

The Crucible

by Arthur Miller

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The Crucible

by Arthur Miller



What human needs and desires do we all have in common?



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The Crucible

Introducing the Play

THE CRUCIBLE

Click on the title to start the video.

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The Crucible

Introducing the Play

Sometimes our public and private selves—with all their convictions and passions—come into conflict. ▼

Then, we must make a choice: ▼

- Which self will triumph, and which must be sacrificed? ▼



In seventeenth-century Salem, these choices became a matter of life and death.

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The Crucible

Introducing the Play

Salem, Massachusetts, 1692: Reverend Samuel Parris's daughter Betty lies seemingly unconscious. The baffled doctor suggests "unnatural" causes. ▼



One night earlier, Parris had seen Betty, his niece Abigail, and others dancing wildly in the woods. ▼

Mutterings of witchcraft become shouts of accusation. The witch hunt . . . has begun.



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The Crucible

Literary Focus: Motivation

Motivation is the reason for a character's behavior. ▼

Like real people, fictional characters often have complex motivations. ▼

- A particular action may have several reasons behind it. ▼

Abigail lies about what happened in the woods.

because

She is generally deceitful and self-serving.

She is terrified that she will be accused of witchcraft.

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The Crucible

Literary Focus: Motivation

Miller demonstrates that the residents of Salem were not just a hysterical mob. ▼

Every person had at least one reason for acting the way he or she did—motives that were

- psychological ▼
- sexual ▼
- financial ▼
- theological ▼
- political

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The Crucible

Literary Perspectives: Analyzing Credibility in Literature

Jury Duty

At its heart, *The Crucible* is a legal drama. ▼



- Suspicious behavior is everywhere. ▼
- Accusations of sinister acts abound. ▼
- Investigations and interrogations are made. ▼
- Calls for punishment are heard. ▼

You—as reader—get to sit in the jury box and judge the characters.

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Literary Perspectives: Analyzing Credibility in Literature

Jury Duty

The characters, however, make claims and accusations that starkly contradict one another. ▼



How do you know what really happened?

How do you know who to believe?

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The Crucible

Literary Perspectives: Analyzing Credibility in Literature

Hints About Credibility

Using details from the play, you can analyze the **credibility**, or believability, of each character. ▾

Think about each character's

- values
- essential qualities
- motivations
- personal history ▾



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The Crucible

Literary Perspectives: Analyzing Credibility in Literature

Hints About Credibility

Using details from the play, you can analyze the **credibility**, or believability, of each character.

Put all the clues together, and reach your verdict: ▼

- Who is telling the truth?
- Who is lying?
- Who is confused?
- Who has hidden motives?



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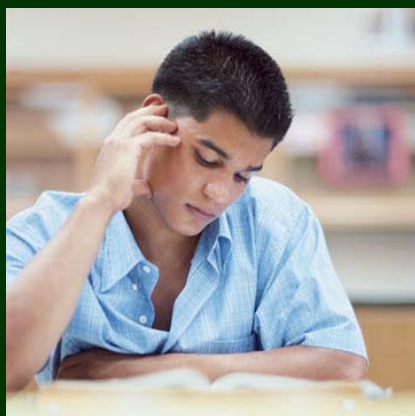
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The Crucible

Reading Focus: Drawing Conclusions About Characters

To understand a complex dramatic work, you need to interpret it. ▼



- Read the text carefully.
- Consider your own knowledge of the world.
- Make inferences about the characters and their actions. ▼

When your inferences lead you to form opinions about characters and aspects of the text, you are **drawing conclusions**.

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The Crucible

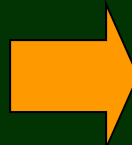
Reading Focus: Drawing Conclusions About Characters

As you read *The Crucible*, notice what the dialogue and actions reveal about the characters' values, emotions, motivations, and personal histories. ▾

Some of Abigail's Dialogue

"No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!"

"Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!"



What It Tells About Her Character

Abigail seems to always be protesting her innocence and blaming other people. She must be hiding something.

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The Crucible

Reading Focus: Drawing Conclusions About Characters

Use the text and what you know about human nature to **draw conclusions** about



- who the characters really are ▾
- why they behave the way they do ▾
- what the larger meaning of their tragedy is

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The Crucible

Reading Focus: Drawing Conclusions About Characters

Into Action: Use a chart to record lines of dialogue that reveal key information about a character. ▼

●	Character	Dialogue (Act)
	Reverend Parris	Abigail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish you compromise my very character. (Act One)
●		

After you finish reading, you can refer to your chart to draw conclusions about the characters.

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The Crucible

Writing Focus: Think as a Reader/Writer

Find It in Your Reading

Miller uses stage directions to supplement the dialogue of his characters. ▼

Parris, *scrambling to his feet in a fury*: Out of my sight!

Abigail, *quavering, as she sits*: I would never hurt Betty. I love her dearly. ▼

What do the stage directions tell us about the characters? How do they help the audience understand the dialogue. ▼

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

-  **theocracy** *n.*: a government ruled by religious authority. ▼
-  **dissembling** *n.*: hiding one's feelings or motives. ▼
-  **partisan** *n.*: a strong supporter in a cause. ▼
-  **avidly** *adv.*: eagerly. ▼
-  **blasphemy** *n.*: words or actions that disrespect something sacred. ▼

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

-  **deposition** *n.*: testimony given under oath at a trial. ▼
-  **beguile** *v.*: mislead; deceive. ▼
-  **adamant** *adj.*: not giving in; immovable.

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Think about these two word parts: ▼

theo- : God or a god | *-cracy* : type of government ▼

Based on its parts, what do you think the word *theocracy* means? ▼

A **theocracy** is a form of government ruled by religious authority.



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

In a **theocracy**, which of these would be considered the highest authority?



A. a court



B. a deity



C. a king



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Have you ever encountered someone who seemed to be **trying to hide his or her true feelings or motives** about something? ▾

Why do you think he or she was **dissembling**?



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Mary was sad to be moving, but she didn't want to upset her family.



Mary was **dissembling** when she acted happy about the move. ▼

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

As a noun, the word **partisan** refers to a person who strongly supports a certain cause, group, or individual. ▼

These people are **partisans** of their political party.



These fans are **partisans** of their team.

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Which of these words mean *about the same thing* as **partisan**?

supporter

employee

advocate

backer

participant

Which of these words mean the *opposite* of **partisan**?

assistant

critic

opponent

bystander

adversary

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Some **partisans** of a local group called URGENT hold a rally to try to save an endangered species that lives in a nearby river. ▼

What type of group do you think URGENT is?



- a. a group of environmental activists
- b. a women's rights organization
- c. a historical society



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

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Vocabulary

Have you ever **avidly** pursued a certain goal or hobby? ▾



Why do you think you went after what you wanted so **eagerly**?

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Vocabulary

Devon is **avidly** chasing his dream of becoming a professional hockey player. He practices



- a. whenever his friends do.
- b. every free minute he gets.
- c. only when there is nothing better to do.



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Vocabulary

When you think of the word **blasphemy**, what other words come to mind? ▼

Examples:

profanity
sacrilege
irreverence
impiety
disrespect ▼

Word: ▼

blasphemy

Definition ▼

n.: words or actions that disrespect something sacred.

Sentence: ▼

He was accused of **blasphemy**—for jogging past a church.

Image: ▼



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Which of these would be considered **blasphemy**?

B. robbing a store



A. yelling at a referee



B. robbing a store



C. damaging a mosque



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Vocabulary

Which of these would be considered **blasphemy**?

B. robbing a store



A. yelling at a referee



C. damaging a mosque



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Vocabulary

If you've watched a lot of legal dramas on TV, you've probably heard the word **deposition**. ▾

A **deposition** is testimony that a witness gives **under oath**. ▾

A witness's **deposition** is often taken prior to the trial. It is written down to be used at the trial.



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Vocabulary

In which of these occupations would a person take part in many **depositions**?



A. lawyer



B. teacher



C. waiter



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

In which of these occupations would a person take part in many **depositions**?



A. lawyer



B. teacher



C. waiter



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Vocabulary

Has a cunning person ever **beguiled** you into believing something that was not true? ▾

Why do you think this person was able to **mislead** you?



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Vocabulary

Winnie planned to **beguile** her little brother into getting him to do some of her chores for her. ▼



How do you think her brother felt when he realized what Winnie had planned to do? Why? ▼

He probably felt angry and betrayed. No one likes to be tricked.

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The Crucible

Vocabulary

When you think of the word **adamant**, what other words come to mind? ▼

Examples:

insistent
inflexible
firm
unyielding

Word: ▼

adamant

Definition: ▼

adj. not giving in; immovable.

Sentence: ▼

I begged Mom to change my curfew, but she remained **adamant**.

Image: ▼



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The Crucible

Vocabulary

Your best friend is **adamant** that you attend the hot air balloon festival with her. How likely is it that you will be staying home from the festival?



- a. very likely
- b. somewhat likely
- c. not at all likely



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The Crucible

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The Crucible

QuickWrite

Have you, or has someone you know, ever been falsely accused of something?

In a paragraph or two, explain the situation and how it was resolved.



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Meet the Writer

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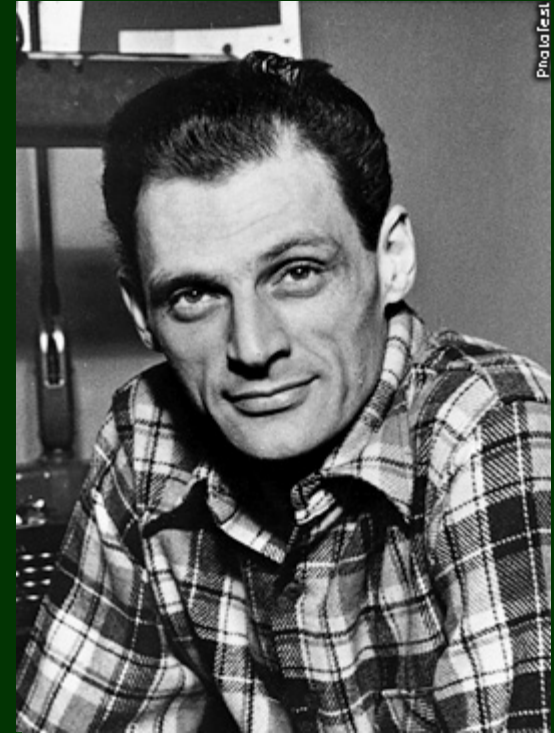
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Meet the Writer

With *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller (1915–2005) drew a parallel between the Salem witch hunt and events closer to home: the 1950s “Red hunt” for Communists. Miller himself was called before Congress for having attended some Communist meetings years before. He spoke frankly about himself but refused to name other attendees.



More about the writer

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The Crucible

Build Background

The Crucible is based on the witch trials that took place in 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts.

Elizabeth Parris, daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, and Abigail Williams, his niece, began acting strangely. Since no medical cause for their behavior could be found, doctors concluded that the girls were bewitched.



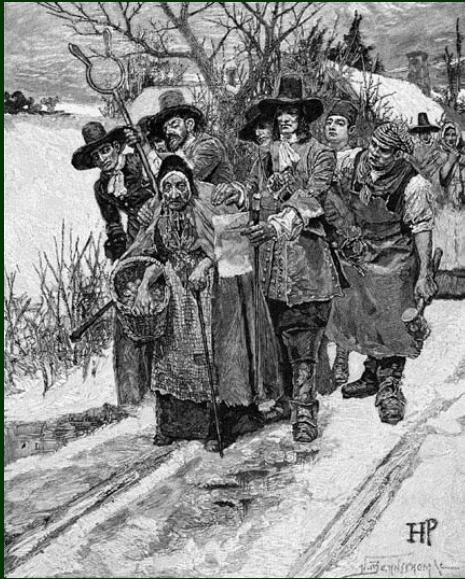
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Build Background

Soon other girls began exhibiting the same behavior, crying out the names of women they knew and sparking the witch hunt. ▼

Over the next eight months, twenty-seven people were convicted, nineteen were hanged, one was crushed to death, and more than one hundred were imprisoned.

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Read with a Purpose

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The Crucible

Read with a Purpose

Read this play to discover how dialogue and actions reveal a character's values, emotions, motivations, and personal history.



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