
***The Crucible*—Background Group Jigsaw**

The historical context usually plays a significant role in the analysis and interpretation of a text. For Arthur Miller’s play, *The Crucible*, especially, it is crucial to understand the historical background in order to fully appreciate the significance of the story.

Directions: Your assignment is to become an expert in on the following articles by reading one of the articles below and answer the assigned questions for your article. You are then responsible for relaying the information about your article to your other group members. This assignment is designed to help you to gain a broader understanding of the background and implications of Miller’s play. You will have a quiz over this information so make sure you are thorough in your research.

Group Member #1: _____

1. Read the article entitled “The Salem Witch Trials” by the Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. History.
2. Answer the following questions using this source:
 - a. **The Cultural Backdrop of the Trials:**
 - i. What did the colonists have a tendency to “attribute anything they could not readily explain to” (Salem Witch Trials 1)?

 - ii. According to this section of the article, why did these religious followers believe in magic?

 - iii. Who fit the profile for a typical European witch?

 - iv. List at least 3 things that the colonists thought witches had the ability to do:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - b. **Accusations Begin:**
 - i. Who did Betty and the other girls accuse of witchcraft? _____
 - ii. By the end of the witch trials, how many people were imprisoned? _____
 - c. **The Trials:**
 - i. Define “spectral evidence” as it is used in this article. (Make sure you give a citation if using a direct quote)

- ii. What is ironic about Increase Mather's role in the Salem Witch Trials?

- iii. According to this section, what were the results of the trials?

- iv. Why did some accused persons refuse to confess?

- d. **Public Backlash:** What happened in 1697?

- e. **The Causes of the Hysteria:**
 - i. According to historians, list some of the causes of the trials?

- f. **Magnalia Christi Americana:**
 - i. Who was the author of his book and when was it published?

 - ii. Mather claimed that his book was a history of "Christ's works in the New World" ("Salem Witch Trials" 3). What do historians categorize Mather's text as?

Group Member #2: _____

1. Read the article "Tituba of Salem Village"
2. Answer the following questions using this source:
 - a. Who is Tituba?

 - b. Who is Samuel Parris?

 - c. Of what crime was Tituba accused?

 - d. After Tituba confessed, how many other women did Tituba accuse?

- e. “Tituba then _____ her confession, and it is believed that Parris eventually sold her to a new owner. This event marks Tituba’s disappearance from the _____
_____” (“Tituba” 1).

Tituba’s Background

- a. Define “contradictory”
- b. There are many stories surrounding Tituba’s background. What are three of them?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- c. What is Tituba’s husband’s name? How did he get this last name?
- d. How old was Tituba when she first arrived in Massachusetts?
- e. In what year did Parris and his family arrive in Salem? From which city did they come?
- f. According to some sources, what is the name of Tituba’s daughter?

Beginnings of the Salem Witch Hunt

- a. What events led to the suspicion of witchcraft in Salem?
- b. What was the purpose of the “witch cake”? Did it work? Explain.

Tituba’s Role during the Salem Witch Trials

- a. When did Tituba testify in the Salem witch trials?
- b. How did Parris force a confession out of Tituba?
- c. “While many historians later claimed that Tituba’s descriptions of these rituals were consistent with _____ practices . . . others say that all the details Tituba provided could be

found in English _____ and _____” (“Tituba” 2).

- d. By the autumn of 1692, how many men and women were accused of witchcraft?
- e. How many people were executed during this time?

Aftermath of the Trials: Tituba’s Release and Legacy

- a. Who paid for Tituba’s incarceration, which ultimately led to her release?
- b. What happened to Good?
- c. What happened to Osborne?

Timeline -- Tituba (Yes, this involves doing math)

- a. About how old was Tituba when she died?
- b. About how old was Tituba when she married John?
- c. In what year was Tituba put on trial for witchcraft?

Group Member #3: _____

- 1. Read the article titled “Why I Wrote the Crucible.”
- 2. Answer the following questions using this source:
 - a. What odd jobs did Miller have before he became a writer?
 - b. The play, _____, is one of America’s best known dramatic works.
 - c. Why was Miller convicted for contempt of Congress in 1957?
 - d. Define **tragedy** and **allegory** using www.m-w.com.
 - i. Tragedy:
 - ii. Allegory:

- e. In 2-3 sentences, briefly summarize the play using the article's "Introduction."
- f. _____, the group's ring-leader, accuses _____ of being a witch.
- g. List the 3 parallels Miller saw between Salem in 1952 and 1692 when he began developing his script.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- h. What was the public's reaction to the play when it debuted on Broadway in 1953?
- i. Miller wanted to create a drama that explored such emotions as _____, _____, _____, and _____.
- j. The playwriting of *The Crucible* was also an artistic processing of the _____ as well as _____.
- k. List 1 of Miller's connections to *The Crucible* talked about in his "essay of reflection."
- 1.
- l. What inspired the style of the dialogue in *The Crucible*? _____

- m. "He [Miller] is ever astute in bringing to the audience's awareness that at any time, _____
_____, _____" ("Why I Wrote"
36).

- n. Read the rest of the article under the heading “Primary Source: ‘Why I Wrote The Crucible’”. Using what you have read, why does Arthur Miller write *The Crucible*? Write 3-4 sentences answering the preceding question. In addition, use at least *I* quote from the article to support your argument.

Group Member #4: _____

1. Read the article titled “McCarthyism.”
2. Answer the following questions using this source:
 - a. According to the first paragraph of the article, what is McCarthyism?
 - b. **Seeds of Anticommunism:**
 - i. What caused the socialist movement? (List at least 2 causes.)
 - ii. When was the Community of Un-American Activities (HUAC) created and what was its purpose?
 - iii. What is the Smith Act?

c. Growing Paranoia:

- i. What executive order did President Harry Truman give in 1947 and what was the result?

- ii. Who is Joseph McCarthy?

- iii. What did McCarthy claim he had?

d. The Role of the FBI:

- i. What role did J. Edgar Hoover play in McCarthyism?

- ii. Once one was identified as a communist or sympathizer, what happened to those people?

- iii. What happened to those who used their “Fifth Amendment right to avoid self-incrimination” (“McCarthyism”)?

e. Discredit and Censure:

- i. What was one of McCarthyism’s “favorite target[s]” (“McCarthyism)?

- ii. Why was the Republican takeover of Congress one of the causes for the end of McCarthyism?

- iii. What happened to McCarthy?

f. The Hollywood Ten:

- i. Who are the Hollywood Ten?

- ii. From what you read in this section, why do you think that hollywood was one of the biggest targets for McCarthy?