

The Crucible: Act Four

Dramatic Conventions: Be able to define each term and apply each term to the play.

theme _____

allusion _____

extended metaphor _____

symbol _____

logical fallacy _____

Enrichment Activity 4: Conflict

In the first three acts of The Crucible, the author presents major conflicts which arise between two decisive characters in the play. These struggles occur between themselves and other members of Puritan society. To understand the motives of the characters, it becomes necessary to recognize the struggles of these two characters, John Proctor and Abigail Williams.

DIRECTIONS: Identify the characters who have conflicts with John and Abigail, and the reasons behind each problem.

| Proctor vs. | Abigail vs. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Character: Reasons: | Character: Reasons: |
| Character: Reasons: | Character: Reasons: |
| Character: Reasons: | Character: Reasons: |
| Character: Reasons: | Character: Reasons: |

The Crucible

Act Four. Guided Reading Questions

1. Why has Reverend Hale returned to Salem?
2. What is Reverend Hale advising the condemned to do?
3. What does Reverend Parris reveal about his niece Abigail?
4. How does Andover differ from Salem?
5. How do the proposed hangings of Rebecca Nurse and John Proctor differ from the past executions?
6. What does Reverend Parris want Danforth to do?
7. What does Reverend Hale want Danforth to do?
8. What does Reverend Hale mean when he says, "there is blood on my head!"?
9. Why does Danforth refuse to postpone the hangings?
10. What do Hale and Danforth request of Elizabeth Proctor?

11. What happened to Giles Corey?

12. What is John's excuse for confessing?

13. What is Elizabeth's proof that John is a good man?

14. After John confesses, what does Danforth want him to do?

15. What does Hale attribute Proctor's willingness to hang to?

16. What does Elizabeth attribute it to?

Literary Analysis: Theme

The havoc that fear and suspicion can wreak if not countered by reason is the most obvious theme of *The Crucible*. A **theme** is a central idea of insight that a writer tries to convey in a literary work. Miller's depiction of paranoia in Salem and his references to America in the 1950's make clear his ideas on the topic.

A work of literature may have more than one theme. Miller carefully intertwines other topics and themes as well. The personal motivations of the characters, for example, contribute to their fates along with the religious issue of witchcraft. John withholds critical information about Abigail, for example, because of his past relationship with her. Hale's academic pride blinds him to hysteria's momentum for too long. How does Miller spin these threads into themes about people and how they behave? What themes does he express?

DIRECTIONS: Use the following chart to help you identify themes in *The Crucible*. In the first column are subjects or topics that Miller addresses in the play. In the second column, write a sentence that states a theme about each topic that the events in the play express. In the third column, list the events or evidence in the play that points to the theme you've identified.

| TOPIC | THEME | EVENTS IN THE PLAY |
|--------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1. GUILT | | |
| 2. REVENGE | | |
| 3. PRIDE | | |
| 4. AUTHORITY | | |
| 5. INTEGRITY | | |