

Summer Reading and Writing - Honors English 11 - Council Rock High School North

Honors 11 is a challenging English course that operates as a survey of American literature. Our year opens with Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, a play written in the 1950s but set during the Salem Witch Trials of 1693. Miller's piece is a perennial American favorite that explores the limits of truth in the midst of social fear and hysteria. We'll start our year discussing this play and grounding it in its historical context. Your preparation is vital for the success of our opening days of school!

Directions

1. Read Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, making notes about characters, content, and themes, especially as they connect to the "Critical Analysis" writing prompts.
2. Write a roughly 500 word response to THREE of the "Critical Analysis" prompts, keeping the following in mind:
 - a. Writing must be analytical. Analysis is about the why and the how of the novel, not the what. Do not write a summary of the play; do not simply explain what you know about characters, plot, or setting.
 - b. Responses should seek to interpret the story, making argumentative claims. Claims must be supported with quotations from the text, cited in MLA format. Please follow this link for a refresher on [MLA format](#).
 - c. Do not use secondary sources or external sources. If you are struggling, be patient and take some time to think and/or free-write before writing your critical analysis.
 - d. Responses must be typed. They will be submitted to Turnitin on the first day of class. Please be mindful of this when writing--plagiarism will result in a failing grade. While again you are asked not to use secondary sources, if you do use them, you must cite them to avoid plagiarism.

The primary purpose of this assignment is to engage with a great work of literature through thoughtful, analytical writing. It will give us a baseline from which to improve, in a course that will stretch you as a reader, a writer, and a thinker. This assignment is your first opportunity to present yourself as a student who is ready for the demands of the Honors English 11 curriculum.

***The Crucible* - Critical Analysis**

Choose **Three** of the following prompts and write a multi-paragraph (2-3) essay in response.

Option #1:

John Proctor is a farmer who must choose between serving only his own self-interests and demonstrating commitment to the larger community. Explore Proctor's growth throughout the play as a vehicle for exploring Miller's message about the individual's relationship to society.

Option #2:

Compare and Contrast the two main ministers in the story, Reverend Parris and Reverend Hale by exploring Miller's view of society, Miller's view of individual conscience, and Miller's view of hypocrisy.

Option #3:

Abigail Williams is perhaps the most interesting character in the play. Is Abigail a victim of her society or a perpetrator within it? What situations or events in her past and present influence her behavior? Can she be excused or pardoned because outside forces "made" her the way she is? Why or why not? Then, explore the message that Miller creates about the individual's relationship to society.

Option #4:

Arthur Miller wrote this play in 1953 as a parallel to the McCarthyist Red Scare of his own day. What does *The Crucible* tell us about the nature of social hysteria? In a literal or modern day witch-hunt, how is truth manipulated, controlled, or made into propaganda? How do you see these principles operative in our day?

Rubric for each essay: 15 points per essay; 45 total points

- MLA heading and title at the top of the page
- Maintains a clear specific focus on a particular character, theme, argument, or claim.
- Contains substantial, specific and illustrative details that reinforce your chosen focus
- Employs **at least two quotations from the play** that are effectively integrated with your analysis and are cited correctly (Miller 14).
- Demonstrates a clear organization through multiple paragraphs and transitions
- Provides evidence of independent thinking, without the use of outside sources.
- Free of grammar and usage errors, reflecting revisions and editing
- Your essay **MUST** be typed. They will be submitted to Turnitin.com on the first day of class.