



## Read and Respond

### *The Crucible*

by Arthur Miller

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller is included as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2026. It may be used as part of the Comparative at Ordinary Level or Higher Level.

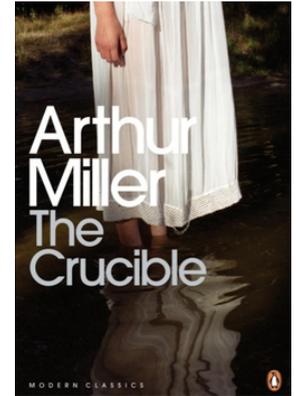


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#### **Please note:**

The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons. You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.



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### **Before you read... (Teacher Guidance)**

These activities support students in exploring key concepts and historical contexts relevant to *The Crucible* prior to engaging with the drama. Adapt activities as appropriate for your class context.

#### **1. Exploring the Title**

Introduce students to the term crucible and invite brief research into its meanings and associations. You may wish to guide students in mapping possible connotations and considering how these ideas might connect to themes or conflicts within the play.

#### **2. Considering Historical Context**

Provide background on Massachusetts in 1692 and support students in investigating relevant contexts such as the Salem Witch Trials, Puritan beliefs, mass hysteria, and parallels with McCarthyism and the Red Scare.

Encourage students to record key findings and draw connections between historical events and emerging themes in the drama.

#### **3. Exploring Moral Perspectives**

Facilitate a walking debate using statements related to truth, fear, reputation, and loyalty. Encourage students to justify their positions and reflect on how differing viewpoints may relate to tensions explored in the play.



**Extract from**

***The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller.**

*The town is brewing with rumours of witchcraft after some girls were seen dancing in the woods. Here, one girl uses fear and lies to keep the others quiet, while another seems deeply unwell since their actions. Read this extract to see how panic, power and secrecy start to turn friends against one another.*

**MARY:** Before we do, the whole country's talking witchcraft! They'll be callin' us witches, Abby!

**MERCY:** She means to tell him, Abby.

**MARY:** Abby, we've got to tell. Witchery's a hangin' error, a hangin' like they done in Boston two years ago! We must tell the truth, Abby!—you'll only be whipped for dancin', and the other things!

**ABIGAIL:** Oh, we'll be whipped!

**MARY:** I never done none of it, Abby. I only looked!

**MERCY:** Oh, you're a great one for lookin', aren't you, Mary Warren? What a grand peeping courage you have!

**ABIGAIL:** (Betty whimpers.) Now, Betty, dear, wake up now. It's Abigail. (She sits Betty up, shakes her.) I'll beat you, Betty! My, you seem improving. I talked to your papa and I told him everything. So there's nothing to...

**BETTY:** (Betty springs off bed, rushes to window.) I want my mama.

**ABIGAIL:** What ails you, Betty? Your mama's dead and buried.

**BETTY:** I'll fly to Mama. Let me fly! (She raises arms to fly.)

**ABIGAIL:** (Pulls her back.) I told him everything; he knows now, he knows everything we –

**BETTY:** You drank blood, Abby, you didn't tell him that!

**ABIGAIL:** Betty, you never say that again! You will never...

**BETTY:** You did, you did! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor's wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!

**ABIGAIL:** (Slaps her face.) Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this—let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it. I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down! No, Betty, sit up and stop this! (Betty collapses in her hands.)

**MARY:** What's got her? Abby, she's gonna die; it's a sin to conjure, and we –

**ABIGAIL:** I say shut it, Mary Warren! Shut it.

*Arthur Miller, The Crucible, 1953, Act 1)*

## Activities Based on Extract (Teacher Guidance)

The following may be completed in written or oral format, as individuals or as part of a group activity.

### 1. Exploring Atmosphere

Guide students in examining Miller's language choices and how they contribute to an atmosphere of fear within the scene. You may wish to support students in developing a short analytical response drawing on relevant textual evidence.

### 2. Considering Power and Society

Facilitate paired or small-group discussion exploring power dynamics within the extract. Encourage students to identify who holds authority, who appears submissive, and how fear influences behaviour.

Students may use this discussion to reflect on what these dynamics suggest about the values and social structures of the society portrayed.

### 3. Reimagining the Scene

Invite students to reinterpret the scene within a modern context, such as a school, workplace, or online environment. Encourage attention to maintaining the tone and tension of the original drama while adapting setting and circumstances.

## Reflect and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following question may be based on the extract included or form part of your extended study of the novel.

### 1. Personal Reflection

Invite students to compose a personal essay reflecting on the influence of fear or social pressure in shaping individual choices or experiences.

### 2. Speaking and Persuasion

Support students in preparing a speech addressing the dangers of peer pressure and conformity. You may wish to encourage connections with personal experience, contemporary society, or historical examples.

### 3. Contemporary Connections

Guide students in exploring the modern relevance of the concept of a "witch hunt" through the composition of a news article examining parallels in today's world.

### 4. Creating Atmosphere

Encourage students to produce a descriptive piece portraying a group setting marked by tension or secrecy, with attention to mood, body language, and unspoken conflict.