

The Crucible, Act III by Arthur Miller

Open-Book Test

Short Answer Write your responses to the questions in this section on the lines provided.

1. *The Crucible* is a complex play with numerous characters who bring conflicting motives to the witch hunt that envelops Salem. It can often be helpful in understanding such a play to list the main characters and sort them out by their motives in relation to the main plot developments, in this case the witch trials. Use the following chart to classify some of the main characters' attitudes toward the witch hunt at the beginning of Act III of *The Crucible* by placing a check mark for each character in the appropriate column: For the Witch Hunt, Against the Witch Hunt, or Undecided. In each case, briefly explain your classification of the character.

Character	For the Witch Hunt	Against the Witch Hunt	Undecided	Explanation
Thomas Putnam				
John Proctor				
Mary Warren				
Reverend Hale				
Abigail Williams				
Giles Cory				
Danforth				

2. What can the audience conclude about the intentions of the court from Judge Hathorne's questioning of Martha Corey at the beginning of Act III of *The Crucible*? Explain why this examination is an example of dramatic irony.

3. In Act III of *The Crucible*, Francis Nurse attempts to convince the judges that the girls who have claimed to be possessed by witches are frauds. Hathorne's response is, "This is contempt, sir, contempt!" Hathorne's response is an example of what kind of irony? Briefly explain your answer.

4. In Act III of *The Crucible*, what is Proctor's main motive for bringing Mary Warren to court?

5. What role does Parris play in the proceedings in Act III of *The Crucible*? What kinds of arguments and statements does he typically make to try to discredit the testimony of those who oppose him? Cite at least one example to support your answer.

6. In Act III of *The Crucible*, Danforth mentions a rumor that Elizabeth Proctor is pregnant and uses this as a basis for giving her at least a year's reprieve from execution. What does this offer show about Danforth's character? What does Proctor's refusal of the offer show about his motives in presenting counterevidence to the court?

7. In Act III of *The Crucible*, Proctor presents to Danforth a testament from ninety-one citizens attesting to the good character of Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor. How would you evaluate Danforth's response that all ninety-one should be arrested for "examination"? What is he trying to achieve with this response?

8. Throughout Act III of *The Crucible*, Hale shows himself to be a man struggling over the increasingly obvious travesties of the court's prosecutions. Explain what Hale means when he declares, "I dare not take a life without there be a proof so immaculate that no slightest qualm of conscience may doubt it."

9. Near the end of Act III of *The Crucible*, after Proctor has confessed his adultery with Abigail and Mary has been intimidated into disowning her testimony on Elizabeth's behalf, Proctor tells Danforth, "God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together." What does Proctor mean by this statement?

10. If you explained to your teacher why you failed to do your homework assignment, and your teacher looked at you incredulously, is it likely that the teacher has believed your explanation? Why or why not? Base your answer on the meaning of *incredulously* as it is used in Act III of *The Crucible*.

Essay

Write an extended response to the question of your choice or to the question or questions your teacher assigns you.

- 11. In Act III of *The Crucible*, there are changes in the behavior and attitudes of Reverend Hale and Mary Warren. In an essay, discuss these changes and the impact they have on events in Salem and on other characters in the play.
- 12. Reverend Hale's character continues to evolve throughout Act III of *The Crucible*. In an essay, analyze Hale's role in Act III. Is he more of a friend of those who have been accused or a friend of the court? How does his behavior in Act III compare to his behavior in the previous two acts? Support your answer with details from the play.
- 13. In Act III of *The Crucible*, John Danforth emerges as the most powerful and influential figure in the play. In an essay, analyze the character of John Danforth. What kind of man is he? Is there any evidence that he has any reservations about the proceedings? If so, why doesn't he stop the whole process? Support your answer with details from the play.
- 14. **Thinking About the Essential Question: How does literature shape or reflect society?** In the Bible worshiped by the Puritans of seventeenth-century Salem, one of the Ten Commandments reads, "Thou shalt not lie." Yet the intensely religious community of Salem is caught up in a web of lies and false accusations as the witchcraft hysteria overtakes the town. What does Act III of *The Crucible* reveal about the value the citizens of Salem place on truth-telling, and what does their view of this matter say about the kind of religion they practice? Develop your answer in an essay supported by details from the text.

Oral Response

15. Go back to question 4, 5, or 6 or to the question your teacher assigns to you. Take a few minutes to expand your answer and prepare an oral response. Find additional details in Act III of *The Crucible* that support your points. If necessary, make notes to guide your oral response.