

Writing Prompts for The Crucible

1. A major theme in “The Crucible” deals with guilt. Recall a time when you felt guilty about something you had done or said. It may not be as serious as the characters in the play, but it was probably just as real. It can be some recent experience or one that took place in childhood. How did you deal with those feelings? As you look back now were your fears justified, or were you being too hard on yourself?
2. Who gets the blame for this entire horrific event? Does the majority of the blame rest on just one character, or is the blame spread equally to multiple characters? Take a defined stand on one or two villains and defend it.
3. Besides letting the trials get out of control, what other weaknesses characterize Reverend Parris as a community leader? What are his overriding concerns, and how does he manage them? To what degree is he responsible for the trials and the final setting of the play?
4. Who is ultimately more central to this story: John Proctor or Abigail Williams? What did John mean by his anguished cries of “Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!” Is John a “real” Puritan? Is Abigail?
5. Match the events in the play to the real life events for which it was supposedly written. Does McCarthyism get a bad rap because of this play? Do some events clearly match? Does this play impact the hearts and minds of the American public in relation to the McCarthy Hearings or Red Scare overall? Does this comparison even work?
6. Reverend Hale is a dynamic character, in that he evolves during the play. To what does he evolve, and why? What pressures directly influence his “research” of the citizens of Salem, and what does he learn from them that facilitates his change?
7. What does the title mean? Is it the best title for this play? What parts of the play support the literal and figurative definitions of “crucible”?