

Directions: In preparation for the fishbowl discussion, answer these guiding questions with your thoughts, opinions, and evidence from *The Crucible*. Aim to have **at least three bullet point answers per question**. **Most responses should include at least 1 quote/event from the text to support your answer.**

1. Arthur Miller had a specific, critical agenda in mind in writing *The Crucible*—to show the damage that can result from widespread suspicion, paranoia, and repression in a society. What kind of picture of the sixteenth-century Puritan society of Salem does Miller convey in Act I of *The Crucible*? Develop your answer supported by details from Act I of the play.
2. Does this play promote the idea that it's okay to lie and cheat as long as you can get away with it? If not, is there ever a justifiable time to lie? Use quotes from the text to support your answers.
3. Is there a hero in this play? If so, who? Think about heroic and actions taken by minor characters as well as major characters. If you think the play lacks a hero, explain why you think none of the characters' actions are heroic. Use quotes from the text to support your answers.
4. Identify one message that Arthur Miller is trying to communicate through writing *The Crucible*. Explain fully what he is attempting to communicate about the human condition, and/or about how humans should or do behave in relationship with one another. Be sure to cite evidence from the text for support. *Hint: It would be helpful to know what the "human condition" is.*
5. In any unfaithful marriage or relationship, who is to blame – the adulterous party (John), the counterpart or tempter (Abigail), or the distant spouse (Elizabeth)? Can someone be justified or pushed to cheat on their partner? Use quotes from the text to support your answers.
6. Is John Proctor right or wrong to refuse to sign the paper (in the end)? Explain your answer. Use quotes from the text to support your answer.
7. Write persuasively - argue for or against the following statement: "It is nobler to die with integrity than to live with compromised principles that harm others." Use quotes from the text to support your answers.
8. Despite the lessons learned from the Salem Witch Trials, we have seen the damage of mass hysteria repeated. Why do societies throughout history continue to react irrationally in times of fear or panic?
9. "I am not sure what *The Crucible* is telling people now, but I know that its paranoid center is still pumping out the same darkly attractive warning that it did in the fifties. For some, the play seems to be about the dilemma of relying on the testimony of small children accusing adults of sexual abuse, something I'd not have dreamed of forty years ago. For others, it may simply be a fascination with the outbreak of paranoia that suffuses the play--the blind panic that, in our age, often seems to sit at the dim edges of consciousness... But below its concerns with justice the play evokes a lethal brew of illicit sexuality, fear of the supernatural, and political manipulation, a combination not unfamiliar these days. The film, by reaching the broad American audience as no play ever can, may well unearth still other connections to those buried public terrors that Salem first announced on this continent." (Arthur Miller, "Why I Wrote *The Crucible*")

Can a work of art such as a play/film change the way the world views certain topics? How? Has this play changed any opinion of yours about the way people behave? How?

