**QUESTIONS FOR ACT TWO OF THE CRUCIBLE**

1. What ominous revelation does Mary Warren make about Elizabeth’s reputation? How does this disclosure serve to make the quarrel between Elizabeth and John even more heated?

2. In what ways is Miller’s use of dialogue effective in the first two pages of this scene to show a rift between the couple?

3. Identify the literary device in the following quote and explain its significance. "The magistrate that sits in your heart that judges you."

4. Identify the literary device in the following quote and explain its significance. "My wife is the very brick and mortar of the church."

5. Explain the symbolism of:
   - The golden candlesticks
   - The poppet

6. What theological argument does John Hale use to explain the causes of the events in Salem?

7. What conflict does John Proctor face at the end of the act?

8. Explain how each of the following is an example of verbal, situational, or dramatic irony:
   - Mary’s gift of a poppet to Elizabeth
   - The one Commandment out of ten that John Proctor can’t remember
   - Proctor’s statement about Abigail at the end of the act, "Good. Then her saintliness is done with."

9. Identify the literary device in the following quote and explain its significance. "Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!"

10. Critics disagree whether John Proctor or Abigail is the protagonist of this play. Adhering to the definition of the term, argue and support your choice of John Proctor or Abigail as the true protagonist.

11. Do you believe Mary is helping Abigail frame Elizabeth in Act II, or is she just an unwitting part of the scheme? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

12. Given the Puritans’ view of the forest, what atmosphere does Miller create by setting this scene in the woods?

13. What evidence is there that Abigail’s saintly reputation mentioned in Act II, Scene I is changing?

14. In what way has Abigail become the poppet?

15. "Oh John, the world’s so full of hypocrites." Of what literary device is this an example? What does it mean?

16. What motivation does Abigail give for making the world “white again”?

17. Discuss Proctor’s implied motivation for warning Abigail of his intentions in court the next day.

18. The original version of THE CRUCIBLE, published in 1953, included a second scene for Act II. Prior to 1971, Miller decided to excise this scene. Argue whether this scene should have been kept in the play or excluded.

**The Crucible Act Two Questions**

1. Describe one reason why Proctor holds back at the beginning of Act Two from telling what he knows about Abigail.

2. Why does Hale argue that Proctor’s forgetting a commandment is a serious matter?

3. Explain how Mary Warren changes once she is appointed to the court. Use three details from the text to support your response.

4. Give one piece of evidence that casts suspicion on Proctor’s feelings for Abigail.

5. Hale says to Proctor about Rebecca Nurse’s arrest, “Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven.” Explain what Reverend Hale means by these lines.

6. Is Abigail the villain in this drama, or is she innocent? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

7. Mr. Hale visits the Proctors and hears of Rebecca’s and Martha Corey’s arrests. He makes the following statement:

   … our hearts break, we cannot flinch; these are new times, sir. There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court—the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail [shy away from] to follow wherever the accusing finger points!

   Describe how this statement parallels McCarthy’s beliefs as he wages war on Communism.

8. As the Proctors converse in the opening scene of Act II of THE CRUCIBLE, how would you characterize their relationship? Cite evidence from the play to support your answer.
9. In the early part of Act II of *The Crucible*, Elizabeth tells Proctor that Mary Warren has been to court and speaks of Abigail, the chief accuser, as a saint. Knowing that Mary works for the Proctors, and that Abigail bears a grudge against Proctor, what prediction can you make about the impact of Mary's attitude on her employers?

10. Early in Act II of *The Crucible*, Elizabeth insists that John should go to Salem to testify to the falseness of the witchcraft charges. What does this show about what kind of woman she is?

11. In Act II of *The Crucible*, John Proctor initially shows some reluctance to go to Salem to expose the falseness of Abigail's charges of witchcraft. His reluctance is due to an inner conflict over what longstanding issue?

12. When Mary returns to the Proctors' residence in Act II of *The Crucible*, why does she present a doll (poppet) to Elizabeth?

13. In Act II of *The Crucible*, when Hale appears at the Proctors' door, he is described as "different now--drawn a little, and there is a quality of deference, even of guilt, about his manner now." What inner conflict accounts for this change?

14. When Hale quizzes Proctor on the Ten Commandments in Act II of *The Crucible*, Proctor has trouble remembering one of them. Which one does he forget, and why?

15. In Act II of *The Crucible*, when Hale hears that Rebecca Nurse has been charged, he is troubled. Read his allusion below to the story of the Devil. What does he intend to point out by making this allusion "an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven."

16. If you noticed that your dinner companion was eating his meal avidly, would you assume that he was enjoying the dish? Explain your answer, basing it on the meaning of *avidly* as it is used in Act II of *The Crucible*.

17. Early in *The Crucible*, Mary Warren seems like a timid and unimportant character. What does Mary learn throughout the first two acts that shows her a way to acquire more power and importance in the community? How does she use this knowledge? Explain Mary's changing role in an essay that cites details from the play.

18. Write an essay in which you explain the influence of Abigail Williams on the events of Act II of *The Crucible*. Does she actually appear in the act? How does her character affect the action and dialogue of the other characters? Consider Abigail's motivations for her actions and their impact on other characters.

19. In an essay, analyze the state of life in Salem at the end of Act II of *The Crucible*. Are most people in the community happy or unhappy? As the witchcraft trial proceeds, are standards of justice in the community rising or falling? What effect is the religious fervor surrounding the trials having on the moral life of the community? Cite evidence from Act II to support your response.

20. **Thinking About the Essential Question: How does literature shape or reflect society?** In *The Crucible*, Miller portrayed the religious hysteria of seventeenth-century Salem as being comparable to the anti-Communist fervor that spurred the divisive investigations of Senator Joseph McCarthy in the early 1950s in the United States. To emphasize the irrational, rigid nature of this fervor, Miller uses religious allusions throughout Act II. Give examples of at least two of these allusions, and explain how they deepen the reader's understanding of the elements of Puritan society that contributed to the hysteria over witchcraft.

21. The references to the Commandments are an allusion to _____. Select the correct answer and explain why this allusion are important to the events that are taking place in Act II, *The Crucible*.
   a. Salem's charter
   b. Salem's laws
   c. the Bible
   d. a play by Shakespeare

22. Hale has been called to Salem to determine whether the Devil is among the people. As Act II of *The Crucible* progresses, his opinion as to whether the Devil is present is being tempered by his observations of the people of Salem. Use the graphic organizer to trace Hale's observations. Summarize the conclusion he is reaching.