



Playwright



Arthur Miller

The Crucible, Act IV

Concept Vocabulary

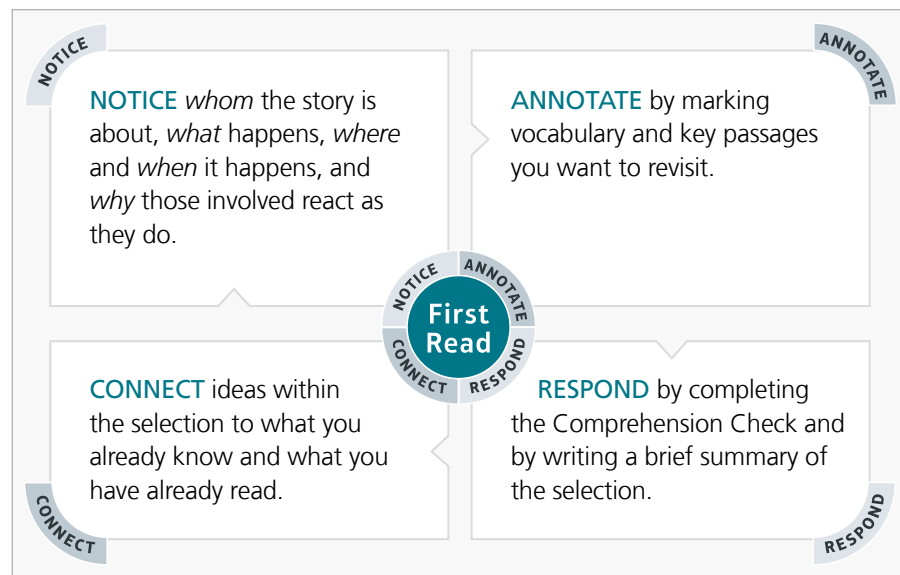
You will encounter the following words as you read Act IV of *The Crucible*. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (3).

| WORD | YOUR RANKING |
|--------------|--------------|
| conciliatory | |
| adamant | |
| disputation | |

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read DRAMA

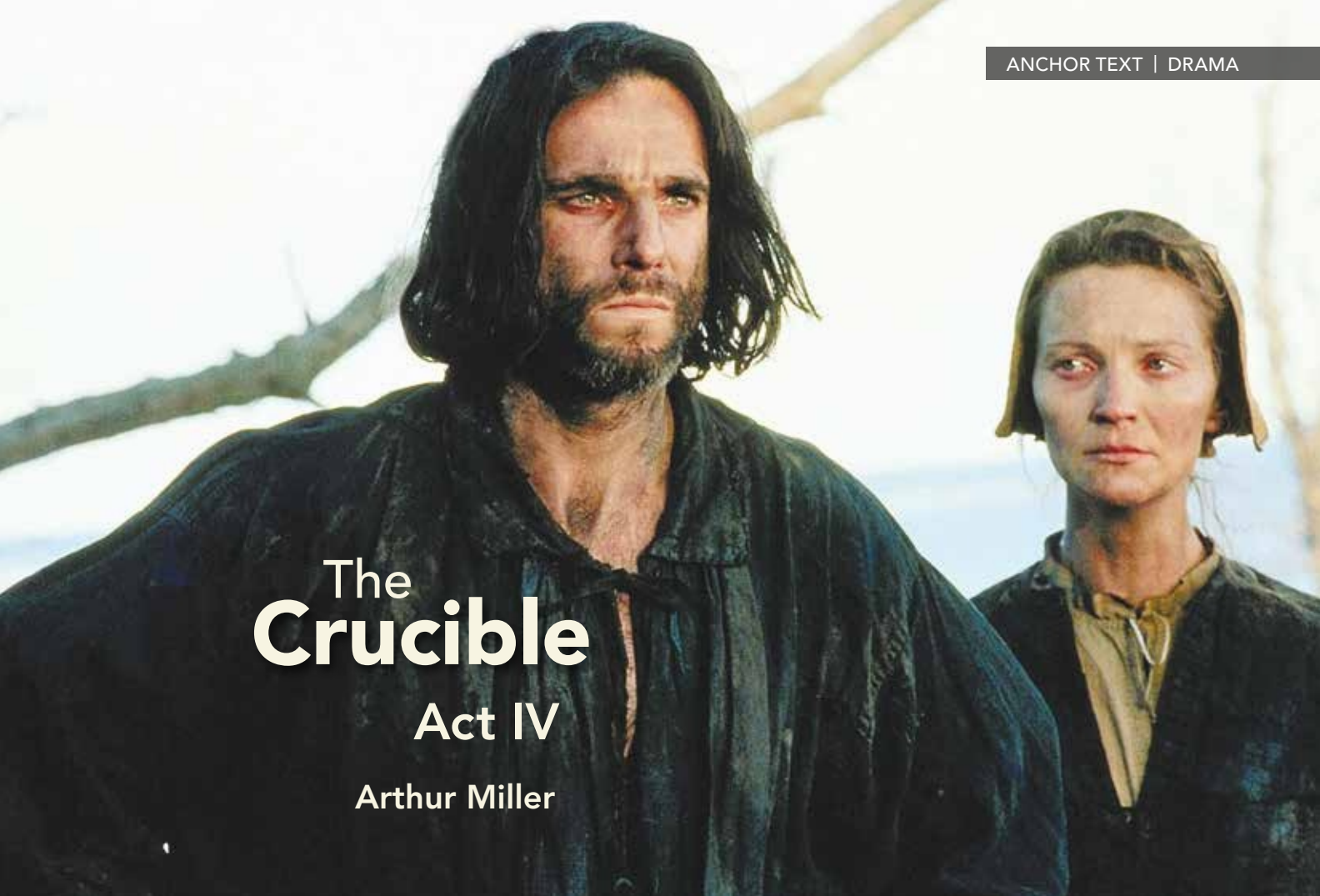
Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.



STANDARDS

Reading Literature

11.RL.RRTC.10 Read and comprehend a variety of literature throughout the grades 11-12 text complexity band proficiently, with a gradual release of scaffolding at the higher end as needed.



The Crucible

Act IV

Arthur Miller

REVIEW AND ANTICIPATE

"Is every defense an attack upon the court?" Hale asks in Act III. Danforth observes, "A person is either with this court or he must be counted against it." Such remarks stress the powerlessness of people like John Proctor and Giles Corey against the mounting injustices in Salem. In pursuing justice, their efforts backfire, and their own names join the list of those accused. What do you think the final outcome will be? Who will survive, and who will perish? Read the final act to see if your predictions are correct.

- 1 *A cell in Salem jail, that fall.*
- 2 *At the back is a high barred window; near it, a great, heavy door. Along the walls are two benches.*
- 3 *The place is in darkness but for the moonlight seeping through the bars. It appears empty. Presently footsteps are heard coming down a corridor beyond the wall, keys rattle, and the door swings open.*
MARSHAL HERRICK enters with a lantern.
- 4 *He is nearly drunk, and heavy-footed. He goes to a bench and nudges a bundle of rags lying on it.*
- 5 **Herrick:** Sarah, wake up! Sarah Good! He then crosses to the other benches.

NOTES

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraphs 18–24, mark each reference to the Devil.

QUESTION: Why does Miller have Sarah Good and Tituba refer to the Devil by various names?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of these details?

- 6 **Sarah Good**, *rising in her rags*: Oh, Majesty! Comin', comin'! Tituba, he's here, His Majesty's come!
- 7 **Herrick**: Go to the north cell; this place is wanted now. *He hangs his lantern on the wall. TITUBA sits up.*
- 8 **Tituba**: That don't look to me like His Majesty; look to me like the marshal.
- 9 **Herrick**, *taking out a flask*: Get along with you now, clear this place. *He drinks, and SARAH GOOD comes and peers up into his face.*
- 10 **Sarah Good**: Oh, is it you, Marshal! I thought sure you be the devil comin' for us. Could I have a sip of cider for me goin' away?
- 11 **Herrick**, *handing her the flask*: And where are you off to, Sarah?
- 12 **Tituba**, *as SARAH drinks*: We goin' to Barbados, soon the Devil gits here with the feathers and the wings.
- 13 **Herrick**: Oh? A happy voyage to you.
- 14 **Sarah Good**: A pair of bluebirds wingin' southerly, the two of us! Oh, it be a grand transformation, Marshal. *She raises the flask to drink again.*
- 15 **Herrick**, *taking the flask from her lips*: You'd best give me that or you'll never rise off the ground. Come along now.
- 16 **Tituba**: I'll speak to him for you, if you desires to come along, Marshal.
- 17 **Herrick**: I'd not refuse it, Tituba; it's the proper morning to fly into Hell.
- 18 **Tituba**: Oh, it be no Hell in Barbados. Devil, him be pleasure man in Barbados, him be singin' and dancin' in Barbados. It's you folks—you riles him up 'round here; it be too cold 'round here for that Old Boy. He freeze his soul in Massachusetts, but in Barbados he just as sweet and—*A bellowing cow is heard, and TITUBA leaps up and calls to the window*: Aye, sir! That's him, Sarah!
- 19 **Sarah Good**: I'm here, Majesty! *They hurriedly pick up their rags as HOPKINS, a guard, enters.*
- 20 **Hopkins**: The Deputy Governor's arrived.
- 21 **Herrick**, *grabbing TITUBA*: Come along, come along.
- 22 **Tituba**, *resisting him*: No, he comin' for me. I goin' home!
- 23 **Herrick**, *pulling her to the door*: That's not Satan, just a poor old cow with a hatful of milk. Come along now, out with you!
- 24 **Tituba**, *calling to the window*: Take me home, Devil! Take me home!
- 25 **Sarah Good**, *following the shouting TITUBA out*: Tell him I'm goin', Tituba! Now you tell him Sarah Good is goin' too!

- 26 *In the corridor outside* TITUBA calls on—"Take me home. Devil; Devil take me home!" and HOPKINS's voice orders her to move on. HERRICK returns and begins to push old rags and straw into a corner. Hearing footsteps, he turns, and enter DANFORTH and JUDGE HATHORNE. They are in greatcoats and wear hats against the bitter cold. They are followed in by CHEEVER, who carries a dispatch case and a flat wooden box containing his writing materials.
- 27 **Herrick:** Good morning, Excellency.
- 28 **Danforth:** Where is Mr. Parris?
- 29 **Herrick:** I'll fetch him. *He starts for the door.*
- 30 **Danforth:** Marshal. HERRICK stops. When did Reverend Hale arrive?
- 31 **Herrick:** It were toward midnight, I think.
- 32 **Danforth, suspiciously:** What is he about here?
- 33 **Herrick:** He goes among them that will hang, sir. And he prays with them. He sits with Goody Nurse now. And Mr. Parris with him.
- 34 **Danforth:** Indeed. That man have no authority to enter here, Marshal. Why have you let him in?
- 35 **Herrick:** Why, Mr. Parris command me, sir. I cannot deny him.
- 36 **Danforth:** Are you drunk, Marshal?
- 37 **Herrick:** No, sir; it is a bitter night, and I have no fire here.
- 38 **Danforth, containing his anger:** Fetch Mr. Parris.
- 39 **Herrick:** Aye, sir.
- 40 **Danforth:** There is a prodigious stench in this place.
- 41 **Herrick:** I have only now cleared the people out for you.
- 42 **Danforth:** Beware hard drink, Marshal.
- 43 **Herrick:** Aye, sir. *He waits an instant for further orders. But DANFORTH, in dissatisfaction, turns his back on him, and HERRICK goes out. There is a pause. DANFORTH stands in thought.*
- 44 **Hathorne:** Let you question Hale, Excellency; I should not be surprised he have been preaching in Andover¹ lately.
- 45 **Danforth:** We'll come to that; speak nothing of Andover. Parris prays with him. That's strange. *He blows on his hands, moves toward the window, and looks out.*
- 46 **Hathorne:** Excellency, I wonder if it be wise to let Mr. Parris so continuously with the prisoners. DANFORTH turns to him, interested. I think, sometimes, the man has a mad look these days.
- 47 **Danforth:** Mad?

1. Andover During the height of the terror in Salem Village, a similar hysteria broke out in the nearby town of Andover. There, many respected people were accused of practicing witchcraft and confessed to escape death. However, the people of Andover soon began questioning the reality of the situation, and the hysteria quickly subsided.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 52, mark the word that Cheever repeats as he describes a conflict that is going on in the community.

QUESTION: Why does Miller have Cheever repeat this word?

CONCLUDE: How does this repeated word add to the effect of this dialogue?

- 48 **Hathorne:** I met him yesterday coming out of his house, and I bid him good morning—and he wept and went his way. I think it is not well the village sees him so unsteady.
- 49 **Danforth:** Perhaps he have some sorrow.
- 50 **Cheever**, *stamping his feet against the cold*: I think it be the cows, sir.
- 51 **Danforth:** Cows?
- 52 **Cheever:** There be so many cows wanderin' the highroads, now their masters are in the jails, and much disagreement who they will belong to now. I know Mr. Parris be arguin' with farmers all yesterday—there is great contention, sir, about the cows. Contention make him weep, sir; it were always a man that weep for contention. *He turns, as do HATHORNE and DANFORTH hearing someone coming up the corridor. DANFORTH raises his head as PARRIS enters. He is gaunt, frightened, and sweating in his greatcoat.*
- 53 **Parris**, *to DANFORTH, instantly*: Oh, good morning, sir, thank you for coming. I beg your pardon wakin' you so early. Good morning, Judge Hathorne.
- 54 **Danforth:** Reverend Hale have no right to enter this—
- 55 **Parris:** Excellency, a moment. *He hurries back and shuts the door.*
- 56 **Hathorne:** Do you leave him alone with the prisoners?
- 57 **Danforth:** What's his business here?
- 58 **Parris**, *prayerfully holding up his hands*: Excellency, hear me. It is a providence. Reverend Hale has returned to bring Rebecca Nurse to God.
- 59 **Danforth**, *surprised*: He bids her confess?
- 60 **Parris**, *sitting*: Hear me. Rebecca have not given me a word this three month since she came. Now she sits with him, and her sister and Martha Corey and two or three others, and he pleads with them, confess their crimes and save their lives.
- 61 **Danforth:** Why—this is indeed a providence. And they soften, they soften?
- 62 **Parris:** Not yet, not yet. But I thought to summon you, sir, that we might think on whether it be not wise, to—*He dares not say it.* I had thought to put a question, sir, and I hope you will not—
- 63 **Danforth:** Mr. Parris, be plain, what troubles you?
- 64 **Parris:** There is news, sir, that the court—the court must reckon with. My niece, sir, my niece—I believe she has vanished.
- 65 **Danforth:** Vanished!
- 66 **Parris:** I had thought to advise you of it earlier in the week, but—
- 67 **Danforth:** Why? How long is she gone?

- 68 **Parris:** This be the third night. You see, sir, she told me she would stay a night with Mercy Lewis. And next day, when she does not return, I send to Mr. Lewis to inquire. Mercy told him she would sleep in *my* house for a night.
- 69 **Danforth:** They are both gone?!
- 70 **Parris, in fear of him:** They are, sir.
- 71 **Danforth, alarmed:** I will send a party for them. Where may they be?
- 72 **Parris:** Excellency. I think they be aboard a ship. DANFORTH *stands agape*. My daughter tells me how she heard them speaking of ships last week, and tonight I discover my—my strongbox is broke into. *He presses his fingers against his eyes to keep back tears.*
- 73 **Hathorne, astonished:** She have robbed you?
- 74 **Parris:** Thirty-one pound is gone. I am penniless. *He covers his face and sobs.*
- 75 **Danforth:** Mr. Parris, you are a brainless man! *He walks in thought, deeply worried.*
- 76 **Parris:** Excellency, it profit nothing you should blame me. I cannot think they would run off except they fear to keep in Salem any more. *He is pleading.* Mark it, sir. Abigail had close knowledge of the town, and since the news of Andover has broken here—
- 77 **Danforth:** Andover is remedied. The court returns there on Friday, and will resume examinations.
- 78 **Parris:** I am sure of it, sir. But the rumor here speaks rebellion in Andover, and it—
- 79 **Danforth:** There is no rebellion in Andover!
- 80 **Parris:** I tell you what is said here, sir. Andover have thrown out the court, they say, and will have no part of witchcraft. There be a faction here, feeding on that news, and I tell you true, sir, I fear there will be riot here.
- 81 **Hathorne:** Riot! Why at every execution I have seen naught but high satisfaction in the town.
- 82 **Parris:** Judge Hathorne—it were another sort that hanged till now. Rebecca Nurse is no Bridget that lived three year with Bishop before she married him. John Proctor is not Isaac Ward that drank his family to ruin. *To* DANFORTH: I would to God it were not so, Excellency, but these people have great weight yet in the town. Let Rebecca stand upon the gibbet² and send up some righteous prayer, and I fear she'll wake a vengeance on you.

2. **gibbet** (JIHB iht) *n.* gallows.

- 83 **Hathorne:** Excellency, she is condemned a witch. The court have—
- 84 **Danforth**, *in deep concern, raising a hand to HATHORNE:* Pray you. To **Parris:** How do you propose, then?
- 85 **Parris:** Excellency, I would postpone these hangin's for a time.
- 86 **Danforth:** There will be no postponement.
- 87 **Parris:** Now Mr. Hale's returned, there is hope, I think—for if he bring even one of these to God, that confession surely damns the others in the public eye, and none may doubt more that they are all linked to Hell. This way, unconfessed and claiming innocence, doubts are multiplied, many honest people will weep for them, and our good purpose is lost in their tears.
- 88 **Danforth**, *after thinking a moment, then going to CHEEVER:* Give me the list.
- 89 **CHEEVER** *opens the dispatch case, searches.*
- 90 **Parris:** It cannot be forgot, sir, that when I summoned the congregation for John Proctor's excommunication there were hardly thirty people come to hear it. That speak a discontent, I think, and—
- 91 **Danforth**, *studying the list:* There will be no postponement.
- Parris:** Excellency—
- 92 **Danforth:** Now, sir—which of these in your opinion may be brought to God? I will myself strive with him till dawn. *He hands the list to PARRIS, who merely glances at it.*
- 93 **Parris:** There is not sufficient time till dawn.
- 94 **Danforth:** I shall do my utmost. Which of them do you have hope for?
- 95 **Parris**, *not even glancing at the list now, and in a quavering voice, quietly:* Excellency—a dagger—*He chokes up.*
- 96 **Danforth:** What do you say?
- 97 **Parris:** Tonight, when I open my door to leave my house—a dagger clattered to the ground. *Silence. DANFORTH absorbs this. Now PARRIS cries out:* You cannot hang this sort. There is danger for me. I dare not step outside at night!
- 98 **REVEREND HALE** *enters. They look at him for an instant in silence. He is steeped in sorrow, exhausted, and more direct than he ever was.*
- 99 **Danforth:** Accept my congratulations. Reverend Hale; we are gladdened to see you returned to your good work.
- 100 **Hale**, *coming to DANFORTH now:* You must pardon them. They will not budge.
- HERRICK** *enters, waits.*
- 101 **Danforth**, *conciliatory:* You misunderstand, sir; I cannot pardon these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just.

conciliatory (kuhn SIHL ee uh tawr ee) *adj.* in a manner intended to make peace and bring about agreement

- 102 **Parris**, *with failing heart*: Rebecca will not confess?
- 103 **Hale**: The sun will rise in a few minutes. Excellency, I must have more time.
- 104 **Danforth**: Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve are already executed: the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die this morning. Postponement now speaks a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this—I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by Heaven to do. Have you spoken with them all, Mr. Hale?
- 105 **Hale**: All but Proctor. He is in the dungeon.
- 106 **Danforth**, *to HERRICK*: What's Proctor's way now?
- 107 **Herrick**: He sits like some great bird: you'd not know he lived except he will take food from time to time.
- 108 **Danforth**, *after thinking a moment*: His wife—his wife must be well on with child now.
- 109 **Herrick**: She is, sir.
- 110 **Danforth**: What think you, Mr. Parris? You have closer knowledge of this man; might her presence soften him?
- 111 **Parris**: It is possible, sir. He have not laid eyes on her these three months. I should summon her.
- 112 **Danforth**, *to HERRICK*: Is he yet **adamant**? Has he struck at you again?
- 113 **Herrick**: He cannot, sir, he is chained to the wall now.
- 114 **Danforth**, *after thinking on it*: Fetch Goody Proctor to me. Then let you bring him up.
- 115 **Herrick**: Aye, sir. *HERRICK goes. There is silence.*
- 116 **Hale**: Excellency, if you postpone a week and publish to the town that you are striving for their confessions, that speak mercy on your part, not faltering.
- 117 **Danforth**: Mr. Hale, as God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising,³ so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment.
- 118 **Hale**, *harder now*: If you think God wills you to raise rebellion, Mr. Danforth, you are mistaken!
- 119 **Danforth**, *instantly*: You have heard rebellion spoken in the town?

NOTES

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 104, mark words and phrases related to confusion or weakness. Mark other details related to strength or decisiveness.

QUESTION: What do these details show about Danforth's character?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of this speech on Parris and Hale? On readers?

adamant (AD uh muhnt) *adj.*
unrelenting; refusing to be persuaded

3. Joshua . . . rising In the Bible, Joshua, leader of the Israelites after the death of Moses, asks God to make the sun and the moon stand still during a battle, and his request is granted.

- 120 **Hale:** Excellency, there are orphans wandering from house to house; abandoned cattle bellow on the highroads, the stink of rotting crops hangs everywhere, and no man knows when the harlot's cry will end his life—and you wonder yet if rebellion's spoke? Better you should marvel how they do not burn your province!
- 121 **Danforth:** Mr. Hale, have you preached in Andover this month?
- 122 **Hale:** Thank God they have no need of me in Andover.
- 123 **Danforth:** You baffle me, sir. Why have you returned here?
- 124 **Hale:** Why, it is all simple. I come to do the Devil's work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves. *His sarcasm collapses.* There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head!!
- 125 **Parris:** Hush! *For he has heard footsteps. They all face the door. HERRICK enters with ELIZABETH. Her wrists are linked by heavy chain, which HERRICK now removes. Her clothes are dirty; her face is pale and gaunt. HERRICK goes out.*
- 126 **Danforth, very politely:** Goody Proctor. *She is silent.* I hope you are hearty?
- 127 **Elizabeth, as a warning reminder:** I am yet six month before my time.
- 128 **Danforth:** Pray be at your ease, we come not for your life. We—*uncertain how to plead, for he is not accustomed to it.* Mr. Hale, will you speak with the woman?
- 129 **Hale:** Goody Proctor, your husband is marked to hang this morning. *Pause.*
- 130 **Elizabeth, quietly:** I have heard it.
- 131 **Hale:** You know, do you not, that I have no connection with the court? *She seems to doubt it.* I come of my own, Goody Proctor. I would save your husband's life, for if he is taken I count myself his murderer. Do you understand me?
- 132 **Elizabeth:** What do you want of me?
- 133 **Hale:** Goody Proctor, I have gone this three month like our Lord into the wilderness. I have sought a Christian way, for damnation's doubled on a minister who counsels men to lie.
- 134 **Hathorne:** It is no lie, you cannot speak of lies.
- 135 **Hale:** It is a lie! They are innocent!
- 136 **Danforth:** I'll hear no more of that!
- 137 **Hale, continuing to ELIZABETH:** Let you not mistake your duty as I mistook my own. I came into this village like a bridegroom to his beloved, bearing gifts of high religion; the very crowns of holy law I brought, and what I touched with my bright confidence, it died; and where I turned the eye of my great faith,

blood flowed up. Beware, Goody Proctor—cleave to no faith when faith brings blood. It is mistaken law that leads you to sacrifice. Life, woman, life is God's most precious gift; no principle, however glorious, may justify the taking of it. I beg you, woman, prevail upon your husband to confess. Let him give his lie. Quail not before God's judgment in this, for it may well be God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride. Will you plead with him? I cannot think he will listen to another.

138 **Elizabeth**, *quietly*: I think that be the Devil's argument.

139 **Hale**, *with a climactic desperation*: Woman, before the laws of God we are as swine! We cannot read His will!

140 **Elizabeth**: I cannot dispute with you, sir; I lack learning for it.

141 **Danforth**, *going to her*: Goody Proctor, you are not summoned here for **disputation**. Be there no wifely tenderness within you? He will die with the sunrise. Your husband. Do you understand it? *She only looks at him.* What say you? Will you contend with him? *She is silent.* Are you stone? I tell you true, woman, had I no other proof of your unnatural life, your dry eyes now would be sufficient evidence that you delivered up your soul to Hell! A very ape would weep at such calamity! Have the devil dried up any tear of pity in you? *She is silent.* Take her out. It profit nothing she should speak to him!

142 **Elizabeth**, *quietly*: Let me speak with him, Excellency.

143 **Parris**, *with hope*: You'll strive with him? *She hesitates.*

144 **Danforth**: Will you plead for his confession or will you not?

145 **Elizabeth**: I promise nothing. Let me speak with him.

146 *A sound—the sibilance of dragging feet on stone. They turn. A pause. HERRICK enters with JOHN PROCTOR. His wrists are chained. He is another man, bearded, filthy, his eyes misty as though webs had overgrown them. He halts inside the doorway, his eyes caught by the sight of ELIZABETH. The emotion flowing between them prevents anyone from speaking for an instant. Now HALE, visibly affected, goes to DANFORTH and speaks quietly.*

147 **Hale**: Pray, leave them Excellency.

148 **Danforth**, *pressing HALE impatiently aside*: Mr. Proctor, you have been notified, have you not? PROCTOR *is silent, staring at ELIZABETH.* I see light in the sky, Mister; let you counsel with your wife, and may God help you turn your back on Hell. PROCTOR *is silent, staring at ELIZABETH.*

149 **Hale**, *quietly*: Excellency, let—

150 **Danforth** *brushes past HALE and walks out. HALE follows. CHEEVER stands and follows. HATHORNE behind. HERRICK goes. PARRIS, from a safe distance, offers:*

NOTES

disputation (dihs pyu TAY shuhn) *n.*
debate or argument

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 152, mark each action that actors playing John and Elizabeth Proctor are told to do.

QUESTION: Why does Miller provide such a specific description of the characters' actions?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of this description?

- 151 **Parris:** If you desire a cup of cider, Mr. Proctor, I am sure I—
PROCTOR turns an icy stare at him, and he breaks off. PARRIS raises his palms toward PROCTOR. God lead you now. PARRIS goes out.
- 152 *Alone, PROCTOR walks to her, halts. It is as though they stood in a spinning world. It is beyond sorrow, above it. He reaches out his hand as though toward an embodiment not quite real, and as he touches her, a strange soft sound, half laughter, half amazement, comes from his throat. He pats her hand. She covers his hand with hers. And then, weak, he sits. Then she sits, facing him.*
- 153 **Proctor:** The child?
- 154 **Elizabeth:** It grows.
- 155 **Proctor:** There is no word of the boys?
- 156 **Elizabeth:** They're well. Rebecca's Samuel keeps them.
- 157 **Proctor:** You have not seen them?
- 158 **Elizabeth:** I have not. *She catches a weakening in herself and downs it.*
- 159 **Proctor:** You are a—marvel, Elizabeth.
- 160 **Elizabeth:** You—have been tortured?
- 161 **Proctor:** Aye. *Pause. She will not let herself be drowned in the sea that threatens her. They come for my life now.*
- 162 **Elizabeth:** I know it.
- 163 *Pause.*
- 164 **Proctor:** None—have yet confessed?
- 165 **Elizabeth:** There be many confessed.
- 166 **Proctor:** Who are they?
- 167 **Elizabeth:** There be a hundred or more, they say. Goody Ballard is one; Isaiah Goodkind is one. There be many.
- 168 **Proctor:** Rebecca?
- 169 **Elizabeth:** Not Rebecca. She is one foot in Heaven now; naught may hurt her more.
- 170 **Proctor:** And Giles?
- 171 **Elizabeth:** You have not heard of it?
- 172 **Proctor:** I hear nothin', where I am kept.
- 173 **Elizabeth:** Giles is dead.
- 174 *He looks at her incredulously.*
- 175 **Proctor:** When were he hanged?
- 176 **Elizabeth, quietly, factually:** He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they'd hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons

will have his farm. It is the law, for he could not be condemned a wizard without he answer the indictment, aye or nay.

NOTES

- 177 **Proctor:** Then how does he die?
- 178 **Elizabeth**, *gently*: They press him, John.
- 179 **Proctor:** Press?
- 180 **Elizabeth:** Great stones they lay upon his chest until he plead aye or nay. *With a tender smile for the old man*: They say he give them but two words. "More weight," he says. And died.
- 181 **Proctor**, *numbed—a thread to weave into his agony*: "More weight."
- 182 **Elizabeth:** Aye. It were a fearsome man, Giles Corey.
- 183 *Pause.*
- 184 **Proctor**, *with great force of will, but not quite looking at her*: I have been thinking I would confess to them, Elizabeth. *She shows nothing*. What say you? If I give them that?
- 185 **Elizabeth:** I cannot judge you, John.
- 186 *Pause.*
- 187 **Proctor**, *simply—a pure question*: What would you have me do?
- 188 **Elizabeth:** As you will, I would have it. *Slight pause*: I want you living, John. That's sure.
- 189 **Proctor**, *pauses, then with a flailing of hope*: Giles's wife? Have she confessed?



As the play reaches its climax, John and Elizabeth Proctor discuss whether he should confess to save his life.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 199, mark the adjective that modifies John Proctor's "longing."

QUESTION: Why does Miller use this word?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of this word, and how might it guide the performance of an actor playing John Proctor?

- 190 **Elizabeth:** She will not.
- 191 *Pause.*
- 192 **Proctor:** It is a pretense, Elizabeth.
- 193 **Elizabeth:** What is?
- 194 **Proctor:** I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. *She is silent.* My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing's spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before.
- 195 **Elizabeth:** And yet you've not confessed till now. That speak goodness in you.
- 196 **Proctor:** Spite only keeps me silent. It is hard to give a lie to dogs. *Pause, for the first time he turns directly to her.* I would have your forgiveness, Elizabeth.
- 197 **Elizabeth:** It is not for me to give, John, I am—
- 198 **Proctor:** I'd have you see some honesty in it. Let them that never lied die now to keep their souls. It is pretense for me, a vanity that will not blind God nor keep my children out of the wind. *Pause.* What say you?
- 199 **Elizabeth, upon a heaving sob that always threatens:** John, it come to naught that I should forgive you, if you'll not forgive yourself. *Now he turns away a little, in great agony.* It is not my soul, John, it is yours. *He stands, as though in physical pain, slowly rising to his feet with a great immortal longing to find his answer. It is difficult to say, and she is on the verge of tears.* Only be sure of this, for I know it now: Whatever you will do, it is a good man does it. *He turns his doubting, searching gaze upon her.* I have read my heart this three month, John. *Pause.* I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery.
- 200 **Proctor, in great pain:** Enough, enough—
- 201 **Elizabeth, now pouring out her heart:** Better you should know me!
- 202 **Proctor:** I will not hear it! I know you!
- 203 **Elizabeth:** You take my sins upon you, John—
- 204 **Proctor, in agony:** No. I take my own, my own!
- 205 **Elizabeth:** John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept! *In fright, she swerves, as HATHORNE enters.*
- 206 **Hathorne:** What say you, Proctor? The sun is soon up.
- 207 **Proctor, his chest heaving, stares, turns to ELIZABETH.** *She comes to him as though to plead, her voice quaking.*
- 208 **Elizabeth:** Do what you will. But let none be your judge. There be no higher judge under Heaven than Proctor is! Forgive me,

forgive me, John—I never knew such goodness in the world! *She covers her face, weeping.*

209 **PROCTOR** *turns from her to HATHORNE; he is off the earth, his voice hollow.*

210 **Proctor:** I want my life.

211 **Hathorne** *electrified, surprised:* You'll confess yourself?

212 **Proctor:** I will have my life.

213 **Hathorne**, *with a mystical tone:* God be praised! It is a providence! *He rushes out the door, and his voice is heard calling down the corridor:* He will confess! Proctor will confess!

214 **Proctor**, *with a cry, as he strides to the door:* Why do you cry it? *In great pain he turns back to her.* It is evil, is it not? It is evil.

215 **Elizabeth**, *in terror, weeping:* I cannot judge you, John. I cannot!

216 **Proctor:** Then who will judge me? *Suddenly clasping his hands:* God in Heaven, what is John Proctor, what is John Proctor? *He moves as an animal, and a fury is riding in him, a tantalized search.* I think it is honest, I think so; I am no saint. *As though she had denied this he calls angrily at her:* Let Rebecca go like a saint; for me it is fraud! *Voices are heard in the hall, speaking together in suppressed excitement.*

217 **Elizabeth:** I am not your judge, I cannot be. *As though giving him release:* Do as you will, do as you will!

218 **Proctor:** Would you give them such a lie? Say it. Would you ever give them this? *She cannot answer.* You would not; if tongs of fire were singeing you you would not! It is evil. Good, then—it is evil, and I do it!

219 **HATHORNE** *enters with DANFORTH, and, with them, CHEEVER, PARRIS, and HALE. It is a businesslike, rapid entrance, as though the ice had been broken.*

220 **Danforth**, *with great relief and gratitude:* Praise to God, man, praise to God; you shall be blessed in Heaven for this. **CHEEVER** *has hurried to the bench with pen, ink, and paper. PROCTOR watches him.* Now then, let us have it. Are you ready, Mr. Cheever?

221 **Proctor**, *with a cold, cold horror at their efficiency:* Why must it be written?

222 **Danforth:** Why, for the good instruction of the village. Mister; this we shall post upon the church door! *To PARRIS, urgently:* Where is the marshal?

223 **Parris**, *runs to the door and calls down the corridor:* Marshal! Hurry!

224 **Danforth:** Now, then, Mister, will you speak slowly, and directly to the point, for Mr. Cheever's sake. *He is on record now, and is really dictating to CHEEVER, who writes.* Mr. Proctor, have

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In the stage directions in paragraphs 231–240, mark the actions that John Proctor takes after Rebecca Nurse enters the room.

QUESTION: Why does Miller include these stage directions?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of these details?

you seen the Devil in your life? PROCTOR's *jaws lock*. Come, man, there is light in the sky; the town waits at the scaffold; I would give out this news. Did you see the Devil?

225 **Proctor:** I did.

226 **Parris:** Praise God!

227 **Danforth:** And when he come to you, what were his demand? PROCTOR *is silent*. DANFORTH *helps*. Did he bid you to do his work upon the earth?

228 **Proctor:** He did.

229 **Danforth:** And you bound yourself to his service? DANFORTH *turns, as REBECCA NURSE enters, with HERRICK helping to support her. She is barely able to walk*. Come in, come in, woman!

230 **Rebecca, brightening as she sees PROCTOR:** Ah, John! You are well, then, eh?

231 PROCTOR *turns his face to the wall*.

232 **Danforth:** Courage, man, courage—let her witness your good example that she may come to God herself. Now hear it, Goody Nurse! Say on, Mr. Proctor. Did you bind yourself to the Devil's service?

233 **Rebecca, astonished:** Why, John!

234 **Proctor, through his teeth, his face turned from REBECCA:** I did.

235 **Danforth:** Now, woman, you surely see it profit nothin' to keep this conspiracy any further. Will you confess yourself with him?

236 **Rebecca:** Oh, John—God send his mercy on you!

237 **Danforth:** I say, will you confess yourself. Goody Nurse?

238 **Rebecca:** Why, it is a lie, it is a lie; how may I damn myself? I cannot, I cannot.

239 **Danforth:** Mr. Proctor. When the Devil came to you did you see Rebecca Nurse in his company? PROCTOR *is silent*. Come, man, take courage—did you ever see her with the Devil?

240 **Proctor, almost inaudibly:** No.

241 DANFORTH, *now sensing trouble, glances at JOHN and goes to the table, and picks up a sheet—the list of condemned*.

242 **Danforth:** Did you ever see her sister, Mary Easty, with the Devil?

243 **Proctor:** No, I did not.

244 **Danforth, his eyes narrow on PROCTOR:** Did you ever see Martha Corey with the Devil?

245 **Proctor:** I did not.

246 **Danforth, realizing, slowly putting the sheet down:** Did you ever see anyone with the Devil?

- 247 **Proctor:** I did not.
- 248 **Danforth:** Proctor, you mistake me. I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have most certainly seen some person with the Devil. *PROCTOR is silent.* Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil.
- 249 **Proctor:** Then it is proved. Why must I say it?
- 250 **Danforth:** Why “must” you say it! Why, you should rejoice to say it if your soul is truly purged of any love for Hell!
- 251 **Proctor:** They think to go like saints. I like not to spoil their names.
- 252 **Danforth, inquiring, incredulous:** Mr. Proctor, do you think they go like saints?
- 253 **Proctor, evading:** This woman never thought she done the Devil’s work.
- 254 **Danforth:** Look you, sir. I think you mistake your duty here. It matter nothing what she thought—she is convicted of the unnatural murder of children, and you for sending your spirit out upon Mary Warren. Your soul alone is the issue here, Mister, and you will prove its whiteness or you cannot live in a



John Proctor makes his final defense.

Christian country. Will you tell me now what persons conspired with you in the Devil's company? PROCTOR *is silent*. To your knowledge was Rebecca Nurse ever—

255 **Proctor:** I speak my own sins: I cannot judge another. *Crying out, with hatred:* I have no tongue for it.

256 **Hale, quickly to DANFORTH:** Excellency. It is enough he confess himself. Let him sign it, let him sign it.

257 **Parris, feverishly:** It is a great service, sir. It is a weighty name; it will strike the village that Proctor confess. I beg you, let him sign it. The sun is up, Excellency!

258 **Danforth, considers; then with dissatisfaction:** Come, then, sign your testimony. *To CHEEVER:* Give it to him. CHEEVER *goes to PROCTOR, the confession and a pen in hand. PROCTOR does not look at it.* Come, man, sign it.

259 **Proctor, after glancing at the confession:** You have all witnessed it—it is enough.

260 **Danforth:** You will not sign it?

261 **Proctor:** You have all witnessed it; what more is needed?

262 **Danforth:** Do you sport with me? You will sign your name or it is no confession, Mister! *His breast heaving with agonized breathing, PROCTOR now lays the paper down and signs his name.*

263 **Parris:** Praise be to the Lord!

264 *PROCTOR has just finished signing when DANFORTH reaches for the paper. But PROCTOR snatches it up, and now a wild terror is rising in him, and a boundless anger.*

265 **Danforth, perplexed, but politely extending his hand:** If you please, sir.

266 **Proctor:** No.

267 **Danforth, as though PROCTOR did not understand:** Mr. Proctor, I must have—

268 **Proctor:** No, no. I have signed it. You have seen me. It is done! You have no need for this.

269 **Parris:** Proctor, the village must have proof that—

270 **Proctor:** Damn the village! I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough!

271 **Danforth:** No, sir, it is—

272 **Proctor:** You came to save my soul, did you not? Here! I have confessed myself: it is enough!

273 **Danforth:** You have not con—

274 **Proctor:** I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!

- 275 **Danforth:** Mr. Proctor—
- 276 **Proctor:** You will not use me! I am no Sarah Good or Tituba. I am John Proctor! You will not use me! It is no part of salvation that you should use me!
- 277 **Danforth:** I do not wish to—
- 278 **Proctor:** I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?
- 279 **Danforth:** You have not sold your friends—
- 280 **Proctor:** Beguile me not! I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!
- 281 **Danforth:** Mr. Proctor, I must have good and legal proof that you—
- 282 **Proctor:** You are the high court, your word is good enough! Tell them I confessed myself; say Proctor broke his knees and wept like a woman; say what you will, but my name cannot—
- 283 **Danforth, with suspicion:** It is the same, is it not? If I report it or you sign to it?
- 284 **Proctor—he knows it is insane:** No, it is not the same! What others say and what I sign to is not the same!
- 285 **Danforth:** Why? Do you mean to deny this confession when you are free?
- 286 **Proctor:** I mean to deny nothing!
- 287 **Danforth:** Then explain to me. Mr. Proctor, why you will not let—
- 288 **Proctor, with a cry of his whole soul:** Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!
- 289 **Danforth, pointing at the confession in PROCTOR's hand:** Is that document a lie? If it is a lie I will not accept it! What say you? I will not deal in lies, Mister! PROCTOR *is motionless*. You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope. PROCTOR *does not reply*. What way do you go, Mister?
- 290 *His breast heaving, his eyes staring, PROCTOR tears the paper and crumples it, and he is weeping in fury, but erect.*
- 291 **Danforth:** Marshal!
- 292 **Parris, hysterically, as though the tearing paper were his life:** Proctor, Proctor!
- 293 **Hale:** Man, you will hang! You cannot!
- 294 **Proctor, his eyes full of tears:** I can. And there's your first marvel, that I can. You have made your magic now, for now I do think

NOTES

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: In paragraph 288, mark the repeated words.

QUESTION: Why do you think Miller has Proctor repeat these words?

CONCLUDE: What is the effect of this repetition?

Proctor and others are taken to their fate.



NOTES

I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs. *ELIZABETH, in a burst of terror, rushes to him and weeps against his hand.* Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it! *He has lifted her, and kisses her now with great passion.*

295 **Rebecca:** Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!

296 **Danforth:** Hang them high over the town! Who weeps for these, weeps for corruption! *He sweeps out past them. HERRICK starts to lead REBECCA, who almost collapses, but PROCTOR catches her, and she glances up at him apologetically.*

297 **Rebecca:** I've had no breakfast.

298 **Herrick:** Come, man.

299 *HERRICK escorts them out, HATHORNE and CHEEVER behind them. ELIZABETH stands staring at the empty doorway.*

300 **Parris, in deadly fear, to ELIZABETH:** Go to him, Goody Proctor! There is yet time!

301 *From outside a drumroll strikes the air. PARRIS is startled. ELIZABETH jerks about toward the window.*

302 **Parris:** Go to him! *He rushes out the door, as though to hold back his fate.* Proctor! Proctor!

303 *Again, a short burst of drums.*

304 **Hale:** Woman, plead with him! *He starts to rush out the door, and then goes back to her.* Woman! It is pride, it is vanity. *She avoids his*

eyes, and moves to the window. He drops to his knees. Be his helper!—What profit him to bleed? Shall the dust praise him? Shall the worms declare his truth? Go to him, take his shame away!

305 **Elizabeth**, supporting herself against collapse, grips the bars of the window, and with a cry: He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!


306 *The final drumroll crashes, then heightens violently. HALE weeps in frantic prayer, and the new sun is pouring in upon her face, and the drums rattle like bones in the morning air.*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

NOTES

Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. As Act IV opens, what is to take place at daybreak?
2. Why has Reverend Hale returned to Salem?
3. What does Parris say Abigail has recently done?
4. What does Danforth want John Proctor to do?
5.  **Notebook** Write a summary of Act IV of *The Crucible*.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the play?

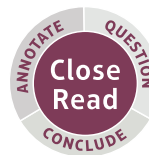
Research to Explore Conduct research on an aspect of the text you find interesting. For example, you may want to learn more about the play's reception during the McCarthy era.



THE CRUCIBLE, ACT IV

Close Read the Text

Reread Parris's remarks about the executions, beginning with paragraph 82. Mark references to the "sort" who were hanged previously. What does Miller want his audience to infer about the people who are about to die?



Analyze the Text

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

Notebook Respond to these questions.

1. (a) When Hale urges Danforth to pardon the prisoners, why does Danforth refuse? (b) **Analyze** What does Danforth's attitude reveal about his sense of justice and the legitimacy of the executions?
2. (a) When urged by Hale to persuade her husband to confess, how does Elizabeth Proctor characterize Hale's argument? (b) **Interpret** What does Elizabeth mean by characterizing Hale's argument in this way?
3. **Interpret** Why does Proctor confess and then retract his confession?
4. **Essential Question: *How do we respond when challenged by fear?***
What have you learned about how people respond to fear from reading this play?

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Vocabulary

conciliatory adamant disputation

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words relate to arguments and people's attitudes when engaged in them. What other words in Act IV relate to this concept?

Practice

Notebook Write a one-paragraph summary of Act IV that uses all three concept vocabulary words.

Word Study

Notebook Etymology The origin and development of a word is its **etymology**. The word *adamant* comes from the Greek word *adamas*, which refers to the hardest metal in the world. It is also the name of a character from Greek mythology. In contemporary English usage, *adamant* is most often used in a figurative sense.

1. Write a definition of *adamant* based on your understanding of its etymology. Check your answer and the pronunciation of the word in a college-level dictionary.
2. Use an etymological dictionary to research the Greek origins of the words *tantalize* and *cereal*. Explain your findings.

WORD NETWORK

Add words related to fear from the text to your Word Network.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

11-12.RL.KID.2 Determine multiple themes or central ideas of a text or texts and analyze their development; provide a critical summary.

11-12.RL.CS.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning the structure of specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure, meaning, and aesthetic impact.

Language

11-12.L.VAU.4.c Consult reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or phrase.

Analyze Craft and Structure


Author's Choices: Literary Forms An **allegory** is a narrative that works on two levels of meaning: a literal meaning and one or more symbolic meanings.

- The **literal meaning** presents the characters and conflicts at face value. The literal story is complete and can be understood without reference to other stories or situations.
- The **symbolic meaning** interprets the characters and conflicts at a representative level—a deeper meaning that readers must infer. Characters may be symbols for real people, and the conflicts may focus readers on events or ideas that are not part of the literal narrative. Understanding an allegory's symbolic meaning can reveal the **theme**—the work's message or insight.

The Crucible is an allegory that Arthur Miller wrote to comment on the way that the 1950s "Red Scare" encouraged and preyed upon Americans' fears. At that time, Senator Joseph McCarthy and the separate House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) accused many Americans of being Communists, intent on overthrowing the United States government. Those targeted by HUAC investigation were often blacklisted and lost their jobs. After many life-ruining accusations, the public turned against the Communist hunts.

Practice

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

 **Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. Use the chart to cite specific passages from the play and explain their importance to both the literal story and Miller's allegory. Begin with the twisted logic of Danforth's speech in paragraph 104 of Act IV.

| PASSAGE | LITERAL MEANING | ALLEGORICAL MEANING |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| Danforth's speech in Act IV, paragraph 104 | | |
| | | |
| | | |

2. (a) At the end of the play, John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, and others make the noble decision. Is it the right decision? Explain. (b) What is Miller saying about those who stood fast against HUAC?
3. Miller has written about similarities between the Salem trials and the HUAC investigations: "Three hundred years apart, both prosecutors were alleging membership in a secret disloyal group; should the accused confess, his honesty could be proved only in precisely the same way—by naming former confederates." Explain how these ideas are developed in each act of *The Crucible*.



THE CRUCIBLE, ACT IV

STANDARDS**Reading Literature**

11-12.RL.CS.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings and language that is stylistically poignant and engaging.

Writing

11-12.W.BPK.9 Support and defend interpretations, analyses, reflections, or research with evidence found in literature or informational texts, applying grade band 11-12 standards for reading to source material.

Analyze Craft and Structure

Biblical Allusions Some of the conflicts in *The Crucible* arise out of the religious worldview that dominates the Salem community. That worldview is revealed, in part, through the characters' actions and the descriptions of their way of life. It is also revealed through **Biblical allusions**—passing or unexplained references to people, places, or events from the Bible.

Biblical allusions remind characters—and the audience—of the religious beliefs on which the Puritan community is based. Allusions also help to portray individual characters. For example, in Act IV, paragraph 117, Danforth says, “Mr. Hale, as God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment.” A note in the text identifies the source of this allusion, and the context makes its meaning clear: Just as Joshua could not delay the sun’s movement, so Danforth cannot (or will not) delay his quest to obtain confessions from the condemned. The Biblical allusion reinforces the idea that Danforth sees his work as a mission from God.

Practice

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

Some of the allusions Miller uses in *The Crucible* appear in the chart.

Determine what each allusion means. Then, explain what it reveals about the characters or situation.

| BIBLICAL ALLUSION | MEANING IN CONTEXT |
|---|--------------------|
| Act II, paragraph 53: “Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel.” (Source: Exodus 14:21–22) | |
| Act II, paragraph 396: “Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!” (Source: Matthew 27:22–26) | |
| Act III, paragraph 131: “I think not, or you should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel.” (Source: Genesis 4:1–8) | |
| Act IV, paragraph 133: “Goody Proctor, I have gone this three month like our Lord into the wilderness.” (Source: Luke 4:1) | |

Author's Style

Realism In visual art and literature, **Realism** is the presentation of the details of everyday life, showing them as they actually are (or were) seen and experienced. All the elements of a realistic drama—including the setting, plot, and dialogue—are presented in ways that mirror real life.


- The **setting**, or place and time in which the drama unfolds, is like a place in the real world. It may be an actual location or historical place and time. This setting may be represented on stage with historically accurate props, backdrops, and costumes that are recognizable as objects, places, and clothing from real life.
- The playwright bases the **plot**, or action of the play, on events that either did happen or could happen in real life. Characters' reactions to these events are authentic and plausible.
- The **dialogue**, or conversation between and among characters, reflects the ways in which people actually speak or did speak in a past era. Characters may use slang, regionalisms, dialect, or formal language. These choices reflect their circumstances and personalities.

Read It

Review the opening scene of Act IV. Identify and describe one example of each dramatic element that is presented in a realistic way. Explain which textual details create or emphasize the realistic quality.

| ELEMENT | EXAMPLE | HOW MILLER MAKES IT SEEM REAL |
|------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| Setting | | |
| Plot Event | | |
| Dialogue | | |

Write It

 **Notebook** In a paragraph, explain why you think Miller chose to tell the story of *The Crucible* in a realistic way. Why might realism be especially valuable in a play based on actual historical events?

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

11-12.RL.CS.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning the structure of specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure, meaning, and aesthetic impact.