

Approved for use in English III

Summary of the Work:

The Crucible is a dramatic play set in the Puritan town of Salem, Massachusetts, and focusing on the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. Arthur Miller, a prolific playwright, designed *The Crucible* as a deliberate parallel between the Salem Witch Trials and the Communist Red Scare that America was experiencing at the time.

The play presents the tragic hero, John Proctor, a respected farmer, defending himself against the charges of lustful teenager Abigail Williams, with whom John has committed adultery. The entire community is in an uproar about suspected witchcraft. Conflicts are intensified when officials governed by Puritan theocracy are called in to settle the matter of witchcraft.

Rationale:

The Crucible is an ideal selection for the Junior curriculum, exploring American history on multiple levels. The play, written during the McCarthy era, explores the conflicts that result from the abuse of power as seen in the 1950's McCarthy trials and the 1692 Witch trials. The dramatic play *The Crucible* engages readers and provides for discussion and analysis of the classic conflicts of man vs. man and man vs. society. Discussion and analysis overlap the content of English and American history courses.

The play incorporates the elements of drama and encourages class-reading activities. All readers may participate and engage with the often archaic language of the 1600's.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- Library Journal 08/01/04
- Voice of Youth Advocates (V.O.Y.A.) 10/01/04

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

Readability:

- Lexile Score: Not available at this time
- Readability Level: 9

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 1975??

Notes 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 historical time of the Salem Witch Trials and is based on Miller's research; however, Miller takes creative liberties, and therefore the plot is not historically accurate. Characters may be hung or put to death, though the specific trials and charges may not be accurate.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The introduction to the literary period of colonialism and the historical and cultural influences each is a significant part of the junior curriculum. *The Crucible* also helps students see how literature can provide effective social criticism.

At the same time *The Crucible* allows students to engage with the elements of allegory and point of view.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)