

## The Crucible Study Questions

Write your answers in complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper

### Act One

1. "So now they and their church found it necessary to deny any other sect its freedom, lest their New Jerusalem be defiled and corrupted by wrong and deceitful ideas." What is the irony in that statement?
2. Explain how the witch-hunt years were a time of "general revenge."
3. Identify Tituba, Abigail, Betty
4. Why does Mrs. Putnam believe there are witches in Salem?
5. Why is Thomas Putnam bitter?
6. Parris says, "Oh, Abigail, what proper payment for my charity! Now I am undone!" What does that mean?
7. What is Mary's argument to Abby?
8. Describe Proctor.
9. What happened between Abigail and John Proctor prior to the opening of the play?
10. What was the "sign" that Betty was bewitched?
11. Identify Francis and Rebecca Nurse.
12. Explain the political relationship between the Putnam and Nurse families.
13. What did Rebecca do to Betty?
14. What is Rebecca's explanation of the girls' behavior?
15. "There are wheels within wheels in this village and fires within fires." Explain.
16. What is Proctor's reason for his not regularly attending church?
17. What does Parris want?
18. Giles says, "Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit." To what is he referring literally and symbolically?
19. What do Putnam and Proctor argue about? What does this show?
20. Who is Rev. John Hale, and why does he come to Salem?
21. Hale says, "They [the books] must be [heavy]; they are weighted with authority." What is the significance of this remark?
22. To what did Tituba confess? Why?
23. What do the girls do at the end of Act One?



### Act Two

1. Where does Elizabeth want John to go, and what does she want him to do there?
2. What is John's response to her prodding?

3. What gift did Mary give Elizabeth?
4. What was the "evidence" against Sarah Good?
5. Why doesn't Proctor want Mary to go back to court?
6. Why does Elizabeth think Abigail wants to kill her?
7. Why did Hale come to Proctor's house?
8. What things are "suspicious" about Proctor and his family?
9. Hale asks Elizabeth if she believes in witches. What is her reply?
10. On what charge(s) was Rebecca Nurse arrested?
11. Why does Cheever come to the Proctor house?
12. Explain the significance of the needle in the "poppet."
13. What will happen to Proctor if he tries to discredit Abby?
14. Why doesn't Mary want to testify about the doll?

### Act Three

1. Why do Giles and Francis want to talk to Danforth?
2. What is Parris's argument against Proctor?
3. What does Mary tell Danforth?
4. When Danforth hears that Elizabeth is pregnant, what does he allow?
5. What paper did ninety-one people sign?
6. ". . . a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between." Explain the importance of Danforth's statement.
7. What quote did Proctor use to help Mary remain brave?
8. Of what does Giles accuse Putnam?
9. What is Hale's problem as Proctor and his friends present evidence to Danforth?
10. Hawthorne thinks of a test for Mary. What is it? Can she do it? Why or why not?
11. Proctor calls Abigail a whore, and he confesses his lechery. Danforth tests Proctor's statement by calling for Elizabeth and asking her why Abigail was dismissed. What does Elizabeth say?
12. What do the girls do to Mary? What is her response?
13. What happens to Proctor?
14. What does Hale do?

### Act Four

1. What explanation does Cheever give for Parris' "mad look"?
2. What did Abigail do?
3. Parris says, "You cannot hang this sort. There is

- danger for me." What "sort" does he mean, and what is the danger to him?
4. Explain Danforth's reason that a pardon would not be just.
  5. Why has Hale come back to Salem?
  6. What does Hale want Elizabeth to do?
  7. What happened to Giles?
  8. Proctor says, "My honesty is broke, Elizabeth, I

- am no good man." Explain.
9. What "confession" did Elizabeth make to John?
  10. What did Proctor do after he signed the confession? Why?
  11. "I have given you my soul; leave me my name!" Explain.
  12. "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!" What does Elizabeth mean?

### ***The Crucible Vocabulary***

*Using the sentences for context cues, match each word with its definition.  
You may write directly on this paper.*

#### **Act One, part 1**

1. But we never conjured spirits.
2. There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?
3. Abominations are done in the forest—
4. But Betty collapses in her hands and lies inert on the bed.
5. & 6. He need not have been a partisan of any faction in the town, but there is evidence to suggest that he had a sharp and biting way with hypocrites.
7. In Proctor's presence a fool felt his foolishness instantly -- and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore.
8. That is a notorious sign of witchcraft afoot, Goody Nurse, a prodigious sign!
9. It's somewhat true; there are many that quail to bring their children--
10. Why, we are surely gone wild this year. What anarchy is this?

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| _____ 1. conjured     | A. to lose courage; decline; fail; give way   |
| _____ 2. faction      | B. unable to move or act  |
| _____ 3. abominations | C. summoned by oath or spell  |
| _____ 4. inert        | D. false statements knowingly made to injure someone                                |
| _____ 5. hypocrites   | E. small group, usually contentious, within a larger group                          |
| _____ 6. partisan     | F. people who say they believe one way, but whose actions show they believe another |
| _____ 7. calumny      | G. political disorder and confusion   |
| _____ 8. prodigious   | H. things that elicit great dislike or abhorrence                                   |
| _____ 9. quail        | I. extraordinary; marvelous   |
| _____ 10. anarchy     | J. militant supporter of a party, cause, faction or idea                            |

#### **Act One, part 2**

1. This is a beloved errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at least been publicly called for.
2. Evidently we are not quite certain even now whether diabolism is holy and not to be scoffed at.
3. And it is no accident that we should be so bemused.
4. . . . he is called up and damned not only by our social antagonists but by our own side, whatever it may be.
5. I have no doubt that people *were* communing with, and even worshiping, the Devil in Salem, and if the whole truth could be known in this case, as it is in others, we should discover a regular and conventionalized propitiation of the dark spirit.
6. How could it be the Devil? Why would he choose my house to strike? We have all manner of licentious people right here in the village!
7. You cannot evade me, Abigail. Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?
8. On their ecstatic cries, the curtain falls.

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| _____ 1. ascertain | A. appeasement                   |
| _____ 2. diabolism | B. in a state of exalted delight |

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| _____ 3. bemused      | C. find out; detect                                 |
| _____ 4. antagonists  | D. having no regard for accepted rules or standards |
| _____ 5. propitiation | E. witchcraft; sorcery                              |
| _____ 6. licentious   | F. escape or avoid by cleverness or deceit          |
| _____ 7. evade        | G. confused   |
| _____ 8. ecstatic     | H. adversaries; opponents                           |

### Act Two, part 1

1. Proctor, holding back a full condemnation of her: It is a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth--you're the mistress here, not Mary Warren.
2. I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl's a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she's fraud, and the town gone so silly.
3. Her strangeness throws him off, and her evident pallor and weakness.
4. Elizabeth, perplexed, looking at the doll: Why, thank you, it's a fair poppet.
5. Mary Warren, with an indignant edge: She tried to kill me many times, Goody Proctor!
6. Aye, but then Judge Hawthorne say, "Recite for us your commandments!"--leaning avidly toward them--and all of the ten she could not say a single one.
7. I only hope you'll not be so sarcastical no more. . . . I--I would have you speak civilly to me, from this out.
8. Woman, am I so base? Do you truly think me base?

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| _____ 1. condemnation | A. bewildered; puzzled; confused                                |
| _____ 2. fraud        | B. expressing mocking or contemptuous remarks                   |
| _____ 3. pallor       | C. severe reproof; strong censure                               |
| _____ 4. perplexed    | D. having low moral standards; contemptible; inferior           |
| _____ 5. indignant    | E. enthusiastically   |
| _____ 6. avidly       | F. deliberate deception for unfair or unlawful gains            |
| _____ 7. sarcastical  | G. extreme paleness   |
| _____ 8. base         | H. filled with an anger aroused by something unjust or unworthy |

### Act Two, part 2

1. Believe me, Mr. Nurse, if Rebecca Nurse be tainted, then nothing's left to stop the whole green world from burning.
2. Cheever, ineptly reaching toward Elizabeth . . .
3. I had my doubts, Proctor, I had my doubts, but here's calamity, *To Hale, showing the needle*: You see it, sir, it is a needle!
4. Were there murder done, perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to Heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you help me to discover it.
5. Proctor, *moving menacingly toward her*: You will tell the court how that poppet came here and who stuck the needle in.
6. Abby'll charge lechery on you, Mr. Proctor!
7. It is a providence, and no great change; we are only what we always were, but naked now.

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| _____ 1. tainted    | A. disaster                                  |
| _____ 2. ineptly    | B. promiscuity                               |
| _____ 3. calamity   | C. having a moral defect; infected           |
| _____ 4. blasphemy  | D. awkwardly                                 |
| _____ 5. menacingly | E. work of divine direction                  |
| _____ 6. lechery    | F. an irreverent or impious act or utterance |
| _____ 7. providence | G. threateningly                             |

### Act Three, part 1

1. How do you dare come roarin' into this court! Are you gone daft, Corey?
2. Giles Corey, sir, and a more contentious—
3. And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot? Now be gone.
4. Mary Warren, *hardly audible*: Aye.

5. But if he hide in anonymity I must know why. Now sir, the government and central church demand of you the name of him who reported Mr. Thomas Putnam a common murderer.
6. This is a court of law, Mister. I'll have no effrontery here!
7. . . . I dare not take a life without there be a proof so immaculate no slightest qualm of conscience may doubt it.

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| _____ 1. daft         | A. quarrelsome                                       |
| _____ 2. contentious  | B. audacity; insulting boldness                      |
| _____ 3. contemptuous | C. a sensation of misgiving or uneasiness            |
| _____ 4. audible      | D. crazy; foolish; stupid                            |
| _____ 5. anonymity    | E. able to be heard                                  |
| _____ 6. effrontery   | F. scornful; disdainful                              |
| _____ 7. qualm        | G. secrecy; having an unknown or unacknowledged name |

**Act Three, part 2**

1. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, apparitions, nor any manifest of the Devil.
2. She glances at Abigail, who is staring down at her remorselessly.
3. He charges contemplation of murder.
4. That were pretense, sir.
5. She is transfixed--with all the girls, she is whimpering open-mouthed, agape at the ceiling.
6. Will you confess yourself befouled with Hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet?

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| _____ 1. manifest      | A. the act of pretending                             |
| _____ 2. remorselessly | B. loyalty   |
| _____ 3. contemplation | C. something apparent to the sight or understanding  |
| _____ 4. pretense      | D. thoughtful observation or meditation              |
| _____ 5. transfixed    | E. mercilessly; having no pity or compassion         |
| _____ 6. allegiance    | F. rendered motionless with terror, amazement or awe |

**Act Four**

1. Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more.
2. . . . reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now.
3. If retaliation is your fear, know this--I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes.
4. Is he yet adamant?
5. Giles is dead. *He looks at her incredulously.*
6. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they's hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law.
7. I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public?

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| _____ 1. beguile       | A. statement of criminal charges          |
| _____ 2. reprieve      | B. a law, decree or edict                 |
| _____ 3. statutes      | C. performing of penance                  |
| _____ 4. adamant       | D. disbelievingly                         |
| _____ 5. incredulously | E. postponement of punishment             |
| _____ 6. indictment    | F. firm in purpose or opinion; unyielding |
| _____ 7. penitence     | G. delude; cheat; divert                  |