

Webquest for Salem Witchcraft trials  
Junior English Mrs. Sullivan

General Objective: to gather information regarding the Salem witchcraft trials – before reading Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*, we’ll look at some of the same documents he used to write his play about the events of 1691-2.

Specific objectives:

- to learn about this shameful event in our nation’s early history
- to understand the role that a theocracy can play
- To understand the role of hysteria, rumor, lies and gossip in ruining people’s lives then and now!
- To gather background on the play before we read it

Instructions. Use the websites here to answer the questions and reflect on the incidents that led to the hysteria surrounding the trials of those accused by the girls who started the mess in 1691.

**Write your name on every page!**

Turn to the site called

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SALEM.HTM>

(you can paste this address right in)

Read “An Account of Events in Salem” (begins under picture of “Examination of a Witch”) and answer the following questions

1. How many people were hanged as a result of the trials? How else did they kill people accused of crimes in Salem?
2. What forces were in conflict the time of the start of the trials? How did all the trouble begin?
3. What are some ideas about the reasons given for the girls’ afflictions (sicknesses)?
4. How did Cotton Mather’s book and Dr. Grigg’s opinion help to create the problem – and then make it worse?
5. Why do you think that people were willing to believe the girls who accused so many people of being involved in witchcraft?
6. Follow any *three* of the links on the “Account of Events.” List *three* important facts for *each* of the links you follow (so you will have nine facts in all). The information you gather and record may be helpful to you later on!

On the left column, click on the link to “Biographies.”

Read the biography of Parris and answer the following questions.

1. What problems was Parris having with the people he was serving in his job as minister?
2. How did Parris react to his daughter and his niece’s signs of “illness”?
3. According to the article about him, how did he get his slave Tituba to confess to witchcraft?
4. What was his eventual attitude toward the trial? Do you think he was sorry enough? Why or why not?

Now, read the biography of John Proctor and answer the questions that follow.

1. How did John Proctor bring down some of his own trouble on himself?
2. What was his attitude toward all the craziness of the girls?
3. What did Proctor do when he was in jail to help end the hysteria?
4. Did his letter writing help HIM? Why or why not?

Lastly, go to the left side of the homepage labeled “You’re Accused” – this is just for fun. Follow the choices it gives you. Then, after you have explored every option, write down which course of action you would have taken -- and explain why!

After you have completed this webquest, make sure that your name is on each page. Proofread it carefully and make any corrections, then print it and give me the hard copy!