John Proctor (p. 20, 21) | | |
| John Proctor (p. 20,21) | | |
| Rebecca Nurse (p. 25, 26) | | |
| Francis Nurse (p. 25, 26) | | |
| Rev. Hale (p. 32-36) | | |
| Rev. Hale (p. 32-36) | | |
| Rev. Hale (p. 32-36) | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Giles Corey (p. 40,41) | | |
| Giles Corey (p.40,41) | | |
| Abigail Williams | | |
| Abigail Williams | | |
| Tituba | | |

Do you see any "alliances"?

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Act One
## Comprehension Check

*As you read The Crucible, use the Note-Taking techniques described on page 19. To give you a complete and comprehensive method of reading and understanding all aspects of the play, answer the following questions for Act One. Write your answers in complete sentences.*

1. What is wrong with Betty Parris?
2. How does Tituba react to Betty's condition?
3. What news does Susanna bring from the doctor?
4. What rumor is circulating about Betty?
5. How does Abigail initially defend the girls' behavior in the woods?
6. Why is Reverend Parris so worried about his reputation?
7. What did Parris see in the woods?
8. What does Abigail claim is the reason she was discharged from the Proctor household?
9. In what condition is Ruth Putnam?
10. Briefly describe Thomas Putnam.
11. Why did Mrs. Putnam enlist Tituba's help?
12. Why did Abigail drink blood?
13. How does Abigail threaten the other girls?
14. Briefly describe John Proctor.
15. What happens when John and Abigail are left alone?
16. What does Rebecca Nurse say about Betty and Ruth's sickness?
17. Why is Reverend Parris dissatisfied with his job in Salem?
18. About what are Proctor and Putnam fighting?
19. Describe Reverend Hale. For what reason has he been called to Salem?
20. What is Giles Corey's complaint about his wife?
21. Why does Tituba finally "confess"? What do you think of her actions? What do you think will happen as a result?
22. Why do you think the girls begin their accusations when they could have just let Tituba take the blame for everything?
23. What does the girls' behavior tell you about the youth of Salem?

Name _____ Period _____

## Act Two
## Standards Focus: Types of Conflict

**Conflict** is a literary term indicating the struggle between two or more opposing forces. If conflict is written well, it can create a feeling of suspense, tension, and intrigue. There are several types of conflict:

1) *man versus man*—struggle between two or more characters
2) *man versus himself*—struggle between a character and his conscience, morals, or physical limitations
3) *man versus nature*—struggle between a character and a force of nature such as weather or the environment
4) *man versus society*—struggle between a character and the rules, beliefs, or pressures of a society or community
5) *man versus fate*—struggle between a character and the "forces" of the universe, such as God, destiny, or chance happenings

In addition, conflict can be divided into external or internal conflicts. **External conflicts** are man versus man, man versus nature, man versus society, and man versus fate. The **internal conflict** is man versus himself.

*Directions: For each of the following quotes from Acts One and Two, decide who or what is involved in the conflict, and which type of conflict is being represented (see 1-5 above). Then decide whether this conflict is a main or subordinate conflict in the play. An example has been done for you.*

**Ex.** Parris urges Abigail to tell him the truth about what happens in the woods: "It must come out—my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?"

Opposing forces: Parris versus certain members of the community

Type of conflict: man versus society

Main or subordinate?: subordinate

1. Abigail defends her name in the town: "She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It's a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!"

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

2. John Proctor rejects Abigail: "Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby."

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

Name _____ Period _____

## Act Two
## Standards Focus: Types of Conflict

3. Giles comments on recent events: "Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit. I have been six time in court this year—"

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

4. Parris and Putnam threaten to whip and hang Tituba, and she begs for her life: "No, no, don't hang Tituba! I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir."

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

5. Proctor attempts to convince his wife: "Woman. I'll not have your suspicion any more... I'll not have it!"

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

6. Proctor is plagued by guilt: "But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed. Confessed! Some dream I had must have mistaken you for God that day. But you're not, you're not, and let you remember it! Let you look sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not."

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

7. Hale questions Proctor: "I thought, sir, to put some questions as to the Christian character of this house, if you'll permit me."

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

8. Elizabeth learns of Abigail's charge: "Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly—"

   Opposing forces: _____

   Type of conflict: _____

   Main or subordinate?: _____

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Act Two
## Comprehension Check

*As you read The Crucible, use the Note-Taking techniques described on page 19. To give you a complete and comprehensive method of reading and understanding all aspects of the play, answer the following questions for Act Two. Write your answers using complete sentences.*

1. What is the mood at the beginning of Act Two? Why?
2. What do we learn about John and Elizabeth's relationship at the beginning of the act?
3. What does Mary give Elizabeth?
4. What news does Mary Warren bring from court?
5. What does Elizabeth mean when she says: "Oh, the noose, the noose is up!"
6. What does Elizabeth want John to do in town? What will everyone find out if he does this?
7. Why has Reverend Hale come to the Proctor house?
8. To what is John referring when he says: "...it tells me that a minister may pray to God without he have golden candlesticks upon the altar."
9. What does Hale ask John to do? What happens?
10. What is ironic about this omission?
11. What news do Giles Corey and Frances Nurse tell John Proctor?
12. On what basis are they accused?
13. What is the significance of the poppet? How does this serve as "proof" for Elizabeth's accusation?
14. What does John mean when he says "I'll tell you what's walking in Salem—vengeance is walking in Salem"?

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Act Three
## Standards Focus: Irony

One of the most powerful elements of *The Crucible* is Miller's use of irony. There are several examples of irony in Act Three of *The Crucible*.

**Irony** is an inconsistency between appearance and reality. There are several types of irony:

- **Verbal** irony is when a speaker or writer says one thing but actually means the opposite. For example, when your mom walks into your filthy bedroom and says, "I see you've cleaned your room!" Sarcasm is one type of verbal irony.
- **Situational** irony is when the outcome of a situation is inconsistent with what we expect would logically or normally occur. An example of situational irony would be if a thief's house was broken into at the same time he was robbing someone's house.
- **Dramatic** irony is when the audience or the reader is aware of something that a character does not know. For example, when Romeo believes Juliet is dead, but the audience knows that she has only been given a potion to sleep.

*Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.*

1. What was John's intention in publicly admitting his affair with Abigail? How is this ironic? What type of irony is this? _____

2. What was Elizabeth's intention when lying about John's affair? What is ironic about Elizabeth's lie? What type of irony is this? _____

3. What is ironic about the beliefs of the Puritan community and the events of the play so far? ____

Name _____ Period _____

## Act Three
## Comprehension Check

*As you read The Crucible, use the Note-Taking techniques described on page 19. To give you a complete and comprehensive method of reading and understanding all aspects of the play, answer the following questions for Act Three. Write your answers using complete sentences.*

1. When the act begins, who is on the stand, and of what is she accused?
2. Who bursts into court, and why?
3. What does Mary Warren tell the court?
4. What does Cheever say that Proctor did when they came to arrest Elizabeth Proctor?
5. What do we learn about Elizabeth Proctor?
6. How many people signed the deposition? Who are the people who signed, and to what are they testifying?
7. Why is Giles Corey arrested?
8. How many death warrants has Hale signed?
9. What do the men of the court want Mary Warren to do on command?
10. What does Proctor confess?
11. What does Proctor say about his wife that eventually works against him?
12. What do the girls pretend to see in the courtroom?
13. What does Mary claim Proctor made her do?
14. What does Hale do at the end of the act? Why?
15. In our court system today, the accused is innocent until proven guilty. In what ways does the court of Salem ignore the "innocent until proven guilty" clause?
16. If you were a lawyer defending one of the accused today, what arguments would you make to defend your client? Compose a one-page speech which defends the innocence of John Proctor. Be sure to use examples from the text to make your case.

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Act Four
## Standards Focus: Tragedy and the Tragic Hero

Over 2,300 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote his definition of a **tragedy**. According to Aristotle: "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions." In other words, to be a true tragedy, a play must make the audience pity the characters and make them fear the same consequences the character (usually the protagonist) experiences.

Similarly, Aristotle defined the concept of a tragic hero. A **tragic hero** is a protagonist with a fatal (also called tragic) flaw which eventually leads to his downfall. The Aristotelian tragic hero is introduced as happy, powerful, and privileged, and ends up dying or suffering immensely because of his own actions or mistakes. The tragic hero must have four characteristics: goodness (a moral and ethical person), superiority (such as someone with supreme or noble authority or control), a tragic flaw (will eventually lead to his own demise), and the eventual realization that his decisions or actions have caused his downfall (faces death or suffering with honor). Usually, the realization of tragic flaw results in an **epiphany**, or a sudden realization by the character, audience, or both, and a **catharsis**, or a release of emotions, which makes the audience feel more at peace.

*Directions: Many scholars feel that John Proctor is the classic tragic hero. Analyze the character of John Proctor and the play as a whole by answering the questions below.*

1. In your opinion, what is John Proctor's tragic (fatal) flaw?
2. When John is first introduced, is he "happy"? Why or why not?
3. How might John be considered a superior or privileged person?
4. In your opinion, is John a moral and/or ethical person? Support your response with textual evidence.
5. At what point does John realize he is facing his own demise? What is his reaction? How is/isn't this consistent with the characteristics of the tragic hero?
6. Do you feel John Proctor is the ideal tragic hero? Why or why not? Explain how he fits or does not fit the definition of a tragic hero.
7. According to the definition, is *The Crucible* a tragedy? Why or why not? Support your response with evidence from the play. Do you feel pity for the characters, especially John Proctor? Did you experience a catharsis because you did not suffer the same fate as John and the others who were accused of practicing witchcraft? Why or why not?

**Name** _____ **Period** _____

## Act Four
## Comprehension Check

*As you read The Crucible, use the Note-Taking techniques described on page 19. To give you a complete and comprehensive method of reading and understanding all aspects of the novel, answer the following questions for Act Four.*

1. What is Reverend Hale doing at the jailhouse?
2. What is happening to the farms and animals in the town of Salem? Why do you think this is happening?
3. What has happened to Abigail and Mercy Lewis?
4. What happened in the town of Andover? Why is Parris afraid of this news?
5. What does Parris suggest to Danforth? Why does he make this suggestion?
6. What other indications does Hale give that the town is falling apart?
7. What does Hale mean when he says, "There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head"?
8. Why does Danforth refuse to postpone the executions?
9. How long has passed since the trials first began?
10. What do Hale and Danforth beg Elizabeth to do? Why?
11. What does Elizabeth say happened to Giles Corey?
12. What has Proctor been contemplating doing? What is Elizabeth's response to this?
13. What do Danforth and Parris plan to do with Proctor's confession?
14. Why does Proctor refuse to sign the confession?
15. What does he do with the confession, and what happens to him as a result?
16. What does Elizabeth mean by: "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him"?
17. What lessons do you think Arthur Miller wanted readers and audiences to learn from his play? What do you think are the most important themes of the play?
18. Do you think the story would have been as effective as a novel rather than a play? Why or why not? Why do you think Miller decided to tell the story of the Salem Witch Trials as a play rather than a novel?

Ergot Poisoning - the cause of the Salem Witch Trials

PBS "Secrets of the Dead II" — Witches Curse

Case 1: Interview

Linnda Caporael may have solved one of the biggest mysteries of early American history — the cause of the Salem Witch Trials — but she stumbled onto the case quite by accident. "I actually started this project as a senior in college," recalls Caporael, now a behavioral scientist and full professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. "I had one of those standard senior problems where you are going for graduation check-out and find you are missing a critical course. Mine was a history course. I enrolled in one, and had to immediately write a paper, which I decided to do on Anne Putnam because I'd seen Arthur Miller's play THE CRUCIBLE. My goal was to demonstrate that women could be as wicked as men. As I began researching, I remember having one of those kind of 'ah-hah!' experiences, where I was reading a book in which the author said he was at a loss to explain the hallucinations of all these people in Salem. It was that word 'hallucinations' that made everything click. Years and years ago, when I was a little kid, I had read about the French case of ergot poisoning, and I made the connection between the two."

"The curious thing is that I went back recently to take a look at that reference and the author doesn't use the word hallucination at all. I must have hallucinated the word as much as anything else! Now I'm not too sure what the click actually was, but something said to me 'maybe it could be ergot poisoning.'"

Her detective work, first published 25 years ago, brought Caporael instant fame, worldwide recognition — even a front-page story in the NEW YORK TIMES. That's quite a heavy load for a student. "When it first came out it was quite sensational," Caporael recalls. "I sort of thought that was my 15 minutes of fame and went on to do my more usual work." But the allure of the trials and Caporael's intriguing explanation — that the "bewitched" accusers of Salem had in fact suffered hallucinations, convulsions, bizarre skin sensations and other unusual symptoms because they'd been poisoned by a crop of fungus-infested rye — is still fascinating 25 years later.

Caporael sees the allure. "It has all the elements of a good mystery story. I'd never worked on a project that was as well defined — we were talking about one event at one particular point in time," she says. "Plus, it was a lot of fun to do!"

Although she has long since moved on to other work, Caporael keeps her nose in the ergotism case file, following research that suggests the role of ergot in other historical events. She doesn't buy into all of them. "Some of these ideas are skating on thin ice," she says, such as the theory that ergot poisoning may have influenced the outcome of the French Revolution. "I do think there is a lot of work that can be done on the historical incidence of ergot, but not all of these cases will end up being ergot poisoning. Many of them could be attributed to the same kind of mass hysteria hypothesis that described Salem at one time."

Ergot poisoning can't even explain all of the events at Salem, Caporael concedes. Some of the behaviors exhibited by the witch accusers probably were the result of mass hysteria — or outright fakery. "At the end of June and the beginning of July, 1692, I think there was more imagination than ergot. But by that point in time three people had already been hung, and the trials had taken a path that people felt they had to stay on," Caporael says. "One of the clearest examples is the young accuser who, in the late

summer, said 'wait a minute, I don't think that there are witches after all.' At that point, the other girls began accusing HER of being a witch, and she immediately seemed to understand what was going on and began being a vociferous accuser again."

And yet Caporael believes that the role of ergotism in history might still be underappreciated. "I just got a fascinating email from a scholar in England who noticed that the fits of Caliban — the character in Shakespeare's THE TEMPEST — matched the description of those of people with ergot poisoning. She wondered would this kind of poisoning been possible in the 16th century when Shakespeare was writing. And the answer, of course, is yes. There were claims of outbreaks in both the U.K. and Europe then," says Caporael. "I think it's a fascinating idea that this would have been picked up in literature. In fact, it should have been if there was some kind of consistent physiological response."

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Case 1: Background

The trouble in Salem began during the cold dark Massachusetts winter, January, 1692. Eight young girls began to take ill, beginning with 9-year-old Elizabeth Parris, the daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, as well as his niece, 11-year-old Abigail Williams. But theirs was a strange sickness: the girls suffered from delirium, violent convulsions, incomprehensible speech, trance-like states, and odd skin sensations. The worried villagers searched desperately for an explanation. Their conclusion: the girls were under a spell, bewitched — and, worse yet, by members of their own pious community.

And then the finger pointing began. The first to be accused were Tituba, Parris's Caribbean-born slave, along with Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn, two elderly women considered of ill repute. All three were arrested on February 29. Ultimately, more than 150 "witches" were taken into custody; by late September 1692, 20 men and women had been put to death, and five more accused had died in jail. None of the executed confessed to witchcraft. Such a confession would have surely spared their lives, but, they believed, condemned their souls.

On October 29, by order of Massachusetts Governor Sir William Phips, the Salem witch trials officially ended. When the dust cleared, the townsfolk and the accusers were at a loss to explain their own actions. In the centuries since, scholars and historians have struggled as well to explain the madness that overtook Salem. Was it sexual repression, dietary deficiency, mass hysteria? Or, could a simple fungus have been to blame?

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Case 1: Clues and Evidence

When Linnda Caporael began nosing into the Salem witch trials as a college student in the early 1970s, she had no idea that a common grain fungus might be responsible for the terrible events of 1692. But then the pieces began to fall into place. Caporael, now a behavioral psychologist at New York's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, soon noticed a link between the strange symptoms reported by Salem's accusers, chiefly eight young women, and the hallucinogenic effects of drugs like LSD. LSD is a derivative of ergot, a fungus that affects rye grain. Ergotism — ergot poisoning — had indeed been implicated in other outbreaks of bizarre behavior, such as the one that afflicted the small French town of Pont-Saint-Esprit in 1951.

But could ergot actually have been the culprit? Did it have the means and the opportunity to wreak havoc in Salem? Caporael's sleuthing, with the help of science, provided the answers.

Ergot is caused by the fungus Claviceps purpurea, which affects rye, wheat and other cereal grasses. When first infected, the flowering head of a grain will spew out sweet, yellow-colored mucus, called "honey dew," which contains fungal spores that can spread the disease. Eventually, the fungus invades the developing kernels of grain, taking them over with a network of filaments that turn the grains into purplish-black sclerotia. Sclerotia can be mistaken for large, discolored grains of rye. Within them are potent chemicals, ergot alkaloids, including lysergic acid (from which LSD is made) and ergotamine (now used to treat migraine headaches). The alkaloids affect the central nervous system and cause the contraction of smooth muscle — the muscles that make up the walls of veins and arteries, as well as the internal organs.

Toxicologists now know that eating ergot-contaminated food can lead to a convulsive disorder characterized by violent muscle spasms, vomiting, delusions, hallucinations, crawling sensations on the skin, and a host of other symptoms — all of which, Linda Caporael noted, are present in the records of the Salem witchcraft trials. Ergot thrives in warm, damp, rainy springs and summers. When Caporael examined the diaries of Salem residents, she found that those exact conditions had been present in 1691. Nearly all of the accusers lived in the western section of Salem village, a region of swampy meadows that would have been prime breeding ground for the fungus. At that time, rye was the staple grain of Salem. The rye crop consumed in the winter of 1691-1692 — when the first usual symptoms began to be reported — could easily have been contaminated by large quantities of ergot. The summer of 1692, however, was dry, which could explain the abrupt end of the 'bewitchments.' These and other clues built up into a circumstantial case against ergot that Caporael found impossible to ignore.

# *The Crucible* Movie Viewing Guide

**Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions**

1. What problems might a screenwriter have in adapting this work to a movie format?

2. Which scene(s) do you think will be the most challenging for the director? Why?

3. Whom would you select to play the major roles in a movie version of this work? Explain your choices.

**Viewing Discussion Questions**

**Setting**

1. What details help establish time and place?

2. Did you prefer imagining the scenes as you read the work or viewing the settings in the film? Why?

**Character**

1. Were the characters in this video more believable and real for you than the characters in the play? Why or why not?

2. What qualities did the protagonist (Proctor) possess? In which scenes were these qualities most evident?

3. How did you react to the antagonist (Abigail)? What aspects of the movie caused you to react that way?

4. Which character differed most dramatically from the way you imagined him or her in the play? In what ways did the actor's portrayal of the character differ from your expectations?

**Plot**

1. Which events were most effective in the video version of the play? Explain.

2. Was the sequencing of events any different in the movie and printed versions? Which scenes did the filmmaker sequence differently?

3. What events from the novel did the filmmaker alter or omit? Why do you think he made these changes?

4. What was the climax of the movie? How did the director, cinematographer, and actors contribute in making this the high point of the film?

**Theme**

1. How effectively did the filmmakers employ the author's symbols to convey theme? Explain.

**Film Review**

Provide a paragraph review of the film. Also, give the film a rating (examples: 4 out of 5 stars, a letter grade, a number on a scale of 1 to 10, or some other rating system you devise).