Allegories of America in *The Crucible*

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**Trial of Miller Attracts Crowds; Lawyers in Clash on Red Charge**

*By Luther A. Huston*

WASHINGTON, May 14—The then well-advertised drama of the Arthur Miller trial opened today without Marilyn Monroe.

Mr. Miller, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, is on trial for contempt of Congress. In private life Miss Monroe, film actress, is Mrs. Miller. The

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PLEASE SEE NOTES ON THE PDF, PAGE 4.
Allegories of America in *The Crucible*

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**HUMANITIES OUT THERE**

Humanities Out There was founded in 1997 as an educational partnership between the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine and the Santa Ana Unified School District. HOT runs workshops in humanities classrooms in Santa Ana schools. Advanced graduate students in history and literature design curricular units in collaboration with host teachers, and conduct workshops that engage UCI undergraduates in classroom work. In the area of history, HOT works closely with the UCI History-Social Science Project in order to improve student literacy and writing skills in the history classroom, and to integrate the teaching of history, literature, and writing across the humanities. The K-12 classroom becomes a laboratory for developing innovative units that adapt university materials to the real needs and interests of California schools. By involving scholars, teachers, students, and staff from several institutions in collaborative teaching and research, we aim to transform educational practices, expectations, and horizons for all participants.

**THE SANTA ANA PARTNERSHIP**

The Santa Ana Partnership was formed in 1983 as part of the Student and Teacher Educational Partnership (STEP) initiative at UC Irvine. Today it has evolved into a multi-faceted collaborative that brings institutions and organizations together in the greater Santa Ana area to advance the educational achievement of all students, and to help them enter and complete college. Co-directed at UC Irvine by the Center for Educational Partnerships, the collaborative is also strongly supported by Santa Ana College, the Santa Ana Unified School District, California State University, Fullerton and a number of community-based organizations. Since 2003-2004, HOT has contributed to the academic mission of the Santa Ana Partnership by placing its workshops in GEAR UP schools. This unit, Allegories of America in *The Crucible*, reflects the innovative collaboration among these institutions and programs.

**CONTENT COUNTS: A SPECIAL PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

This is one in a series of publications under the series title Content Counts: Reading and Writing Across the Humanities, supported by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Content Counts units are designed by and for educators committed to promoting a deep, content-rich and knowledge-driven literacy in language arts and social studies classrooms. The units provide examples of “content reading”—primary and secondary sources, as well as charts, data, and visual documents—designed to supplement and integrate the study of history and literature.
The lessons in this unit are designed to provide students and teachers with tools for an analysis of Arthur Miller's play, *The Crucible*. The lessons address the historical context of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, biographical information about Arthur Miller's experiences in the 1950s, and methods for textual analysis of characters and their motivations in the play. Each of the lessons addresses the point of view of the author, the characters in the play, or the reader. Most of the lessons provide students with opportunities to practice writing sustained and organized arguments about literature. Finally, each lesson introduces important key terms, which are listed and defined at the beginning of the unit and can be photocopied for the students to use with each lesson.

Lesson 1 introduces the historical setting of the play by discussing the Salem Witchcraft Trials, and asks students to do a careful textual analysis of the play to discover the point of view of its writer and speakers. The students begin by reading and answering questions about a short passage by Cotton Mather, which helps them to see that point of view can often be inferred through careful reading—the kind of reading that goes beyond reading for plot. The students then analyze excerpts from the play in order to speculate on the point of view of different characters, what motivates their actions, and who is more likely to be accused of witchcraft in the town of Salem.

Lesson 2 gives more general background on the witch hunts in Europe and America, and asks students to consider instances of “magical thinking” in the play (the belief that events can be explained by unseen forces or coincidences that are not substantiated by logical reasoning). The students examine how magical thinking was an important part of beliefs about witchcraft in America and Europe, and consider alternative explanations for what happened in Salem. After completing these exercises, the students read case studies about people accused of engaging in witchcraft, and formulate logical and organized arguments refuting the accusers’ claims. This lesson allows students to get into the spirit of reading the play while also giving them practice for future writing assignments.

Lesson 3 shifts the students’ attention away from point of view and the play’s historical setting, and instead emphasizes the circumstances under which the play was written. Students learn about allegory through a discussion of Arthur Miller’s experiences with the Red Scare; they discuss how Miller’s appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC, is connected to events in the play (Miller refused to name others as Communist sympathizers during his questioning). To help students understand the fear of Communism motivating the “witch hunts” of the McCarthy era, the lesson provides several images from anti-communist propaganda aimed mainly at children. The students discuss what effect these images might have had on their audience. Finally, the students complete a short creative writing assignment in which they imagine they have been accused of engaging in Communist activities and are being asked to turn in friends and co-workers.

Lesson 4 returns students to the play and asks them to reconsider it in terms of Miller’s personal experience. In this lesson, the students locate elements of the play that might have escaped their attention, specifically in the scenes involving courts and trials. The lesson introduces students to the concepts of parody, satire, and caricature by asking them to examine a brief passage from Jonathon Swift’s “A Modest Proposal.” Analyzing this passage helps the students to see how parody and satire achieve their effects by making tone incongruous with content. Once students have a sense of how parody and satire work in literature, they re-
turn to *The Crucible*. While the play is rarely thought of as funny or comedic, students can see how Miller uses parody and satire to critique a legal system that fails to protect the innocent and discover truth. Students look at the absurd logic and overblown argumentation that Miller builds into his court scenes, and discuss how these rhetorical strategies may be just as important to the meaning of the play as the more emotionally-charged scenes between the play’s central characters.

Lesson 5 asks the students to consider the elements of a strong argument and to practice building one. After discussing the importance of thesis statements, evidence, and analysis in academic writing, the students locate these elements of argumentation in a short critical essay. Then they use their own critical thinking and writing skills to defend or prosecute characters in the play. They read three fictional cases based on the play, and use the facts presented in those cases, as well as their knowledge of the play, to analyze characters and explain events. After a discussion and review session, the students write a short, focused essay in the form of closing remarks to a jury. This part of the lesson can also be modified so that students enact a mini-trial in the classroom.

**NOTES ON THE PDF:**

1) Please note that in this pdf document the page numbers are two off from the printed curriculum. For example, page 2 in the printed curriculum is now page 4 in this pdf document.

2) We apologize if some of the hyperlinks are no longer accurate. They were correct at the time of printing.

3) Full-page versions of the images in this unit—some in color—can be found at the back of this pdf.

4) You can easily navigate through the different parts of this document by using the “Bookmark” tab on the left side of your Acrobat window.
CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS UNIT
Grades Eleven And Twelve

Reading

■ Reading Comprehension

■ Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced (R 2.0).

■ Students make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's argument by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations (R 2.4).

■ Literary Response and Analysis

■ Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science (R 3.0).

■ Analyze characteristics of subgenres (e.g. satire, parody, allegory, pastoral) that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres (R 3.1).

■ Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim (R 3.2).

■ Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both (R 3.3).

■ Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions; evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings (R 3.5, R 3.5c).

Writing

■ Writing Strategies

■ Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument (W 1.0).

■ Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples (W 1.3).

■ Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

■ Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives: narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience (W 2.1, W 2.1a)

■ Write responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages; analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text; support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and other works (W 2.2, W2.2a, W 2.2b, W 2.2c).

Standards continue on next page
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS, continued

Listening and Speaking

■ Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

■ Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description (L&S 2.0).

■ Deliver oral responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g. make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable (L&S 2.3a).

CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARD ADDRESSED IN THIS UNIT

Grade Eleven

■ Students trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the era of McCarthyism, instances of domestic Communism, and blacklisting (11.9.3).
KEY TERMS

**Analysis**: a method of looking at the individual elements of a text or artwork and using the results of that investigation to support a well-developed thesis.

**Allegory**: an extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and events in a narrative represent meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. Allegories can be *literal*, where characters or actions represent actual historical people or events, or *abstract*, where aspects of the writing represent virtues, vices, states of mind, or types of people. Allegory is usually used to teach a moral, ethical, or religious lesson, but it is sometimes used for satiric or political purposes.

**Caricature**: the exaggeration or distortion of a person's physical features or personality traits, often to an absurd extreme. Caricature depicts a type of person or behavior, rather than offering a realistic portrait of an actual human being.

**Evidence**: the facts or details used to support a thesis statement or argument. Evidence can consist of the words and images used by an author, or historical information about his or her era.

**HUAC**: the House Un-American Activities Committee. This was a Congressional committee designed to investigate threats of treason in the U.S. government in the 1940s and 1950s. In the years after World War II, rivalry with Soviet Russia led to an aggressive search for Communist subversion in American politics and culture. The Committee often trampled on the rights of witnesses, and became infamous in 1947 when it began a campaign to expose Communists in Hollywood and the film industry.

**Magical Thinking**: a belief that events are the result of unseen forces or coincidences, rather than the result of logical, material, or scientific causes.

**Point of View**: the vantage point from which an author presents a story or from which characters in a story relay their experiences of events.

**Parody**: a literary device that uses exaggerated imitation to mock or pass judgment on a literary work's style or ideas. This imitation usually achieves its comic effect by applying the imitated style to a lowbrow or inappropriate subject.

**Red Scare**: After World War II, American politicians felt anxious about nuclear developments in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries; since Communists were also referred to as "Reds," fear about Soviet Communism became known as the Red Scare. Government figures and private citizens in the U.S. feared that the Communist Party, which had taken over so many Eastern European countries, might try to take over the United States and destroy the "American Way of Life."

**Satire**: a mode of writing that evokes attitudes of amusement, contempt, or indignation about a subject (usually an individual, institution, or society). Authors often use satire as a way of indirectly recommending a more correct or sensible mode of behavior. Satire uses laughter as a weapon rather than as an end in itself.

**Thesis**: a sentence or group of sentences that clearly state a writer's argument or position on a topic, rather than merely stating facts, details, or observations.

Boyer, Paul and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds. *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England.* Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972. This volume collects actual documents from the Salem Witchcraft Trials, including maps, court testimonies, and court petitions. The book's accessible “Table of Contents” and “Index” allow interested students to compare historical events with their treatment in *The Crucible*, in order to consider the ways that Miller modified the historical record and why those changes were important to the themes of his play.

Gibson, Marion. *Reading Witchcraft.* New York: Routledge, 1999. In this book, Gibson analyzes witchcraft pamphlets from the seventeenth century, which include personal accounts by those accused of witchcraft and by their accusers. Gibson also provides an overview of existing scholarship about these documents.

Hansen, Chadwick. *Witchcraft at Salem.* New York: George Braziller, 1969. Before Hansen published this book, historians often interpreted the Salem Witchcraft Trials as a series of events motivated by the malice and jealousy of the parties involved, as well as a manifestation of the clergy's power over the townspeople. Hansen reinterprets surviving documentary evidence of the trials, and suggests that not only were there actual practitioners of witchcraft in New England, but that widespread cultural fears of witchcraft caused people to react with pathological hysteria. The book's prose is accessible, and the early chapters provide a clear and helpful introduction to Puritan life.

Hill, Frances. *A Delusion of Satan: The Full Story of the Salem Witch Trials.* New York: Doubleday, 1995. In this engaging and detailed account of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, Hill describes the religious, social, and psychological aspects of the Salem witch hunt, and links this event to other, modern-day instances of social hysteria.

Kramer, Heinrich and James Sprenger. *The Malleus Maleficarum.* Trans. Reverend Montague Summers. New York: Dover Publications. 1971. First published in 1486, this immensely popular book argued that witches were a real threat to the Christian world. The book, which was used by agents of the Inquisition to identify and prosecute witches, argued that anyone who even questioned the existence of witches was a heretic. Sections from the *Malleus* appear in this unit.


Sidky, H. Witchcraft, Lycanthropy, Drugs, and Disease: An Anthropological Study of the European Witch-Hunts. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. This book links the origins of the witch-hunting craze in Europe to the first giant wave of the Black Plague, which swept through Europe in the mid-fourteenth century. Sidky explains how “princes and preachers” called on demonology to explain troubles that they could not solve, and used newly devised torture technologies to control populations thought to be responsible for social ills. Sidky also explains cases of witchcraft by reference to mental illness, ergot poisoning, and the inclusion of psychotropic plants in folk remedies.

**ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

*The Crucible – West Springfield High School English Department*

[http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/westspringfieldhs/academic/english/1project/crucible/crucible.htm](http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/westspringfieldhs/academic/english/1project/crucible/crucible.htm)

This site has useful materials and links that help students to analyze *The Crucible* and to make connections between the play and Arthur Miller’s experiences with McCarthyism in the 1950s. There are sections on Miller’s life, the blacklists, HUAC, Joseph McCarthy, and the Salem Witchcraft Trials. The “Teacher Packet” section is particularly useful, with worksheets, homework suggestions, and a link to a teaching guide for the play.

*The Crucible at Curriculumunits.com*


This award-winning, multimedia site on *The Crucible* includes useful sections on “Classroom Activities” and “Assignments” related to the play. It also has a “Background Materials” section that provides information about life in seventeenth-century America, and links to primary-source documents about topics such as witch hunts, slavery, and Puritan life. In addition, the site’s section on “Witch Hunts” helps students to make connections between the themes of the play and modern-day “witch hunts” such as the Japanese internment, the Holocaust, and the McCarthy trials.

*17th Century Colonial New England*

[http://www.17thc.us/](http://www.17thc.us/)

This site has a collection of links to websites detailing life in seventeenth-century New England, with a particular emphasis on the Essex County Witch Hunt of 1692. If you follow the link to “Best Sites on the Internet,” you will find a list of 42 excellent sites, including a couple of gems:

- Link #6, *Mayflower and Early Families*, features a section called the “Colonial Gazette,” which reports on events in Puritan New England as though they were happening today ([http://www.mayflowerfamilies.com/](http://www.mayflowerfamilies.com/)).

- Link #181, *The Salem Witchcraft Trials*, not only includes an extensive collection of primary-source documents such as depositions, letters, petitions, and warrants, but also features an impressive collection of color images of the trials ([http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/salem/salem.html](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/salem/salem.html)). This site also has two excellent links, one to a “Salem Witchcraft Jeopardy” game, and another to an activity called “You’re Accused,” in which viewers choose their own adventure story with a witch-hunt theme.
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES, continued

*Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*


This site includes primary-source legal documents relating to the trials, including a new transcription of court records. If the students follow the link to a page entitled *The Salem Witchcraft Papers* ([http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/transcripts.html](http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/transcripts.html)), they will find a search engine that allows them to locate documents about specific historical characters from the trials. Because the names of characters in *The Crucible* correspond to names of historical characters involved in the trials, the students can compare real events with their treatment in the play. Another section of the site, “Maps of Salem Village in 1692” ([http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ltrials/salem/salem.htm](http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ltrials/salem/salem.htm)), includes an interactive, animated map showing the progression of accusations and arrests during the worst of the crisis.

*The Salem Witch Hunt Interactive Site—National Geographic.com*


This site is a great resource for introducing students to the emotional impact of the Salem Witchcraft Trials. The site recreates the historical scene of the trials and then leads viewers through a first-person experience of them, addressing the moral and ethical issues of the play in a visceral way. The story accuses the viewers and puts them in “virtual” jail, and then gives them a choice of whether to confess or refuse. The students must then follow the consequences of their choice. The site’s historical background section is also useful for its introduction to each of the play’s major characters.
LESSON 1
Understanding Point of View through Close Reading: The Salem Witch Trials and Arthur Miller’s The Crucible

LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

This lesson introduces students to the historical setting of Arthur Miller’s The Crucible. In order to get the students to think about the world-view of the Puritans, the lesson asks them to read a short excerpt from Cotton Mather’s book, The Wonders of the Invisible World. Mather claims that the men and women of Salem have come to America do God’s work, and that witchcraft only appears because the Devil is angry that the people of God have invaded his forest. Mather implies that the Devil still resides in the land outside the settled territories; with this in mind, the lesson calls attention to the fact that Mather believed the landscape itself was sinister. The purpose of this section is to teach students to detect a writer’s world-view based on evidence from the text, even if the writer does not make direct claims about his or her beliefs.

In the group work portion of the lesson, the students continue to study the Mather passage to make a connection between how he characterizes the landscape and how he might have judged the Native Americans who lived out in the “devil’s territories.” The students are asked to think about the relationships between different points of view characterizing Puritan thought (the Puritans’ idea that they were the people of God in a godless place, their assumption that the Devil resided in the forest outside their settlements, and their fear that the people who lived in the forest were in league with the Devil). The students can then speculate about how a world-view encompassing these ideas might have influenced the New Englanders’ treatment of Native Americans. You may want to explain to students that other aspects of Puritan life in seventeenth-century America probably contributed to Mather’s fear of the Devil. In the late-seventeenth century, Puritans were anxious about the decline in religiosity in their community; many believed that the Devil might have taken advantage of this decline to infiltrate their community. Some Puritans also demonized Native Americans for their different religious views and work ethics, blaming the natives for preventing Puritans from completing their religious mission. Moreover, because the Puritans had a rapidly increasing population, they used such cultural differences to justify taking land from Native Americans.

In the next part of the lesson, the students read a passage from a fifteenth-century witch-hunting manual commissioned by the Pope, called The Malleus Maleficarum (The Hammer of Witches). The students examine passages from this book alongside dialogue from The Crucible and then determine the point of view of both books’ authors and characters, paying special attention to their point of view about women. Finally, the students compare how different groups in Puritan society were valued; they think about the commonalities between the bias against Native Americans in Mather’s writing and the attacks on women in both The Malleus Maleficarum and The Crucible.

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is designed to start out as a class discussion, after which the students break down into small groups. The passages are intentionally short and include a glossary, so students at all levels can work through them and answer the questions that follow. Because the reading material is somewhat challenging, however, teachers might consider matching stronger students with students who need more assistance with vocabulary and reading comprehension.
Readings: Cotton Mather; The Malleus Maleficarum; The Crucible

Topics: The Salem Witchcraft Trials; Close Reading for Point of View

Key Term: Point of View

LESSON GOALS
This lesson builds analytical and close-reading skills by asking students to speculate about point of view. Students should learn that point of view is an important category of literary analysis, and should see themselves as capable of engaging in sophisticated reading strategies. They are challenged to read difficult passages and to move beyond the assumption that plot is the most important element of a text. Students are also asked to think about the connection between historical trends and works of literature.

CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON

Grades Eleven and Twelve

Reading

■ Reading Comprehension
  ■ Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced (R 2.0).
  ■ Students make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author’s argument by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations (R 2.4).

■ Literary Response and Analysis
  ■ Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science (R 3.0).
  ■ Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim (R 3.2).
  ■ Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings (R 3.5c).

Writing

■ Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)
  ■ Write responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages (W 2.2, W2.2a).
INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

In the summer of 1692, a small group of young girls in Salem, Massachusetts began acting strangely—having “fits,” contorting their bodies, and shouting out nonsense language. The girls told tales of dancing in the forest and conjuring up spirits, and they blamed their behavior on witches and the Devil. The girls accused other members of their community of practicing witchcraft, and this started a wave of panic and accusation. The accused knew they could be executed for the crime, so in order to avoid the death penalty they made false confessions and accused others in their community. Many people who refused to confess were killed. When the trials finally ended, nineteen men and women had been executed by hanging, and hundreds of others had been arrested and had spent months in jail without trial. These events are known together as the Salem Witchcraft Trials.

In 1953, Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible*, a play that tries to interpret the Salem Witchcraft Trials for a modern audience. One way to learn more about the characters in Miller’s play is to study them in the context of historical documents about witchcraft and life in Colonial America. In this lesson, we will carefully read sections of the play to try to understand Miller’s point of view, or the vantage point from which Miller and his characters experience and explain events or the world. We will also look at different perspectives or views on witchcraft in order to explore the larger world that these characters inhabit and their point of view about this world. By studying these outside sources, we can understand the elements of Puritan life that allowed the Salem Witchcraft trials to happen.

**Puritans and the Forest**

The writings of Cotton Mather, an important Puritan religious leader in colonial America, give us a sense of what the world of the Puritans was like. While Mather is famous for many books he wrote after 1692, he was also involved in the witchcraft trials and wrote about them. Here is an excerpt from his book, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, where he describes what it was like for the Puritans to come from England to the wilder frontier of the New World. The original Puritan settlers had to build villages and cities out of what must have looked like an endless forest.

GLOSSARY

**conjure**: to raise up; to summon into action or bring into existence, as if by magic.

**excerpt**: section or passage.
Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow:

The New Englanders are a people of God settled in those, which were once the devil’s territories; and it may easily be supposed that the Devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a people here accomplishing the Promise of old made unto our Blessed Jesus, that He [Jesus] should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for His Possession. . . . The Devil thus Irritated, immediately tried all sorts of methods to overturn this poor Plantation.

1. What did the New Englanders do in the territories when they came to America?

2. Why does Mather believe that the Devil is upset?

3. From reading this short passage, what can we guess Mather would say about the forest beyond the village?

GLOSSARY

- **territories**: lands.
- **exceedingly**: greatly.
- **utmost**: the greatest possible degree, extent, or intensity.
- **plantation**: settled farm.
- **infer**: to make an educated guess about something.

**IMAGE 1**: The Trial of George Jacobs Sr. in Salem, 1692

**IMAGE 2**: Witches receiving images from a Devil
As you saw from our discussion of Cotton Mather’s language, it is possible to analyze parts of a text or even a picture in order to infer the point of view of the person who wrote it, even if the author or character does not make a direct statement about his or her beliefs. Below you will read some brief passages and answer questions that will help you understand Mather’s point of view.

Discuss the answers to the following questions with members of your group. One person in each group should write down the answers and be prepared to share them with the class.

1. Take another look at the passage on the previous page by Cotton Mather. How does Mather feel about the forest? What parts of the passage help the reader to understand his point of view?

2. What makes the “plantation” or settlement different from the forest? What in the passage alerts the reader to the difference between the settlement and the forest?

3. Think about who lived in the forest when the Puritans arrived in America. Remember that the New World wasn’t new at all to the civilizations and people who already lived there. Given Mather’s ideas about the forest, what might he have thought about these native people? What words in the passage help you answer this question?

4. How might Mather’s view of the forest and the Native Americans explain the treatment of Native Americans by the Puritans and other groups of settlers from Europe?
GROUP WORK: ANALYZING POINT OF VIEW

The History of Witches

The village of Salem in 1692 was certainly not the first society to panic about the presence of witches. Around two hundred years before the Salem Witchcraft Trials, the Pope asked two priests to compile a book on the practice of finding and trying witches. This book, called The Malleus Maleficarum (The Hammer of Witches), was first published in 1486. The belief in and fear of witchcraft was so strong in Europe at the time that it was considered a heresy to refuse to believe in witches. The Malleus Maleficarum says,

The Belief that there are such Beings as Witches is so Essential a Part of the Catholic Faith that Obstinacy to maintain the Opposite Opinion manifestly savours of Heresy.

This book also gives reasons for why women were most often thought of as witches. Even though men have been convicted of witchcraft, history shows that women have been accused of being witches more often than men.

Read the passage from The Malleus below and think about how it describes women. Circle descriptive words as you read. Discuss the passage with your group, and answer the questions on the following page.

As for the first question, why a greater number of witches is found in the fragile feminine sex than among men; it is indeed a fact that it were idle to contradict, since it is accredited by actual experience, apart from the verbal testimony of credible witnesses.

For some learned men propound this reason; [women] know no moderation in goodness or vice; and when they exceed the bounds of their condition they reach the greatest heights and the lowest depths of goodness and vice.

Others again have propounded other reasons why there are more superstitious women found than men. And the first is, that they are more credulous; and since the chief aim of the devil is to corrupt faith, therefore he rather attacks them. . . The second reason is, that women are naturally more impressionable, and more ready to receive the influence of a disembodied spirit. . . the third reason is that they have slippery tongues, and are unable to conceal from the fellow-women those things which by evil arts they know.

GLOSSARY

heresy: an opinion or belief that violates Church teachings.
obstinacy: stubbornness; strong refusal.
maintain: to assert or declare; to state.
manifestly: certainly, definitely.
savours: literally “tastes like,” but here it more likely means “hints at” or “suggests.”
fragile: weak.
idle: useless, having no effect.
accredited: proven, established.
credible: believable.
propound: claim, state, proclaim.
vice: bad behavior.
credulous: willing to believe anything.
impressionable: easily influenced by others.
disembodied: without a body; like a ghost.
imply: to express or state indirectly.
1. What words are used to describe women in this passage? List them below. What image of women do these words portray?

2. What overall picture of women are the writers trying to paint? What is the purpose of this description?

3. In this description of women, there may be implied or unstated views about men and what they are like. If the writers think of men as the opposite of women, how would they describe themselves?

4. Given the point of view about Native Americans implied by Mather’s passage, and the view of women expressed in the passage above, what kinds of social positions were non-Europeans and women likely to have in Puritan society? Give evidence for your answer.

5. Do you think that these kinds of attitudes or points of view still have an influence on our society today? If so, how? Give an example.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

In *The Crucible*, the first person to be accused of witchcraft is the slave Tituba. In the play, she is from Barbados, but the historical record suggests that she was more likely a Native American from a nearby community. While some men were also accused of witchcraft, it was a group of girls who was first suspected and tried. Why do you think a Native American and a group of young girls were so easily accused and punished?
Witches in The Crucible: Salem’s World View

We will now look at a few short speeches from The Crucible that give us a sense of what kind of people the village valued and what kind it did not. We will also consider how Puritan values influenced who was accused and convicted in the trials.

Read the dialogue below and answer the questions on the following page. As you read, circle descriptive words.

Mary Warren is the servant of John Proctor (a respected farmer) and his wife Elizabeth. She was one of the girls involved in the original accusations, and she ends up playing a role in the trials. In the following speech, Mary tells John and Elizabeth that a woman named Sarah Good has been arrested. Mary goes on to say that as soon as Sarah Good confessed, she [Mary] remembered all of the times that Sarah tried to kill her.

MARY WARREN: I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then—then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin’ up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then—entranced—I hear a voice, a screamin’ voice, and it were my voice—and all at once I remembered everything she done to me! (54).

Later in the scene, Mary insists that Sarah Good is pregnant, even though she is over sixty. This is taken as evidence of witchcraft.

MARY WARREN: They had Doctor Griggs examine her, and she’s full to the brim. And smokin’ a pipe all these years, and no husband either! (56).

In the next scene, Mary comes to the house to tell John and Elizabeth that Elizabeth has been accused of witchcraft and will soon be arrested. Elizabeth knows that she has been accused by Abigail Williams, who hates her. Elizabeth also knows that there is a difference between the accusations against Sarah Good and others, and the accusation against herself.

ELIZABETH: . . . There be a thousand names; why does she call mine? There be a certain danger in calling such a name—I am no Goody Good that sleeps in ditches, nor Osburn, drunk and half-witted. She’d dare not call out such a farmer’s wife but there be monstrous profit in it (58).

GLOSSARY

Goody: Goody was short for Good Wife. This was a title used during colonial times in the same way we use Mr. or Mrs.

monstrous: large or great.
1. Based on the passages above, and the descriptions of Sarah Good and Goody Osburn, what kind of women would you say they are? How would you describe them? What do you know about their lives?

2. What can you infer or foretell about Elizabeth from the passages above?

3. If Elizabeth is right and it is more serious to accuse her than the other women of witchcraft, it is probably correct to say that Puritan society considers Elizabeth to be more pure, more religious, or more valuable than the others. Why do you think this is the case?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in 1953. If we think of the play as an *allegory* about 1950s America, what impression of this period does the play give you? Do you think Miller was trying to say something about both his own time and the time of the witchcraft trials? If so, what connections do you think he was trying to make between America in the 1690s and the 1950s?
In order to further develop the unit's emphasis on point of view, this lesson introduces the theme of “magical thinking.” The lesson distinguishes between magical thinking—where things are explained through reference to unseen forces—and logical thinking, where cause and effect are based on material evidence or reasoning. To demonstrate how logical thinking might have explained supposed cases of witchcraft, the lesson presents some recent explanations for witch panic, such as the plague and ergot poisoning. It develops the theme of magical thinking by revisiting the question of why women were so often accused of witchcraft, and demonstrating why it is difficult to refute arguments built on magical thinking. This sets the stage for a discussion of Arthur Miller’s experiences during the Red Scare, which will appear in a later lesson.

The group work portion of the lesson asks the students to look at situations that were once explained by magic and to come up with logical explanations for those events. This work prepares the students for the Case Studies, where they will examine several cases of suspected witchcraft and be asked to defend claims, or theses, that explain why witchcraft could not logically be responsible for such incidents. Inventing explanations to support their claims will give the students practice building argumentative essays. Since some of these Case Studies are from the Salem Witchcraft Trials and are also treated in the play, hopefully the students will make connections between history and literature while working on them.

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

This lesson works quite well in small groups, because the students find the “magical thinking” element rather amusing. They can get very creative in both their magical and logical explanations, which makes for lively and interactive discussion. The individual cases can be used as opportunities for oral presentations. Teachers can have each group work through each case, but can also assign one case that each group will have to report on to the class. One idea for extending the theme of this lesson, and tying it more concretely to the students’ work on The Crucible, is to have the students select certain “magical” incidents from the play and provide both types of explanations for them.
LESSON 2

Readings:
Case Studies of Witch Trials

Topics:
Magical vs. Logical Thinking; Building Arguments from Evidence

Key Terms:
Magical Thinking; Thesis; Evidence

LESSON GOALS
This lesson gives students more ways to think about point of view in The Crucible, and gives them tools for analyzing the motivations of the play’s characters. They are also asked to think about larger historical events and how they are connected to each other and to literature. Primarily, this lesson gives the students repeated exercise in making clear written claims that they must back up with thoughtful and carefully-organized evidence. This can serve as practice for writing an essay about the play at a later stage in the unit, or for writing assignments that the students will have throughout the year.

CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON
Grades Eleven and Twelve

Reading

Reading Comprehension

■ Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced (R 2.0).

■ Students make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author’s argument by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations (R 2.4).

Literary Response and Analysis

■ Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science (R 3.0).

■ Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim (R 3.2).

■ Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings (R 3.5c).

Writing

Writing Strategies

■ Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument (W 1.0).

■ Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples (W 1.3).

Listening and Speaking

Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

■ Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description (L&S 2.0).

■ Deliver oral responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g. make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable (L&S 2.3a).
INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

In this lesson, we will continue thinking about point of view. Considering point of view will allow us to analyze how the author of a book or a character in story perceives and explains events. We will look at the point of view of the people who lived during the Salem Witchcraft Trials to try and understand how they explained the world around them. They often explained things through magical thinking.

Magical thinking looks to explain events by saying they are caused by magic or other unseen forces, instead of explaining them with scientific or logical reasoning.

Fill in the following blanks to demonstrate the difference between magical and logical thinking. The first one has already been completed for you, and will serve as an example.

EXAMPLE:

Event: You failed a math test.

Magical Cause: You were possessed by an evil spirit.

Natural or Logical Cause: You did not study.

Event: You gained 20 pounds.

Magical Cause: __________________________________________________________

Natural or Logical Cause: ________________________________________________

Event: Your boy/girlfriend broke up with you.

Magical Cause: __________________________________________________________

Natural or Logical Cause: ________________________________________________
Trials accusing and punishing people for being witches did not only occur in Salem or pre-Revolutionary America. This trend began in Western Europe in the 1400s. Witch hunts first started during the time of the Black Plague, when thousands of people were dying of an unknown cause. During the time of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, people also died of mysterious causes; scientists now believe that one of these causes was ergot poisoning. Ergot was a fungus that affected wheat and caused anyone who ate the wheat to have vivid hallucinations and sometimes even paralysis. Why do you suppose witch hunts occurred at the same time as these two events?

**Who were the suspects?**

At the time, those who prosecuted witches described them as the ugliest, poorest, and weakest members of society. Many people thought that consorting with evil spirits made witches ugly, smelly, and feeble. In many cases the accused were elderly widows who lacked financial stability in their societies.

**Why were women suspected more often than men?**

You have already looked at the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Hammer of Witches*), which was written by German priests in 1486. We will now review three of the book’s reasons for why women fell into witchcraft more often than men:

1) When [women] are governed by a good spirit, they are most excellent in virtue; but when they are governed by an evil spirit, they *indulge* the worst possible vices.

2) The second reason is, that women are naturally more impressionable, and more ready to receive the influence of a *disembodied* spirit.

3) The third reason is that they have slippery tongues, and are unable to *conceal* from their fellow-women those things which by evil arts they know.

**GLOSSARY**

*indulge*: to give in to someone’s, or one’s own, desires and whims.

*disembodied*: not having a material body.

*conceal*: to hide.

Answer this question:

1. The above passages assume that women are indulgent, impressionable, and gossipy. Do you think our society today still makes these kinds of assumptions about women? If so, give an example.
Of course, not all women were automatically assumed to be witches. In a seventeenth-century book called *Way for the Discovery of Witches*, an English preacher, Mr. Perkins, provided guidelines for detecting if someone was a witch.

Read the following items and answer the questions below:

II. If any Man or Woman, be **notoriously defamed** for a Witch, this yields a strong suspicion.

IV. If after **enmity**, Quarrelling, or Threatening, a present mischief does follow; that also is a great **presumption**.

VI. If the Party suspected be the Son or Daughter, the man-servant or maid-servant, the Familiar Friend, near Neighbor, or old Companion, of a known and convicted Witch; this may be likewise a **presumption**.

XV. If it can be proved, that the party suspected hath called upon the Devil, or desired his Help, this is a **pregnant** proof of a League formerly made between them.

1. According to Mr. Perkins, what evidence does one need to determine if the accused is a witch? Paraphrase each of the four pieces of evidence.

2. Do Perkins’ guidelines seem reasonable to you? Why or why not? Give evidence for your answer.

3. How might an accused witch have defended herself from these accusations?

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GLOSSARY

**notorious**: having a very bad reputation.

**defame**: to damage the reputation, character, or good name of someone.

**enmity**: hostility.

**presumption**: an assumption that is taken for granted.

**pregnant**: used here, pregnant means full of meaning; weighty or significant.

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1 Quoted in Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. 
The illustration above, which was made in 1613, depicts a test that was used to discover witches. If the suspect drowned or sank to the bottom, she was seen as innocent. If she floated, she was considered a witch. However, those who administered the test would sometimes manipulate the ropes to cause the suspect to float or sink.

**GROUP WORK**

Now you will look at a number of cases in which witchcraft was blamed for some event or occurrence. You will be asked to make a logical argument that there are natural (rather than supernatural) causes for each event. You will practice writing a *thesis statement* (a sentence that clearly states your position or argument) for each case, and you will support that thesis with *evidence*, or concrete details that support your position.

Before working with these case studies, you will look at some common stereotypes, from the *Malleus Maleficarum*, about what kinds of behaviors witches engaged in. The book offers “magical causes” for these behaviors, but you will come up with logical explanations for them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event/Occurrence</th>
<th>Magical Cause</th>
<th>Logical/Rational Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control the actions of vicious and hungry wolves.</td>
<td>Witches sometimes cause wolves to “snatch men and children out of their houses and eat them, and run about with such astuteness that by no skill or strength can they be hurt or captured.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause miscarriages and spontaneous abortions.</td>
<td>“The Witches who are Midwives in various ways kill the child conceived in the womb, and procure an abortion.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause good citizens to become possessed by evil spirits.</td>
<td>The witches and the Devil enter the head and cause “such a sudden change and confusion, that [imagined objects] are necessarily thought to be actual things seen with the eyes.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injure or kill cattle.</td>
<td>“There is not even the smallest farm where women do not injure each other’s cows, by drying up their milk, and very often killing them.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stir up hailstorms and tempests.</td>
<td>“Very often men and beasts and storehouses are struck by lightning by the power of devils; and the cause of this seems to be more hidden and ambiguous . . . However, it has been found that witches have freely confessed that they have done such things . . .”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDIES

Read each case study. Then, with your group, come up with logical explanations for the things that happened in it. Use this evidence to write a thesis statement arguing that the suspect is not a witch. You must list this evidence when writing your thesis.

Remember, the evidence that you come up with needs to attack the magical causes for the events described in the case. It should point to logical or scientific reasoning, explain why the suspected witch was targeted, and bring up alternate causes for the event (this might require you to write a two-sentence thesis).

Case Study #1: Bridget Bishop executed in Salem

Bridget Bishop was one of the first victims of the Salem Witchcraft Trials. While the accusers probably did not know her, they had heard stories about her. She had been on trial for witchcraft in the past.

Here is her case: Bridget gave a man a few coins in order to pay for something, but these coins vanished from his pocket. This disappearance was thought to be caused by witchcraft. The same man, while driving his cart near Bridget, found his wheel stuck in a hole. When he came back later to look for the hole, he could not find it. Therefore, he concluded that Bridget caused these problems using witchcraft.

Before writing your thesis, make a list below of the logical explanations you will use as evidence. Remember, your evidence should point to logical or scientific reasoning, explain why the suspected witch was targeted, and bring up alternate causes for the event.

Logical Explanation #1: ____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #2: ____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #3: ____________________________________________________________

More Explanations as needed: _______________________________________________________

Thesis: __________________________________________________________________________

2 Case Studies #1 and #2 are cited from Frances Hill, A Delusion of Satan, pp. 117 and 87. Case Study #3 is cited from Marion Gibson, Reading Witchcraft. p. 1.
Case Study #2: Rebecca Nurse executed in Salem

The elderly Rebecca Nurse was a wealthy and prosperous newcomer to Salem Village. Her and her husband's wealth angered their powerful neighbors, the Putnams. Ann Putnam claimed to be afflicted by witches. She was having fits and was tormented by the biting, pinching, and prickling of her skin. She accused Rebecca Nurse of appearing to her in the night, as if a ghost, and asking her to sign the Devil's book. Rebecca was convicted of being a witch and eventually executed.

Before writing your thesis, make a list below of the logical explanations you will use as evidence. Remember, your evidence should point to logical or scientific reasoning, explain why the suspected witch was targeted, and bring up alternate causes for the event.

Logical Explanation #1: _____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #2: _____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #3: _____________________________________________________________

More Explanations as needed: _______________________________________________________

Thesis: ____________________________________________________________________________

Case Study #3: Alizon Device

On May 18, 1612, Alizon Device left her home in the English countryside and encountered a peddler selling various items. Having no money, she begged for a few pins from him. He refused. According to the peddler, a black dog appeared to Alizon and asked her “What would you have me do to the man?” When Alizon asked what the dog was capable of doing, the dog claimed he could make the man lame. After Alizon commanded the dog to do so, the man fell down and the left side of his body became paralyzed. Alizon Device was arrested and tried for attacking the peddler with witchcraft.

Before writing your thesis, make a list below of the logical explanations you will use as evidence. Remember, your evidence should point to logical or scientific reasoning, explain why the suspected witch was targeted, and bring up alternate causes for the event.

Logical Explanation #1: _____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #2: _____________________________________________________________

Logical Explanation #3: _____________________________________________________________

More Explanations as needed: _______________________________________________________

Thesis: ____________________________________________________________________________
LESSON 3
Allegory in *The Crucible*

**LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS**

In this lesson, the students interpret *The Crucible* in the context of Arthur Miller’s experiences with the Red Scare and anti-communism during the 1950s. The lesson begins by defining the literary term allegory and asks the students to provide examples of allegory from their own reading and experience. The lesson then gives historical background on the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Red Scare from the late 1940s and early 1950s, and discusses how Miller was brought before HUAC. The students consider the parallels between the activities of the Committee and the dynamic of the Salem Witchcraft Trials. They also speculate about the different circumstances under which being an informant can be seen as either cowardly or heroic.

The group work portion of the lesson asks the students to review what they learned in other lessons, especially about point of view and magical thinking. Their discussion should help them make connections between the Salem Witchcraft Trials, *The Crucible*, and Arthur Miller’s historical circumstances. Students then look at several color images from bubblegum cards and comic books from 1947 and 1951, and analyze the images for how they might have encouraged the fear of Communism that was prevalent during the McCarthy era. The students develop arguments about the way the images are paired with text to create specific effects on their audience. Finally, the students complete a creative writing assignment in which they imagine they have been called before HUAC and have been asked to name names.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

This lesson can work very well with students in pairs, small groups, or even as a class, especially if the classroom has equipment to display the images. When discussing the images, you can remind students that just as they analyze written language for tone, imagery, and other forms of figuration, they can interpret visual images using similar techniques. When doing this, the students will analyze the layout of the image, the expressions of the people portrayed, and the relationships between image and text, among other things.

This lesson is in the middle of the unit because it helps the students see how the fear of witches they have been studying in the previous lessons is connected to experiences in Miller’s life. In order to generate discussion about the choice that Miller had to make, you could turn the creative writing assignment into a collaborative project for each group, which they could present at the end of the lesson.
**Readings:** A Brief History of the U.S. Communist Party and HUAC; Images from the Anti-communist Crusade

**Topics:** Allegory; Anti-Communism; Image Analysis

**Key Terms:** Allegory; HUAC; Red Scare

**LESSON GOALS**

This lesson asks the students to think about how an author’s point of view is connected to his or her historical circumstances. The students also consider how images and words work together to create emotional effects on the reader, and support their observations through reference to specific elements of images and text. The creative writing assignment at the end of the lesson helps students get more involved in the play by asking them to make a personal connection to the narrative. This assignment also gets them thinking about how to convey their own point of view to others through written language. Finally, because the lesson teaches students more about Miller’s life, it prepares them for the topic of the next lesson—understanding why the play specifically targets legal proceedings.

**CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON**

**Grades Eleven and Twelve**

**Reading**

- **Literary Response and Analysis**
  - Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science (R 3.0).
  - Analyze characteristics of subgenres (e.g. satire, parody, allegory, pastoral) that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres (R 3.1).
  - Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim (R 3.2).

**Writing**

- **Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)**
  - Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives: narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience (W 2.1, W 2.1a).

**CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARD ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON**

**Grade Eleven**

- Students trace the origins and geopolitical consequences (foreign and domestic) of the Cold War and containment policy, including the era of McCarthyism, instances of domestic Communism, and blacklisting (11.9.3).
INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

_Allegory_ is a literary form in which an author conveys a message or teaches a lesson by having his characters represent things or ideas. An allegory makes sense on two or more levels. On a literal level, it tells a story that makes sense. An allegory's characters or actions sometimes represent actual historical people or events. On a more abstract level, an allegory tries to teach a moral, ethical, or religious lesson. An author might also use allegory for satirical or political purposes.

Examples of Political Allegory

- Humpty Dumpty: This nursery rhyme refers to the British King, Richard III, who lost a terrible battle despite having had numerous soldiers to back him up.
- Some popular phrases also function as allegory. One of these is “The early bird gets the worm.” What is this phrase about on a basic, literal level? What else is it trying to tell us?
  
  Can you think of any other popular phrases that are also allegories?

Allegory in _The Crucible_

_The Crucible_ is an allegory for the Communist witch hunt that took place in the United States between 1947 and 1960. This witch-hunt involved a series of trials run by a Congressional committee called the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Some aspects of the play that are allegorical—because they are literally about Puritan America but _evoke_ events from the 1950s—include false accusations, townspeople who feel the destructive presence of witches and witchery, and a government that forces people to make false confessions.

GLOSSARY

evoke: to call forth (emotions, feelings, or responses).
omniscient: all-knowing; used to describe a narrator who knows everything, who can shift in time and place, or from character to character, and who knows about each character’s thoughts, feelings, and motives.
In the play, Arthur Miller gives some clues to let the reader know he is allegorizing the Communist witch hunt. In the introduction, Miller writes:

*When one rises above the individual villainy displayed [in the witch hunts], one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. It is still impossible for man to organize his social life without repression (7).*

1. What point is Miller trying to make? Paraphrase his comment.

2. What words in the above passage let you know that the play is allegorical?

Later on in the play, Miller gives the reader another clue that the play is an allegory. In Act One, he interrupts the characters' dialogue to describe John Hale. As an omniscient narrator, Miller draws a parallel between the fear of witches and anxiety about Communists. He writes,

*The analogy, however, seems to falter when one considers that, while there were no witches then, there are Communists and capitalists now, and in each camp there is certain proof that spies of each side are at work undermining the other (30).*

3. Why is an omniscient narrator needed to explain that the play is an allegory?
After World War II, American anxieties about foreign affairs focused on the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. Government figures and private citizens alike feared that the Communist Party, which had taken over so many Eastern European countries, might try to take over the United States and destroy the “American Way of Life.” This anxiety about Communists was known as the Red Scare. Communists were known as “Reds” because red was the color of the Soviet flag.

In order to contain this threat, Congress (through the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC) questioned many Americans who were or had been associated with the American branch of the Communist Party. Congress asked these people if they were or ever had been members of the Communist Party. Oftentimes, Congress already knew the answer from other investigations.

If the witness confessed, then he or she was asked to name other friends and acquaintances associated with the Communist Party. If the witness confessed and pointed the finger at others, the government considered him rehabilitated or innocent. If he refused to name others, the government could and would prosecute him for treason or contempt of Congress. Arthur Miller was called up in 1955. Like John Proctor in *The Crucible*, Miller refused to testify against others. He was therefore convicted for contempt of Congress.

As a result of the HUAC trials, many people found themselves living under a shadow of suspicion, and lost their jobs and financial stability. While a few individuals brought before Congress were indeed spies and subversives intent on destroying the American government, others had joined the Party thinking it could lead to a just society without class discrimination and poverty. Many had even joined the Communist Party because it was the most liberal political party around or because joining had been a popular thing to do in the 1930s and 1940s.

**The Informer Becomes a Hero**

During the HUAC trials, a suspected Communist could only prove his innocence by giving the names of other possible Communists to Congress. These people were often friends and acquaintances. Congress made the act of “informing” seem patriotic and heroic.

1. In American society, what do we usually think of a person who informs or tells on his friends? Can you think of some popular slang terms for such a person?

2. Are there any circumstances that would cause you to admire an informer? Explain.

3. Can you think of any famous informers?

4. Could you be an informer? Would you turn in friends or family if you thought it was for a good cause?
**Group Work**

As earlier lessons in this unit pointed out, the Puritans were afraid of witchcraft and devilish forces, and had a tendency to engage in magical thinking. During the time of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, many people believed that witches were real, that they could appear anywhere, and that they could destroy people’s lives.

In the 1940s and early 1950s (during Arthur Miller’s lifetime), there were also many people who were fearful that Communist spies were working in the United States. Members of the U.S. government intent on finding these Communists felt that unless they had the total cooperation of anyone who came before them, the Communists would destroy the United States and all it stood for. They thought that there could be spies in the military, the scientific community, and even in the government itself. They were also very concerned that there might be Communists working in Hollywood and in the movie industry, as Arthur Miller discovered when he was called before HUAC two years after he wrote *The Crucible*.

1. Why do you think Americans would have cared if there had been Communist agents in the movie business?

2. What effect would a Communist presence in Hollywood have had on the American people?

**Image Analysis**

Even though groups opposed to Communism were worried about Communist influences in popular culture, they also used popular culture to spread their message. In this section, you will look at several images from popular forms like bubble gum cards and comic books that were designed to inspire a fear of Communism.

*Look at the images on the following page, read the captions, and discuss the images with your groups. Then answer the questions.*

1. What is the purpose of the card in Image 4?

2. How does it represent Communism? Be specific.

3. How might this affect an American child’s perception of Communism? Use evidence to support your answer.
4. How would you describe the difference in attitudes between the soldiers on the left and the one on the right, in Image 5?

5. What comment does this card make about the Soviet government?

6. What does it say about the right to “speak out” under Communist rule?

7. Do you see any connection between this card’s message and the HUAC trials? If so, what is it?

8. Do you see any connection between this card’s message and today’s world?
9. How does this picture (Image 6) reflect the American attitude toward Communism? Name three details from the image that support your answer.

10. How might the feeling conveyed by this image help explain the HUAC trials?
The fifty-two-page comic book pictured above (Images 7 and 8) imagined what might happen if Communists took over America. An estimated 10-12 million people read this document, which was distributed for free by church groups.

11. Based on Image 7, how do you think this comic book represents what American life would be like under Communism? Be specific in describing aspects of the image.

12. How might pamphlets such as this one have played a role in the Communist “witch hunts”?

This poster (Image 9) was created for the USSR’s Pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair. It represents Communists from a different perspective than we might imagine.

14. How does the poster represent Communism? Name two things about the image that support your answer.

15. What point of view does the poster represent?

16. How does the attitude toward Communism in this poster differ from the American attitude represented by the other images you have been analyzing? You can choose one or more images to compare.

17. The images you have been studying use dramatic situations to convey their point of view. Why do you think Miller decided to write an allegorical play to protest HUAC? Why didn’t he attack HUAC directly?
Imagine that it is 1947 and you are a successful screenwriter. You have been asked to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC). You have never been a member of the Communist party, but your best friend was briefly involved with it more than ten years ago, during the Great Depression. He thought that Communism might provide solutions to the terrible poverty of that period, but he has not been involved with the Communist Party for years.

If you refuse to cooperate with the Committee, you will lose your job and never be able to work in Hollywood again. If you cooperate, you will be asked to name names and turn in your friend, whose life will be ruined. Lying to the Committee has the same penalty as refusing to talk, and there are rumors that the Committee already knows about your friend’s involvement with the Communist Party. What will you do and why will you choose that path? Write your response below.
LESSON 4
Parody, Satire, and Caricature: The Courtroom and *The Crucible*

**LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS**

This lesson begins with a discussion of the basic features and purposes of parody, satire, and caricature in writing. The students first think of and discuss examples from popular culture. This discussion should highlight the fact that these modes of humorous writing are communal and imply some sort of judgment about how people or institutions should behave in the context of community. The students are reminded of HUAC’s attacks on Miller and his contemporaries to emphasize that Miller has reasons to be critical of legal proceedings.

The group work portion of the lesson asks the students to look at Swift’s famous satire, “A Modest Proposal,” in order to see how satire achieves its effects by making tone incongruous with content. The students will be asked to discuss some shared ideas about politicians before they read, which will help them recognize the target of the satire. After constructing and supporting a claim about Swift’s text, the groups will analyze the courtroom scenes in Act Three of *The Crucible*. First, the students will discuss their assumptions about the character of lawyers, and then they will examine scenes in which Miller parodies legalistic thought and language. Finally, they will answer questions and make claims about how the writing in the play and the characterization of the legal scenes helps Miller deliver his critique.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

This lesson can be configured in a number of ways. For students with a higher reading proficiency, small groups are effective with both the excerpts from the play and the Swift passage. The students can take turns reading scenes from *The Crucible* aloud to each other, or the class as a whole can perform sections of the play.

Some students may need guidance in analyzing the Swift passages, which may be done as a whole class exercise. The students who have done this exercise in the past have gotten a certain satisfaction from realizing that Swift is really joking. The Swift exercise sets the tone of the lesson, allowing the students to read passages in the play and to recognize the difference between the ideal of the law—how it is supposed to protect people and find the truth—and the action of the play.
CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON

Grades Eleven and Twelve

Reading

■ Reading Comprehension

■ Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced (R 2.0).

■ Students make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's argument by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations (R 2.4).

■ Literary Response and Analysis

■ Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science (R 3.0).

■ Analyze characteristics of subgenres (e.g. satire, parody, allegory, pastoral) that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres (R 3.1).

■ Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim (R 3.2).

■ Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both (R 3.3).

■ Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings (R 3.5c).

Writing

■ Writing Strategies

■ Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument (W 1.0).

■ Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples (W 1.3).

■ Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

■ Write responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages; analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text (W 2.2, W 2.2a, W 2.2b).

Readings: Excerpt from “A Modest Proposal”; Scenes from The Crucible

Topics: Figuration in The Crucible; Courtroom as Allegory

Key Terms: Parody; Satire; Caricature

LESSON GOALS

This lesson introduces students to some important literary terms and their presence in The Crucible. The students are asked to think about how literature employs many different writing strategies beyond plot or action in order to create certain effects for the reader. The students carefully analyze short passages and build arguments using evidence from their investigations. This is an extension of the practice they have already had with making claims and providing evidence.
INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

We don’t often think of _The Crucible_ as a funny play because its themes are so serious. It may not be funny in a laugh-out-loud way, but Miller did use writing strategies that we often associate with humor in order to make some of his most important points. As the previous lesson explained, Miller and other American writers were brought before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), a Congressional committee that accused many people of being Communists and of working together with the Soviet Union to harm the United States. Miller’s experience observing HUAC gave him good reason to be critical of courts and trials. Today we are going to look at courtroom scenes in _The Crucible_ to see how Miller uses exaggeration in his writing to get the reader to think critically about the law, lawyers, courts, and trials. You will learn the terms parody, satire, and caricature.

**Parody**

_Parody_ mocks or makes fun of other literary works through an exaggerated imitation of their style or main features. Parody often passes some sort of judgment on the author or the literary work being parodied.

Every _genre_ of film or literature has certain features that distinguish it. For example, in horror films, someone usually goes out into the woods alone. In romantic comedies, there is often a funny best friend who _dispenses_ advice. When a parody imitates the features of a particular work, it does so in such a way that they become ridiculous.

Can you think of any movies or television shows that parody other shows? In your example, what is the movie or T.V. show mocking? What type of attitude does the show have toward the thing being mocked?

Parody is actually a form of satire. Parody imitates the style of a literary work, while satire focuses its attention on criticizing a particular behavior.

**Satire**

_Satire_ is a mode of writing that _scorns_ or ridicules individuals, institutions, or societies. In other words, satire judges the behavior of individuals or groups. The judgments in satire are often used to imply a more correct or sensible mode of behavior. This is one reason why satire is often found in works that are otherwise serious in theme and tone.

Parody and satire often appear together in a text. Both of these literary devices assume that the reader or audience member knows enough about what is being made fun of to be able to get
the joke. Therefore, parody and satire assume a degree of shared knowledge and even shared values with the audience.

**Caricature**

Some parody and satire use one-dimensional characters in the service of humor or social critique. When they do this, they are using *caricature*. Caricature is often used in drawing or the visual arts; in writing, it refers to the exaggeration of certain qualities in a person over all others, often to an absurd extreme. Caricature is often used to demonstrate some type of person or behavior, rather than to give a realistic portrait or description of an actual human being. For example, in many comedies, we don’t get to know the complex personalities of the characters because they are reduced to one aspect of themselves in the service of making the story humorous.

**GROUP WORK**

Before looking at sections of the play, you will read a part of one of the most famous satires written in English: “A Modest Proposal,” written by Jonathan Swift in 1729. Swift was writing in response to a political crisis in Ireland. At the time, Ireland was under the political control of England, and British Protestants owned ninety percent of the land in Ireland. These landlords charged very high rents to their tenants and gave them almost nothing in return. In turn, the tenants were poor and often starving. The British were also very **discriminatory** towards the Irish Catholics because of their religion, and passed laws to prevent Catholics from making a decent living. The Irish continued to live in terrible poverty because of British policies, a situation that Swift attacks in his satire.

Even though Swift was writing in a very different time than our own, we may still share ideas about landlords, politicians and other public figures that make his essay relevant today.

Before reading the excerpt from Swift’s essay, discuss the following questions with your groups:

- What do we think politicians and other public servants should do for us?

- What are some of the stereotypes about what politicians actually do?

- What are some of our stereotypes and assumptions about landlords?

**GLOSSARY**

**discriminatory**: prejudiced.
From Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal”:

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation . . .

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed . . . That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in the sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter . . .

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.
1. What is the narrator of the essay proposing?

2. How might Swift want the reader to respond to this proposal? How do you respond to it?

3. How does the narrator present himself and his ideas? Does he present himself as a disgusting cannibal? If you think so, give evidence for your answer. If not, how does Swift convey his plan? What specific phrases does Swift use to convey what he thinks of his idea?

4. What phrases or words from the passage does the writer use to make his idea seem perfectly reasonable? For example, why does he give so many cooking ideas? How do you respond to that section of the essay? Be specific in using evidence from the text to explain your answer.

Making a Claim

Below, write a thesis and provide evidence you would use in supporting it.

- Who or what is the target of Swift's satire?

- What evidence from the text will you use to back up your claim?

1.

2.

3.
The Courtroom in The Crucible

Arthur Miller's play is about very serious subjects, but parts of the play use parody, satire, and caricature to make serious points. This is especially true of the courtroom scenes in Act Three.

Before you look at specific passages from the play, think about the knowledge and ideas we share about the law—especially about lawyers—and answer the following questions:

■ Ideally, what are lawyers supposed to do for their clients?

■ What are some of our shared stereotypes about lawyers and what they do?

PARODY

In Act Three of The Crucible, Reverend John Hale tries to convince Deputy Governor Danforth to allow persons accused of witchcraft to be represented by lawyers. Hale had been consulted when the witch panic first broke out, and at that time he believed that witchcraft had come to Salem. By Act Three of the play, however, Hale has begun to doubt that all the accusations are true. Danforth has come to preside over the hearings, and he gives the following argument as to why the accused do not need lawyers in these trials. In this scene, Danforth is both a lawyer and a politician.

As you read and answer the questions that follow the passage, think about how Miller writes Danforth’s speech as a parody of legal arguments.

HALE: I pray you, sir, this argument let lawyers present to you.

DANFORTH: Mr. Hale, believe me; for a man of such terrible learning you are most bewildered—I hope you will forgive me. I have been thirty-two year at the bar, sir, and I should be confounded were I called to defend these people. Let you consider, now—To Proctor and the others: And I bid you all do

GLOSSARY

terrible: in this case, the term means extreme or excessive.

bar: “at the bar” means to be before the court—Danforth is telling Hale that he has been a lawyer for 32 years.

confounded: confused.

ipso facto: A Latin phrase often used in legal language meaning “by that very fact.” For example, a blind person is, ipso facto, not qualified to get a driver’s license.
likewise. In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is ipso facto, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims—and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring out? I think I have made my point. Have I not? (92-93).

1. Why does Hale think it would be better for the accused to have lawyers?

2. Why does Danforth think the accused don’t need lawyers?

3. What kind of argument or logic does Danforth use to prove his point?

4. What elements of his speech make Danforth sound most like a lawyer?

5. Think again about what lawyers are supposed to do for their clients. Does Danforth’s speech lead to the protection of anyone’s rights? Does it help bring out the truth? Explain your answer.

6. What kind of impression does Miller want the reader to have about Danforth? What does he want us to think about the legal system?

**Making a Claim**

_Below, write a thesis and provide evidence you would use in supporting it._

- Who or what is the target of Miller’s parody in the above scene?

- What evidence from the text will you use to back up your claim?

  1. 
  2. 
  3.
SATIRE

In Act Three of the play, we find out that Abigail, one of the central instigators of the trials, has falsely accused Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft. One piece of evidence Abigail puts forward is that Elizabeth had a “poppet” (a doll) in her house that could have been used to perform devilish curses. Abigail knows that the doll belongs to the Proctors’ maid, Mary Warren.

When the following exchange occurs, Danforth has been questioning Abigail about the doll. Proctor is John Proctor, Elizabeth’s husband. Cheever and Hathorne are officials of the court, and Parris is Salem’s Minister, who is eager for the Proctors to be convicted.

As you read, think about how “logic” is being used in the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

DANFORTH: While you worked for Mr. Proctor, did you see poppets in that house?

ABIGAIL: Goody Proctor always kept poppets.

PROCTOR: Your Honor, my wife never kept no poppets. Mary Warren confesses it was her poppet.

CHEEVER: Your Excellency.

DANFORTH: Mr. Cheever.

CHEEVER: When I spoke with Goody Proctor in that house, she said she never kept no poppets. But she said that she did keep poppets when she were a girl.

PROCTOR: She has not been a girl these fifteen years, Your Honor.

HATHORNE: But a poppet will keep fifteen years, will it not?

PROCTOR: It will keep if it is kept, but Mary Warren swears she never saw no poppets in my house, nor anyone else.

PARRIS: Why could there not have been poppets hid where no one ever saw them?

PROCTOR, furious: There might also be a dragon with five legs in my house, but no one has ever seen it.

PARRIS: We are here, Your Honor, precisely to discover what no one has ever seen (95-96).
1. What is the argument being made about why there might be “poppets” in Elizabeth’s house?

2. How does the seriousness of the lawyers and the scene contrast with the repeated use of the word “poppets”?

3. How does Proctor refute or reject the argument about why there might be unseen poppets in the house?

4. Why does Proctor use what might be called an absurd example of something (a dragon) that might be in his house?

5. What is Parris’ response to Proctor’s argument? Does it come across as more, or less, absurd than Proctor’s statement about dragons? Why?

Making a Claim

Below, write a thesis and provide evidence you would use in supporting it.

■ Who or what is the target of Miller’s satire in the above scene?

■ What evidence from the text will you use to back up your claim?

1.

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**CARICATURE**

In order to write parodies and satires, authors often rely on characters that represent certain traits or behaviors that the writer is criticizing. These characters are often one-dimensional and do not develop new traits as the plot goes along. Reverend Hale comes to regret his involvement with the courts, and in that way his character changes or develops, making him seem more human to the reader. Deputy General Danforth, on the other hand, stays the same. In some ways, this makes him a caricature. His purpose in the play may not be to represent an individual realistically, but to symbolize a certain type of person whom Miller wants to evaluate or judge.

At one point in Act Three, Francis Nurse, a respected citizen of the town, has neighbors sign a petition in support of the several women who have been accused of witchcraft. The people who have signed believe the women to be innocent and hope that their support will influence the court’s decision. Instead, the officers of the court begin to talk of bringing all those who signed the petition in for questioning. Francis fears that he has gotten his neighbors in trouble by asking them to sign.

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As you read the following dialogue, pay attention to Danforth’s attitude about his work and the purpose of the court. Then answer the questions.

**FRANCIS:** I have brought trouble on these people; I have—

**DANFORTH:** No, old man, you have not hurt these people if they are of good conscience. But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road in between. This is a sharp time, now, a precise time—we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God’s grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it. I hope you will be one of those (87).

1. Based on what you have read about Danforth in the passages above, how would you describe him?

2. What does he mean when he says that “the shining sun is up”? In his view, what is the role of the court in helping people see the difference between evil and good?

3. Given the outcome of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, do you agree with Danforth? Does Arthur Miller agree with him?
Making a Claim

Below, write a thesis and provide evidence you would use in supporting it.

■ How does Deputy General Danforth, or the caricature he represents, help Miller make a larger point about the events of the Salem Witchcraft Trials? How does Miller want the readers to judge or evaluate Danforth?

■ What evidence from the text will you use to back up your claim?

1.

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LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

This lesson gives students practice with the conventions of argumentative writing. It begins with a brief discussion of the importance of persuasive and argumentative writing in nearly all aspects of higher education. The introductory material also defines a few terms—thesis, evidence, and analysis.

The group work first asks the students to engage with three paragraphs of an argumentative essay. They are asked to underline the thesis or topic sentence of each paragraph and to make check marks on the evidence that the writer gives to support the thesis. Then the students circle the writer's analysis of the evidence and discuss how the writer has interpreted that evidence in order to make his or her argument.

The second part of the group works asks the students to develop arguments of their own. They are asked to imagine that key characters from The Crucible have come back to sue their accusers in court for damages. In this exercise, the students act as lawyers for the plaintiffs. They will need to call on their memory of the play, but can also use the sheets of facts and quotations from the play included in this lesson. There are three different cases from which the groups can choose. After choosing which character(s) to represent, the students arrange evidence into three categories: character traits; events or incidents; and statements overheard by witnesses. The students must also explain why each piece of evidence will help their particular case. Finally, they select the most persuasive evidence and write a closing argument for their case.

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

This lesson is geared towards small groups, but can also be used for pairs of students or individuals. The assignment focuses mainly on the writing of a closing argument rather than the oral presentation of one. Therefore, you do not need to divide the class into “legal teams” or engage in role-playing exercises, though the lesson will work in those contexts. If you do decide to pursue the oral presentation angle, you can divide small groups of students into prosecution and defense teams. These groups can review the lesson materials together and compose closing arguments either together or individually.
CALIFORNIA ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON

Grades Eleven and Twelve

Reading

Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced (R 2.0).

Students make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's argument by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations (R 2.4).

Writing

Writing Strategies

Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument (W 1.0).

Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples (W 1.3).

Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives: narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience (W 2.1, W 2.1a).

Write responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages; support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and other works (W 2.2, W 2.2a, W 2.2c).

Listening and Speaking

Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description (L&S 2.0).

Deliver oral responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g. make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable (L&S 2.3a).

LESSON GOALS

This lesson is meant to provide students with practice identifying the elements of an effective argument, and to practice using these elements to construct an argument of their own. In writing their own closing argument, the students practice building paragraphs that support a clear thesis. The cases themselves are meant to give the students a chance to review characters and events in the play.

Readings: Excerpts from The Crucible; Paragraphs from an Argumentative Essay

Topics: Identifying and Practicing Argumentative Writing; Review of Characters and Events

Key Terms: Thesis; Evidence; Analysis
WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

Most of the writing that you will do as a college student will be argumentative. There may be times that you will do creative projects, but most of your essays will try to convince an audience that your thesis, or main argument, is persuasive, based on your presentation of evidence and your analysis of that evidence.

The importance of argumentation applies to all fields of academic study. Students who study scientific subjects will be asked to prove a hypothesis based on evidence and data gathered through experiments and analysis of other research. Students studying business will be asked to make proposals and provide logical arguments for why one business plan is better than another. Most of the assignments in introductory writing courses ask you to compose an argument and support your thesis by finding and analyzing evidence from one or two essays.

To prepare you for writing argumentative essays, this lesson asks you to practice your argumentation and analysis skills, while continuing to study The Crucible.

Three Main Components of an Argument

**Thesis:** a sentence or group of sentences that clearly state a writer’s argument or position on a topic, rather than a statement of facts, details, or observations. A topic sentence is like a thesis, but it is the main idea of a body paragraph, rather than the main argument of the whole essay.

**Evidence:** the facts or details used to support a thesis statement or argument. Evidence can come from the words and images used by an author or from historical information about his or her era.

**Analysis:** a method of looking at the individual elements of a text or artwork and using the results of that investigation to support a well-developed thesis or argument.

GROUP WORK:
IDENTIFYING THE ELEMENTS OF AN ARGUMENT

After reading each of the paragraphs on the following page, taken from an argumentative essay about The Crucible, identify the three main components of each paragraph: thesis, evidence, and analysis.

1) First, underline the thesis or topic sentence of the paragraph.
2) Next, place check marks on the pieces of evidence that support the thesis.
3) Finally, circle the analysis of the evidence.

As you work, remember that these are the elements of a strong paragraph.
Paragraph 1

In *The Crucible*, Reverend John Hale is the first judge to be called to Salem. As the play progresses, we see that because Hale cares about logic and common sense more than he cares about always appearing to be right, he finally rejects the actions taken by the court. When we first meet Reverend Hale in Act One, he has a stack of books that he believes have all the necessary information to help him discover without question if someone is possessed by the Devil. He says about his books, “Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated” (37). In the stage directions, Miller writes that Hale has a “tasty love of intellectual pursuit” (37) and in the notes introducing Hale, Miller tells us that Hale is excited to finally be putting all his careful education to the test in a real fight against “the Fiend himself” (34). But even before Hale examines the first sick child, he tells everyone that they must trust him if he finds that there are no devils in the children. He says, “I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her” (36). With this statement, we are able to see from the beginning that Hale believes in learning and careful examination of evidence more than he cares about finding witches in Salem.

Paragraph 2

Hale’s belief in reason and his rejection of the need to be right at all costs continues during the trials in Act Three, when he tries to get Danforth to allow witnesses to have lawyers represent their cases. Hale is no longer as certain as he once was that the court can easily tell the difference between guilt and innocence, and he thinks that lawyers will help make the process more just. He tells Danforth, “I have this morning signed away the soul of Rebecca Nurse, Your Honor. I’ll not conceal it, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I pray you, sir, this argument let lawyers present to you” (92). By the end of the Act, after seeing Mary Warren falsely confess to being a witch and then accuse John Proctor of being “the Devil’s man,” Hale finally walks away from the court. He yells, “I denounce these proceedings, I quit this court!” (111). When he sees that the trials are being conducted unfairly, and that wild emotions instead of logical examination are getting people arrested, he is willing to risk his reputation by quitting.

Paragraph 3

In the last act, we see most clearly that Hale is willing to do anything so that the innocent are not executed, even to reject the notion that people should tell the truth. He comes back to Salem to encourage those who are still in prison to lie to the court in order to preserve their lives. Hale sarcastically says that he has “come to do the Devil’s work” by telling people to lie by confessing their guilt (121). Finally, when he talks to Elizabeth, he tells her that he has no connection to the court at all, but that he wants to save her husband. Hale even says, “if he [her husband] is taken, I count myself as his murderer” (122). Hale has become so sure that Proctor and the others are innocent that he is willing to reject the court and all he used to stand for in order to save them.
Using Evidence and Analysis to Make a Convincing Argument

In this activity, your group will serve as a legal team representing some of the characters in *The Crucible*. Imagine that through some miracle, victims of the Salem Witchcraft Trials have come back from the dead to sue for damages. These characters are taking their accusers to court, and it will be your job to make a strong case for them.

You will be presented with three different cases based on the events in the play. Each case has a Plaintiff (an accuser) and a Defendant. Each case also has a set of facts that you can use in building your prosecution or defense (you can use evidence from the fact sheets on the following pages, but you should also try to use evidence that you remember from reading the play). You will gather and discuss evidence in order to build your case; to build this case, you will have to consider three different kinds of evidence: character traits; events or incidents from the play; and things overheard by witnesses. You will also have to explain to the court why this evidence is significant to your overall argument; in other words, what is the evidence telling us? In the end, you will have to come up with an argument that will persuade a jury to award your client(s) with a victory. Remember, the fact sheets only give you facts from the play. It will be your job to arrange those facts and to explain why they might help your case. You can begin this work on the chart on page 55.
CASE FILE: (Your group should choose ONE of the three cases)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Traits of the Parties Involved:</th>
<th>How this helps our case:</th>
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<th>Events or Incidents in the Play:</th>
<th>How this helps our case:</th>
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<th>Statements Overheard by Witnesses:</th>
<th>How this helps our case:</th>
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FINAL ARGUMENTS

Using the information and analysis gathered above, write a closing argument designed to convince the jury of your side of the case. Begin with your claim, and then explain your evidence in order to prove your case to the jury. You might not use all the evidence, but be sure to use the most persuasive.
CASE #1

Plaintiff:

Elizabeth Proctor, suing for damages and defamation of character. Elizabeth Proctor was the respected wife of farmer John Proctor and mother of four children, one born while she was in prison.

Defendant:

Abigail Williams, 17, niece to Reverend Parris. Orphaned as a girl when Indians murdered her family; fired from her position as servant in the Proctor’s home; suspected of an adulterous relationship with John Proctor. Skipped town before the trials came to an end, and left with Reverend Parris’ entire life savings.

FACTS IN THE CASE

■ In Act One, Betty comes out of her sickness long enough to shout, “You drank blood, Abby!” After Abigail hits her across the face, Betty shouts, “You did, you did! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor’s wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!” (18).

■ In order to prevent the other girls from confessing to all the things that happened in the forest, Abigail threatens them in the following way: “Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you” (19).

■ Later that day, when Abigail meets with John Proctor, she explains Betty’s mysterious illness by saying, “We were dancin’ in the woods last night, and my uncle leaped in on us. She took fright is all” (20).

■ The rest of their conversation centers on Abigail’s feelings for John, and her certainty that he still has feelings for her. When Proctor insists that their affair is over, she says, “You’re surely sportin’ with me.” When Proctor continues to deny his love for her, Abigail responds by saying, “I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!” (21).

■ Abigail also insists that Elizabeth Proctor is telling lies about her in the village.

■ There are several incidents in which Abigail accuses others of witchcraft when she is about to be exposed for being a liar.

■ Abigail sits next to Mary Warren in court while Mary sews the “poppet” that she later accuses Elizabeth of owning. Abigail knows that Mary works at the Proctor home.
CASE #2

Plaintiff:

John Proctor, Puritan, farmer, married to Elizabeth Proctor, and father of four, one born posthumously. John Proctor has returned from the dead to seek damages from Reverend Samuel Parris and Thomas Putnam. He charges them with aiding and abetting the actions of the court that sent him and several other innocent people to their deaths.

Defendants:

Samuel Parris, Minister to the town of Salem. His daughter Betty is one of the first girls to become sick and start the fear of witchcraft in the village.

Thomas Putnam, one of the richest men in Salem. His daughter Ruth is the other girl who is sick along with Betty. Both men dislike John Proctor.

FACTS IN THE CASE

Samuel Parris

■ In Act One, when Parris discovers that Betty is very sick, and that people are wondering about witchcraft, his first concern seems to be his reputation. He tells Abigail, “But if you trafficked with spirits in the forest, I must know it now, for surely my enemies will, and they will ruin me with it” (8). When Abigail denies having conjured spirits, Paris explains: “There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit” (10).

■ Before the accusations become public, Parris insists, “We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house” (13). Later, he supports the activities of the courts.

■ At one point in the play, John Proctor is asked why he does not come to Church more often. Proctor accuses Parris of being a bad preacher in front of other townspeople. Proctor says, “I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God any more” (27).

■ In the same scene, Parris says that he should be getting a free supply of firewood every month, even though his salary already includes an allowance to buy wood: “The salary is sixty-six pound, Mr. Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard College” (28).
Thomas Putnam

- The notes in the play tell us that Putnam is “the eldest son of the richest man in the village” (13).

- His youngest daughter Ruth is the only child of eight to live past infancy. She seems to be very sick at the beginning of the play.

- Putnam has fought constantly with Francis and Rebecca Nurse about land boundaries. Francis and Rebecca are close friends of John Proctor. The following argument was overheard by several witnesses:

  PUTNAM: A moment, Mr. Proctor. What lumber is that you’re draggin’, if I may ask you?
  PROCTOR: My lumber. From out my forest by the riverside.
  PUTNAM: Why, we are surely gone wild this year. What anarchy is this? That tract is in my bounds, it’s in my bounds, Mr. Proctor.
  PROCTOR: In your bounds! Indicating Rebecca: I bought that tract from Goody Nurse’s husband five months ago.
  PUTNAM: He had no right to sell it. I stand clear in my grandfather’s will that all the land between the river and—
  PROCTOR: Your grandfather had a habit if willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain (30).

- There is some suspicion in Act Three that Putnam made his daughter accuse a neighbor of witchcraft so that he could buy the neighbor’s land. Here is the charge Danforth reads in court:

  DANFORTH: “Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery up George Jacobs that is now in jail” (89). With Jacobs convicted, Putnam would be the only person with enough money to buy the land he left behind.
CASE #3

Plaintiffs:

_Tituba, Goody Osburn, and Sarah Good._ Tituba is a slave from Barbados belonging to Reverend Parris. She has some knowledge of “conjuring.” Sarah Good is an old, poor, homeless beggar, and Goody Osburn an old, unmarried alcoholic with possible memory problems. These three have come back from the dead to sue the Putnams for contributing to their arrest and execution.

Defendants:

_Anne and Thomas Putnam._ They are wealthiest couple in the village and parents to Ruth (one of the first two girls to become ill and start the worry over witches in the village).

FACTS IN THE CASE

- Ann Putnam has had eight children, and seven of them died right after birth. She said the following to Reverend Parris: “I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born. And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth” (14).

- Just after she says this, she admits to sending Ruth to Tituba so that Tituba could “speak to the dead” and discover who murdered all of her children (15). She is sure that her babies were murdered by someone or some force.

- Shortly after this, Tituba is named as a witch by Abigail Williams.

- Ann Putnam is overheard expressing jealousy and confusion over the fact that some women in the town have multiple children and grandchildren, while she only has one living daughter.

- After Abigail accuses Tituba, and Tituba is asked who was with her, Mr. Putnam suggests the names Sarah Good and Goody Osburn. His exact words are, “Sarah Good? Did you see Sarah Good with him [the Devil]? Or Osburn?” (43).

- Tituba names Good and Osburn, and Ann Putnam exclaims that she knew Goody Osburn was a witch because Osburn had helped deliver all of the babies who died. She yells, “I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her. My babies always shriveled in her hands!” (44).
Cover Image / Image 1

Trial of Miller Attracts Crowds; Lawyers in Clash on Red Charge

BY LUTHER A. HUSTON

WASHINGTON, May 14—The well-advertised drama of the Arthur Miller trial opened today without Marilyn Monroe.

Mr. Miller, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright, is on trial for contempt of Congress. In private life Miss Monroe, film actress, is Mrs. Miller.

The expectation that Miss Monroe would be there obviously drew many to the courtroom. Newspapers, including British journals, sent reporters, feature writers, and sketch artists.

Instead of seeing a glamorous actress, however, the spectators listened to arid discussions of legal issues. Quite a few stayed until the end.

The trial began before Judge Charles F. McLaughlin in Federal District Court. No jury was impaneled. The reason was that because of rulings of the judge in pre-trial motions, the sole issue involved was a question of law, for the court to decide, rather than of fact for submission to a jury.

The issue was the permissibility to a legislative purpose of the questions Mr. Miller had refused to answer on June 21, 1956. He then was a witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was inquiring into reports that some Americans had obtained passports by misrepresentation and had misused passports abroad.

Mr. Miller testified that he had attended several meetings of Communist party writers in New York in 1947. He was indicted for refusing to answer two questions. They were:

"Can you tell us who were there when you walked into the room?"

"Was Arnaud d'Usseau chairman of this meeting of Communist party writers which took place in 1947 at which you were a member?"

In his opening statement, Mr. Hitz told the court that the committee had not been accepted by the Communist party in Brooklyn. He said that Mr. Miller "has never denied past membership in any party." He added that Mr. Miller "did deny under oath that he was a member of the party, that he was a member of the party, and that he knew of no other case where Mr. Miller, was "rewriting the transcript of the hearings."
Image 2
A knock at the door — and the typical Russian family fears the worst. They are told where to work, where to live and what subjects they must master at school. Their daily routine insists on absolute obedience to their leaders and following Communist doctrine. A simple anti-communist remark by anyone of them could result in a visit by the police. An explanation will be demanded. Prison without fair trial or appeal faces all. This is life under Communism!

**FIGHT THE RED MENACE**

![Image 4](image)

**Image 4**

Image 5

Image 6

Image 7

Image 8

Image 10
Acknowledgments

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Book design by Susan Reese
“This unit on The Crucible stresses both interpretive strategies and writing skills. The movement from lesson to lesson is clearly presented and pedagogically sound, as it takes the students from the historical scene represented in the play to the political context of the play's production, and from the rhetorical strategies used by the playwright to those used by the students in writing argumentative essays about the play. Along the way, the lesson effectively presents definitions and examples of new interpretive and rhetorical concepts for the students to use in achieving each lesson's goals. All of the group exercises seem carefully designed to interest the students and prepare them to engage the challenge of the final assignment—to write a critical essay making an argumentative case in favor of the victims in the play.”

--Steven J. Mailloux, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, The University of California, Irvine

**CONTENT STANDARDS COVERED**

**English-Language Arts Standards:**

- **R 3.1** Students analyze characteristics of subgenres (e.g. satire, parody, allegory, pastoral) that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres.

- **R 3.5c** Students evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings in recognized works of American literature.

- **W 2.2** Students write responses to literature: demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages; analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text; support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and other works.