**The Crucible**

**Discussion Questions – INCLUDE TEXT EVIDENCE**

**Act 1**

1. Review what you know about Massachusetts in the colonial period of early American history. What religious period and political values held Massachusetts together? What characteristics did witches supposedly manifest? How were they identified? How were they punished?
2. How does Miller characterize Reverend Parris? What is his relationship with his parishioners? What is currently ailing his household?
3. Comment extensively on the character of Abigail Williams. What does she reveal about Betty Parris? Do you believe her? What is her relationship to the Proctor household, and why does she resent Elizabeth Proctor? How does she interact with John Proctor? Compare the story she tells Proctor to what she has told Parris.
4. Who is Reverend Hale, and why has he been summoned to Salem? Who objects to his coming, and why? Describe how he is characterized by Miller.
5. Detail Abigail’s interaction with Hale at the end of Act I. To whom does she transfer the attention of Hale? What is her strategy here? What is the result, and why is this significant?

**ACT 2**

1. Describe the atmosphere in the Proctor household. How does Miller portray this not only through character dialogue, but action and body language? Based on your previous knowledge from Act I, why is the atmosphere the way it is? What rhetorical devices does Miller use to reinforce this?
2. What do we learn is happening in Salem? What can John do to change it? What does he choose to do? How does Elizabeth feel about this?

1. Who is Mary Warren? Describe her character. What is her part in the proceedings in Salem, and how is she adjusting to her new responsibilities? What gift does she give to Elizabeth?
2. Describe Reverend Hale’s interaction with the Proctors. What is he doing? How does Miller create dramatic tension? Irony? What do you think of Reverend Hale?
3. What dramatic turn of events takes place in the last part of Act II? On what grounds? How does John plan to address the problem? Connect this back to question 1.

**ACT 3**

1. Who, at this point, are John Proctor’s allies? What are they trying to accomplish, and how do they plan to do it? Describe the attempt of each character to achieve justice in Salem. What is the result?
2. What is the professed purpose of the court? At one point, the court says that witnesses are inadmissible to the proceedings. What is their logic here? How do you assess this approach, and what does it suggest about the nature of the proceedings?
3. What does John Proctor confess? Why? Who is called in to verify his testimony? What is the result? Why? How does Miller use dramatic irony to make this more effective for the audience?
4. Describe Mary Warren’s testimony. What is the result? How does Hale respond to this? Comment on the court proceedings and how they influence the town. Who is masterminding this, and why? How are they continually successful? What is Miller suggesting about the nature of hysteria?

**ACT 4**

1. Catch up with the characters of the play. Where are they? How have they changed? Focus on Tituba, Parris, Abigail, and Hale. Consider Danforth as well – how is he a victim of his own logic? What about institutional authority does Miller continue to demonstrate through Danforth?
2. Describe the interaction between John and Elizabeth Proctor. How has their relationship changed? How is this ironic? What does the court want from John? What is the nature of the conversation between Elizabeth and Hale? How does she respond to his advice? Why?
3. What is the big decision that John Proctor makes? What are the circumstances leading up to this decision? Why does this make Danforth happy, and what does his happiness suggest about the trials? What will Proctor NOT give to Danforth? What, eventually does Proctor choose to do? By doing so, what does he accomplish?
4. What is a crucible? How is it used? Justify Miller’s use of *The Crucible* as a title for the play.