

***The Crucible* by Arthur Miller (Published by Penguin Books, 1953)**

Approved for use in Advanced Placement Communication Arts III and Communication Arts III

Summary

The Crucible, a play by Arthur Miller, is a slightly fictionalized version of the Salem Witchcraft Trials which took place in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. The play pits John Proctor, a respected Salem farmer, against the charges of an irresponsible teenager, Abigail Williams, with whom he has committed adultery. The conflict is intensified by the viewpoint of the judges of the Puritan theocratic government.

Connection to the Curriculum

The play, written during the McCarthy era, explores fanaticism in many forms and the conflicts resulting from the abuse of power and the lack of individual responsibility. It provides many opportunities for discussion and analysis of the classic conflicts of man vs. man and the individual vs. society. In addition, as junior students study American history, the students can make connections to the McCarthy hearings and the actual Salem Witch Trials. Due to the fictional nature of the play, students, as critical readers, must make the distinction between fact and fiction.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Writing: 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

Research: 4.1- The students use effective research practices.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators):

Reading:

1.2- The student adjusts read rate when fluently reading drama

1.4.7 – 1.4.8- The student identifies characteristics of drama and the importance of reading stage directions when reading a play.

1.4.10- The student generates and responds logically to literal, inferential, evaluative, and critical thinking questions before, during, and after reading the text.

1.4.11- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.13- The student explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships in appropriate level narrative texts.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student identifies and describes different types of characters and analyzes their development.

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.4- The student recognizes how an author's beliefs are reflected in his work.

Writing:

3.1-8- The student uses the writing process to write essays.

3.9- The student writes expository pieces.

Research:

4.1.3- The student researches (the Salem Witch Trials) and verifies the accuracy, relevance, and completeness of (Miller's) information.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The Crucible addresses the story of the Salem Witch Trials, based on Miller's research of the actual events. It does, however, add elements (such as an extramarital affair) that are not historically accurate. The play ends with the hanging of some characters. The fate of the characters in the play matches the fate of their historical counterparts, although the dates and trials may not be exact.

AP Connections

The Crucible provides AP students an opportunity to explore the role of point of view as they compare one author's views of the Puritan society with another author's views, such as Hawthorne, Bradstreet, or Taylor.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities