The Crucible Study Guide

Know each of the following characters’ roles in the play:

John Proctor – had an affair with Abigail Williams; tries to prove theocratic courts are false and save his wife; is hung after being accused by Mary Warren and refusing to confess

Elizabeth Proctor- wife to John; throws out Abigail; lies in court because she thinks it will help John; this seems to be her life’s single lie

Abigail Williams- had an affair with Proctor; leader of the girls in making accusations; accuses Elizabeth because she wants to be with J.P.

Reverend Parris- uncle to Abigail and farther to Betty; cares more about his reputation than anything

Betty Parris- pretends to be bewitched; youngest of Abigail’s ‘girls’; Reverend Hale called to “cure”

Reverend Hale- specialist in witchcraft; quits the court when innocent are killed; in the end, tries to get condemned to confess so that they can live

Judge Danforth- leader of the court; only concerned with his authority; seems to be naïve of Abigail’s persuasive means

Mary Warren- servant to the Proctors; timid; easily swayed; self righteous with recent court duties; gives poppet to Elizabeth; part of the group of girls making accusations, but has a temporary change of heart

Giles Corey- argues with Thomas Putnam about land; is pressed to death because he will not enter a plea

Martha Corey- wife of Giles; hung along with John Proctor

Rebecca Nurse- oldest and most respected lady of the village; hung with John Proctor after refusing to confess

Thomas Putnam- wealthiest in Salem; accuses neighbors in order to be able to buy their land

Tituba- slave to the Rev. Parris who takes girls into the forest; after they blame her, she turns the blame onto others to save her life
1. What did Parris see in the woods?
girls dancing around a fire; one was naked; he assumes Abigail, his niece, and Betty, his daughter were present

2. What do the people of Salem often argue about?
land ownership; religious purity of neighbors

3. Why did Tituba, Abigail and Betty begin calling out the names of all those women as witches at the end of Act I of The Crucible?
Mr. Hale puts the idea into their minds and they think it will spare them a whipping.

4. What can be inferred about the values of the Puritan society from the discussion John Proctor had with Reverend Parris, Mr. Putnam, Giles Corey and Rebecca Nurse in Act I?
Regular church attendance was considered basic to a Godly life even if you disagreed with the preacher.

5. From Act I it can be inferred that the Puritans associated the forest with:
disorder and evil

6. How does Reverend Parris’s belief in the supernatural affect his response to his daughter’s illness?
He seeks help from Reverend Hale who specializes in witchcraft

7. From his comments in Act I, it can be inferred that Parris’s concern for his daughter is primarily based on his:
anxiety about his reputation.

8. Why is Reverend John Hale summoned?
He is an expert on witchcraft and can help Salem

9. Who did Abigail say sent her spirit out to choke her in court?
Elizabeth Proctor

10. Describe John and Elizabeth’s relationship before and after the witch trials.
They seem like they are not saying everything they want to say to each other.

11. **Why does Proctor forget the commandment forbidding adultery?**

He has a guilty conscience about his own sin of adultery.

12. **What reason does John Proctor give Reverend Hale for his absence from church?**

He does not think Reverend Parris is godly.

13. **Proctor believes that Abigail accuses Elizabeth of witchcraft because:**

Abigail wants revenge on Proctor for rejecting her.

14. **Hale’s interview with Proctor reveals Hale to be:**

troubled by the accusations against good people, but unwilling to stop the trials.

15. **When Elizabeth says to Proctor, “The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you,” she means that Proctor:**

carries the knowledge of his own guilt in his heart.

16. **What is Proctor’s attitude toward Reverend Parris?**

He believes Parris is too obsessed with wealth and expensive things in the church.

17. **What is implied about human nature by the number of accusations that are brought forth in Act II?**

People want to find someone to blame when things go wrong for them.

18. **What evidence does Cheever use to arrest Elizabeth for witchcraft?**

a poppet with a needle stuck through its stomach

19. **In the beginning of Act Four, Tituba and Sarah Good are doing what?**

waiting for the Devil to take them to Barbados

20. **When Reverend Hale appears in Act III, how has he changed since the events of Act II?**

He is more skeptical of the fairness of the justice of the court.
21. In Act III, Judge Hathorne and Danforth seem to be most troubled about the possibility that:

Their own authority may be undermined.

22. What is Proctor’s main purpose in bringing Mary Warren to court?

To save his wife from hanging for something she didn’t do.

23. In Act III of The Crucible, what can the audience infer from Judge Hathorne’s questioning of Martha Corey?

The court follows the concept that one is innocent until proven guilty.

24. What does Proctor mean when he tells Danforth, “God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together”?

We who commit wrong knowingly are the guiltiest of all.

25. What does Abigail Williams do as soon as Danforth begins to question her?

She begins to cry and behave hysterically.

26. Elizabeth’s motivation for lying about John’s affair with Abigail is that:

She loves John and wants to protect him.

27. At the beginning of Act IV, how has the relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor changed?

They have grown to love and value one another more deeply.

28. Danforth treats Parris with contempt because:

He thinks that Parris was a fool to trust Abigail Williams.

29. In Act IV Parris hopes Rebecca Nurse and John Proctor will confess they are witches because he believes that:

Sparing their lives will prevent public rebellion and save his life.

30. What lesson has Elizabeth Proctor learned during her three months’ imprisonment?

That there are no meaningful standards of right and wrong.
31. What does John Hale urge Elizabeth Proctor to do?

save Proctor from execution

32. Parris wanted to postpone the hangings because:

he was afraid of riots and retribution

33. John tells Elizabeth that he has not confessed to being a witch because:

he does not want to confess a lie to contemptible people

34. Elizabeth blames herself for:

John’s affair with Abigail

35. What is ironic about calling the confessions of witchcraft “coming to God”?

The confessions are lies and therefore sins against God

36. When Proctor decides to confess to witchcraft, he is motivated by his belief that:

He is such a black sinner already one more lie won’t hurt him

37. Why does Hale want Proctor to confess to witchcraft?

to save Proctor from execution

38. What message is suggested by John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse’s willingness to die at the end of Act IV?

To die for one’s principles is worthier than to live a lie.