

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Crucible

by Arthur Miller

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Item No. 200678

The Crucible

Cast of Characters

- Reverend Parris
- Betty Parris
- Tituba
- Abigail Williams
- Susanna Walcott
- Mrs. Ann Putnam
- Thomas Putnam
- Mercy Lewis
- Mary Warren
- John Proctor
- Rebecca Nurse
- Giles Corey
- Reverend John Hale
- Elizabeth Proctor
- Francis Nurse
- Ezekiel Cheever
- Marshal Herrick
- Judge Hathorne
- Deputy Governor Danforth
- Sarah Good
- Hopkins

The Crucible

Objectives

By the end of this Unit the students will be able to:

1. write an essay in support of the following thesis: “Putting aside any contemporary, social concerns and any historical considerations, this play is, first and foremost, the story of one man’s personal crisis.”
2. relate the Salem witch hunts of 1692 to what was happening in the United States in the 1950’s.
3. define a tragic hero and state to what extent John Proctor does or does not measure up to the definition.
4. identify and discuss the following themes in this drama:
 - Authority: where it comes from and its proper and improper use
 - Justice and injustice
 - Courage, weakness, and truth
5. identify and discuss how the following elements fueled the plot in this drama:
 - Superstition
 - Greed and revenge
 - Mass hysteria
6. write a character analysis in which the actions are described and motivation revealed for each of the following characters:
 - John Proctor
 - Elizabeth Proctor
 - Abigail Williams
 - Rev. John Hale
 - Rev. Samuel Parris
 - Giles Corey
 - Governor Danforth
7. write an essay supporting or attacking the following thesis: “Despite their clothing, John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor, and Abigail Williams are thoroughly modern people.”
8. identify and discuss those features that Miller suggests characterize the Puritan society and its thinking.

The Crucible

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In what way is John Proctor the tragic hero in this play?
2. What does this play say about “authority”? Be sure to consider the significance of Proctor’s death at the end in your answer.
3. Prove the following statement: “This play is essentially about courage, weakness and truth.”
4. Why is Governor Danforth *not* a monster in this play?
5. Although touching on many other points, this play is foremost a drama depicting the relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor. Trace this relationship as it develops throughout the play.
6. Identify how each of the following contributed to the insanity of Salem: greed and revenge, mass hysteria, and superstition.
7. Identify and discuss at least three points in this play that have a relevance to what was happening in the United States in the 1950’s.
8. Describe the personal strengths and weaknesses of the following people: Elizabeth Proctor, Giles Corey, Rev. Hale, and Rev. Parris.
9. Abigail’s faults are quite obvious, but if you were given the job of her defense attorney, what arguments could you make in her favor?
10. A crucible is a pot which, because it can withstand great heat, is used to melt iron and other metals. The word “crucible” is also used to describe a severe test or a hard trial. Finally, “crucible” is also used as an adjective to describe a very high grade steel. With these possibilities in mind, why do you suppose Miller called his play *The Crucible*?

Act II

Vocabulary

ameliorate – to make better or more tolerable
contempt – disdain
daft – crazy; idiotic
falter – hesitate
indignant – angry over something unjust
ineptly – incompetently; foolishly
lechery – sexual indulgence
pious – faithfully religious
poppets – dolls
pretense – pretending; “an act”

1. In what way has Mary Warren changed and what changed her?

2. How would you describe the relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor at the beginning of this scene?

3. What is it she wants him to do?

4. Why can't John prove what Abigail told him? Why does Elizabeth pick up on this?

17. What finally causes Mary Warren to agree with Abigail?

18. On what dramatic note does Act III end?
