

The Crucible Extended Response Exam

Directions: Read over the following questions. Choose **three** questions you believe you could develop into thoughtful, well-developed responses. Each question should be a MINIMUM of 8-10 sentences. You may come to class with the designated form filled with page numbers and ideas. I want you to use the time in class to write your paragraphs. Please do not write out your answers at home; just think and plan your concrete details at home. Use your books!!!!

1 .A tragic hero - A tragic hero is a literary character who makes a judgment error that inevitably leads to his/her own destruction.

Many characters in *The Crucible* have personal flaws that lead/contribute to tragedy. Argue whether John Proctor OR Reverend Hale is the **tragic hero** of the play. Discuss the character's strength(s)/noble quality (or qualities) and tragic flaw(s), how his flaw(s) lead to his downfall and/or death. Furthermore, consider how forces beyond his control combine with his own inner flaw to cause his downfall/death.

2. John Wooden, a legendary basketball coach, wrote, "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." Connect this quote to John Proctor's actions at the end of the play.

3. As the action heats up, some of the characters in The Crucible stay the same, but a few of them change. Prepare a detailed character study on **one** of the play's **dynamic characters** who undergo some sort of change from the beginning of the play to the end. You must incorporate textual evidence.

4. Analyze the title of the play. Justify Miller's use for the words as the title of his play.

Crucible - as defined in dictionary.com, one of the meanings of "crucible" is "a severe test, as of patience or belief; a trial. A "crucible" is also "a vessel made of a refractory substance such as graphite or porcelain, used for melting and calcining materials at high temperatures."

5. At the end of the play, Reverend Hale insists that John Proctor's design to hang instead of admitting that he was consorting with the devil is an act of excessive pride or stubbornness. As the old saying goes, sometimes people do "bite off their nose to spite their face." Do you think that Proctor's last act was an act of excessive pride or honor? Were his actions foolish or noble? Please explain your choice.

6. Why does Danforth rejoice when Proctor confesses? What does this imply about the purpose of the trials? What does it imply about Danforth? Why must Danforth hang Proctor?

7. Arthur Miller has been quoted as saying “The tragedy of *The Crucible* is the everlasting conflict between people so fanatically wedded to this orthodoxy that they could not cope with the evidence of their senses.” What does he mean by “this orthodoxy”? What is “the evidence of their senses”? Do you agree that this is the basic conflict?

8. Think about the language Miller uses to describe Abigail Williams’ indiscretions. When Proctor finally gathers his courage to “out” Abigail, he calls her a “whore.” What are your thoughts about Miller’s word choice? Could this play be written the same way in this day and age without criticism? Are there other parts of the play where women are held at a different standard than men? Are there parallels you can draw to modern portrayals of women in film/shows/culture? (*feminist criticism*)

9. What does Elizabeth mean by: “He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him”? Explain the meaning and why Elizabeth will not stop him.

10. A modern day witch hunt is described as a situation where a mob attacks someone or something while operating on dubious (doubtful) premises. It is essentially a situation where paranoia and suspicion are taken to another level through a mob mentality.

On your own, watch Jon Ronson’s TED talk titled, “How One Tweet Can Ruin Your Life.” Describe Ronson’s point of view and make connections to modern day shaming. How are the examples he uses like a witch hunt? Feel free to bring in real-life examples from your own life, current events, fictional stories, etc.