***The Crucible***

**Act One Questions**

Setting: Betty’s small bedroom conveys a sense of confinement and perhaps reflects the narrowness of the community. The room is rather bare, and the furnishings plain. This suggests the austerity (sternness) of the Puritan way of life – possibly a dullness, which has led her to seek the excitement of dancing in the woods.

Abigail tells us that the parlour is packed with people. Parris feels threatened by the presence of these onlookers. We can hear the voices of the congregation as Parris leads them in singing a psalm.

The spring sunshine streams through the narrow window.

Context Questions:

1. What did Parris see in the woods the previous night?
2. Why did Mrs. Putnam contact Tituba?
3. What threat does Abigail make to the other girls?
4. What is the function of Rebecca Nurse in the play?
5. Why is Reverend Hale in Salem?
6. What does Giles Corey reveal to Reverend Hale?
7. When Abigail is questioned by Reverend Hale, whom does she blame? What proof does she offer?
8. Who does Tituba accuse of being a witch? Why does Abigail start accusing people at this point?

Thinking Questions:

1. From the action in the play so far, what has been revealed about the townspeople’s belief in witchcraft?
2. Explain the sources of antagonism between the following people:

* Between Parris and others
* Between Proctor and Putnam
* Between Proctor and Parris
* Between Elizabeth and Abigail

1. What explanation does Rebecca give for the strange behaviour of the girls?
2. Under what conditions does Reverend Hale agree to help them look for the Devil? What is the explanation for why the Devil chose to invade Parris’ house?

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**Act Two Questions**

1. Suggest why *The Crucible* is a suitable title for the play.
2. After reading Act 2 what messages does the play give on the topics of:
3. good and evil
4. love
5. religion
6. Describe the relationship between John and Elizabeth as it is revealed in Act Two. What did Abigail reveal to John? Why did he not tell the court what he knows?
7. Outline the developments since the conclusion of Act One: consider arrest, reasons, “proof” used, convictions, judges.
8. What hold does Mary have over the Proctors? Why does Elizabeth think Abigail called her a witch? Is she correct?
9. Why does Hale come to visit the Proctors? List three reasons for which, John might be suspected, by Hale, of not being a “religious man”. What explanations does John give to absolve himself for each of his “sins”?
10. Why does Elizabeth say she doesn’t believe in witches?
11. What assessment does Proctor give of Parris’ ambition? What do golden candlesticks symbolize?
12. Why are Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey changed as witches?
13. Why is Elizabeth arrested? What “proof” is there, that she is a witch? What does Hale advise the husbands of the arrested women to do?
14. What does John ask Mary Warren to do? Why is she afraid to do as he asks? What sacrifice is John willing to make in order to free Elizabeth?
15. Explain Proctor’s statement, “We are only what we always were, but naked now”. Apply this statement as it explains what is happening in Salem.

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**Acts Three & Four Questions**

**Act Three:**

1. What is contained in the deposition, which Giles brings to court? Why do Proctor and Giles feel they have betrayed the people who signed the deposition?
2. Why is Giles arrested?
3. Considering the “crying out” is pretense, many of the statements made – especially by Danforth – are ironic. Make a list of at least 5 of these ironic statements.
4. What predicament faces Hale and Danforth?
5. How does Elizabeth unknowingly betray John? Why did she do so?
6. Why does Mary Warren back down?
7. Why is Proctor arrested? Why does he say, “God is dead”?
8. Why does Hale quit the court? (Remember Act One)

**Act Four:**

1. Why has Hale returned to Salem? What is he advising the condemned to do?
2. In what way(s) has Parris changed? Give three reasons why he has changed his mind about the witchcraft trials and hangings.
3. What does Hale mean when he says, “There is blood on my head”?
4. What happened to Giles Corey? What characteristic does he symbolize?
5. Outline Elizabeth’s attitude towards John’s “confession”?
6. Why is it so important to Danforth that John confess?
7. Suggest at least four reasons why John “confessed”. Why did he rip up his “confession” (give at least five reasons)?
8. To what does Elizabeth attribute John’s willingness to hang?