***The Crucible:* Act 1**

Below are the main points for this piece. As we read and discuss, take notes of the material.

**Characterization:** the process by which a writer reveals the personality of a character; **direct characterization** allows the writer to explicitly state character traits**; indirect characterization** is asking the reader to make inferences about a character based on the character’s actions, words, dress, interactions with others, and private thoughts.

**Conflict**: the struggle between opposing forces or characters in a story; **external conflict** can exist between two people or a person and a force or nature, machine, or society; **internal conflict** involves opposing forces within a person’s mind

**Setting:** the time and location in which a story takes place [used to create conflict, atmosphere or mood, and characterization

**Foreshadowing:** the use of hints and clues to suggest what will happen later in the plot

**Allegory**: a story in which characters, events, and settings stand for other people or events or abstract ideas

\*\* See notes on **tragedy** and **stage direction** for other literary term definitions

Reminder: we have open-notebook quizzes AND a notebook check!!!

**Before Reading:**

* Historical Context: This play was written in the 50’s as a response to McCarthyism – but it is about the Salem Witch Trials. How are they similar?
* Examine the title: According to Webster’s, a crucible is defined as: a place or occasion of severe test or trial; a place or situation in which different elements. Based on what you know about the play, why do you think Arthur Miller choose this title?

**During Reading:**

1. Why would Miller include the note on historical accuracy? *Miller wants us to understand he is making a direct parallel between McCarthyism and the Witch Hunt of Salem in 1692. He wants us to see how ridiculous the witch hunt is.*

2. What was Samuel Parris’s attitude toward children? *Parris had no use for children – they shouldn’t look adults in the eye or speak unless spoken to.*

3. Who are Reverend Parris, Betty, and Abigail? What is their relationship? *Parris is the leader of the church in Salem, his daughter is Betty (10) and his niece is Abigail (17)*

4. Who is Tituba? What is her relationship to the family? *Tituba is the slave/servant to Parris. She came from Barbados so she has a very different view of religion than what Parris follows. Parris treats her poorly.*

5. What is wrong with Betty? *When the Act opens, Betty is unconscious in her room*

5. Why does Parris suggest calling in Reverend Hale? *Rev. Hale, by title alone, would be a man who is respected. Hale has experience with “Demonic arts” and has “found a witch” in a neighboring town. He is called in as an expert.*

6. Why do you think Rev. Parris has many enemies? *Parris is an unlikable person. He is arrogant in his views – he flaunts his power – he treats his servant poorly and threatens her – he doesn’t like to be questioned; he feels his word is law.*

7. Who are Ann and Thomas Putnam? What do they suggest is Betty's problem? What is their motivation for suggesting this? *The Putnams are others who live in the community – they believe witch craft played a role in why Betty is unconscious and Ruth is not talking. Mr. Putnam is unhappy with Parris –he wanted another someone else for the job – he is vindictive in nature and causes problems with people in the town*. *They have buried 7 babies and need to find something to blame it on.*

8. Who is Ruth? What is wrong with her? How do the Putnams tie her problem to Betty's? *Ruth is their daughter – Although she isn’t unconscious like Betty, she is up and moving but in a fog like way. They believe her soul has been taken.*

9. What does the conversation (after the adults leave) between Abigail, Mercy Lewis, Mary Warren, and Betty reveal about their recent activities? *It clearly shows Abigail is the one in charge – she threatens all of the other girls. The girls were in the woods with Tituba and calling on the spirits to help the girls find her true love. We find out Abigail loves John Proctor and believes if she can eliminate his wife John will marry her.*

10. Give three characteristics of John Proctor. *Respected, not easily led, saw himself as a fraud, sinner, corrupt, confident*

11. What event transpired between Abigail and John Proctor prior to the beginning of Act One? *Abigail worked in the Proctor house at one time – during her time there she and John engaged in an affair – one John deeply regrets now. He claims he would cut off his hand before he reaches for her again.*

12. What does Abigail say about Elizabeth Proctor? How might this affect the outcome of the play? *She claims Elizabeth is cold and sickly and John folds instead of standing up to her. Abigail also says Elizabeth is blackening her name in the community.* *Abigail will call Elizabeth out as being a witch so John will be forced to go back to Abigail.*

13. What happens to Betty when she hears the Lord's name? *Once she hears the Psalm, Betty sits up and starts whining and yelling. This is the second time she become somewhat alert – the first was to confront the girls about their actions in the woods, specifically Abigail drinking blood and now with “Jesus”*

14. Why didn't the Putnams like the Nurses? *To begin, the Nurses were highly respected people – often called upon to help settle disputes. There was also a land war between the Nurses and Putnams – a battle that ended in a physical battle in the forest for 4 days. The Nurses also did not support the Putnams choice for Reverend of Salem. Rebecca Nurse also helped deliver the Putnam babies – who died. The Putnams called out Rebecca Nurse as being a witch – Ruth claimed Rebecca’s spirit was attacking her.*

15. What does Rebecca say about Betty's condition? *Rebecca believes the girls are in a “silly season” and that they will come around when they are ready – there is nothing physically wrong*

16. Give two examples that Proctor, Putnam, and Corey give for why Parris is an unsuccessful minister. *Parris preaches “hellfire and damnation” and not about God so people stay away from the church. They believe he is only there for the money, a deed to the house - he’s Harvard educated and feels people should respect that and pay him more.*

17. What is the Putnam's grievance over land? What significance might this have? *Putnam has a grievance with several people over land – is started with the Nurse family - then another with Giles Corey and we learn of one with John Proctor. This is significant because the witch hunts gave people the opportunity to go after enemies.*

18. Describe Giles Corey in one sentence. *Giles is an old man who is set in his ways. He likes the idea of being able to sue people for obscure reasons, and no one seems to get upset with him because of this. He does not like Parris or the Putnams.*

19. How does Miller describe Reverend Hale? *He is eager and intelligent – He found a witch in his parish who when treated kindly showed no signs of being possessed. He does believe in the Devil and realizes how careful people must be when investigating witchcraft*

20. How and by whom are the other villagers accused of witchcraft? What is the motivation of the girls' accusations? How many people are accused on the last page of Act one? *The accusations officially start with Tituba – but she only gives names she has heard from the Putnams – Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn – then Abigail jumps in and adds Bridget Bishop to the list – Miraculously Betty is healed and she and Abigail call out several more names. Tituba calls out names to save herself – Betty and Abigail realize they can also protect themselves once they see Tituba is believed. All told 10 people were called out in Act I.*