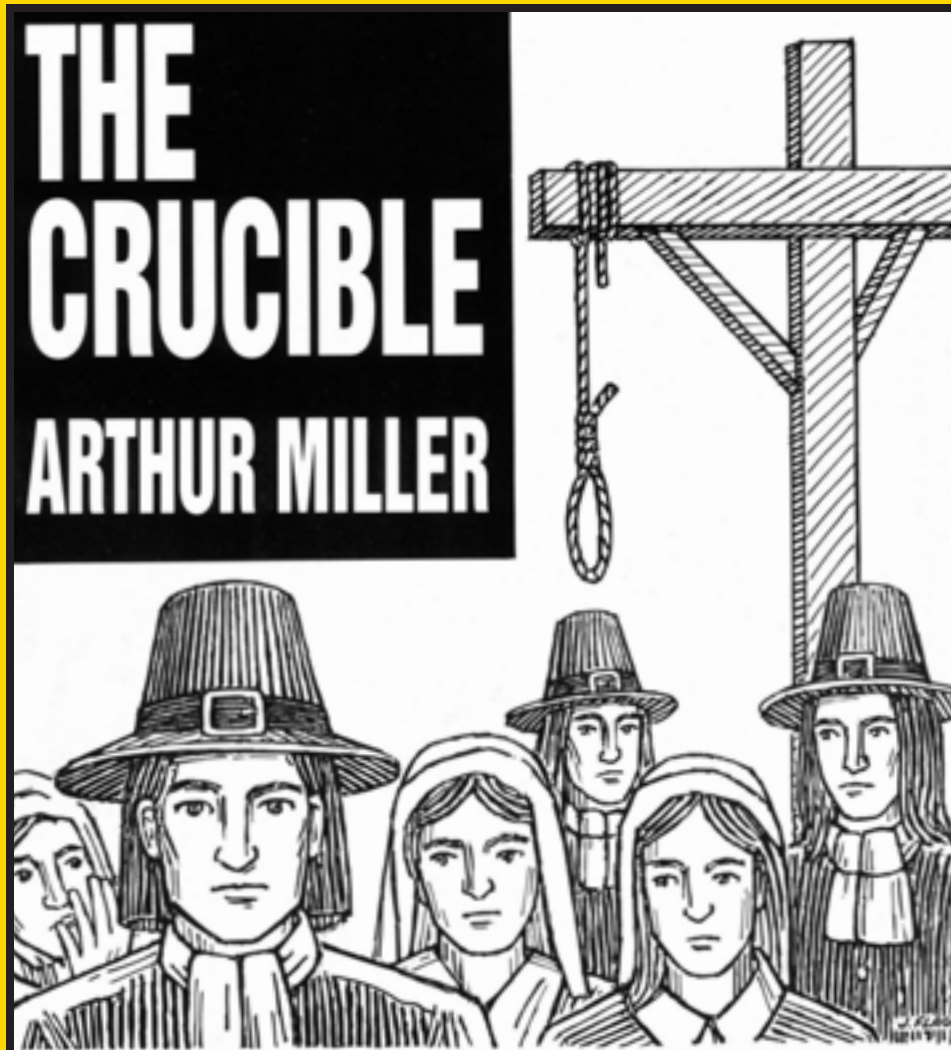


# Novel·Ties



## A Study Guide

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**LEARNING LINKS**

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the play *The Crucible*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Salem Witchcraft

The belief in witchcraft and its ability to produce evil magic was long held by European Christians. False accusations of witchcraft were often used for unethical purposes. This was the case during the Middle Ages when Joan of Arc was burned as a witch by her enemies. In the seventeenth century, James I of England punished hundreds of accused witches in his native Scotland, many of whom were by no coincidence his political enemies. The Puritans in colonial America, because of their literal acceptance of the contents of the Bible, were one group who readily accepted the idea of witches.

Salem was one of various communities established by devout English Puritans who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the early seventeenth century. Despite democratic participation, their local government was a theocracy, a government dominated by religious leaders claiming to represent God. The Puritans were a rigid people, intolerant of the beliefs of others and fearful that any joyous activity, such as dancing, was inspired by the Devil.

Problems began in Salem late in 1691 with odd behavior among some of the community's young girls. When it was revealed that the girls had been dabbling in palmistry, witchcraft was said to be the cause. The girls, who were not themselves accused of being witches, began accusing a few disreputable local women of witchcraft. Before long, they and several adults also began accusing some of the more distinguished members of the community. A form of mass hysteria took hold as the witch trials progressed. By the time they ended, some prominent Massachusetts citizens had been accused, hundreds of alleged witches had been arrested, and nineteen people had been hanged.

### The McCarthy Era

By 1950, the United States was involved in a cold war with the Communist nations, particularly Russia. Fear of the Communist threat to the American way of life precipitated the rise to power of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who launched a crusade against internal subversion by charging that many "known Communists" were working in the State Department. He attacked General of the Army George C. Marshall and leveled charges against the Roosevelt and Truman administrations for "treason." Re-elected to the Senate in 1952, McCarthy attacked many of President Eisenhower's appointments and zealously investigated allegations of subversion in the media. These investigations were labeled "witch hunts" by those who remained level-headed in the face of mass hysteria. McCarthy's power came to an end in 1954, when the Senate voted to condemn the senator for certain of his actions.

In the 1950s, *The Crucible* was widely viewed as a social-protest play, attacking the "witch hunt" tactics of the anti-Communist hearings held by the Wisconsin senator. Audiences of that time, well aware of the madness of McCarthyism, found striking relevance in one of the play's notable lines—"is the accuser always holy now?" Arthur Miller, however, draws only the broadest analogy between the witch hunts of 1692 and those of the McCarthy era. The mood of fear and suspicion permeating both was similar, as was the way accusations were hurled at any who dared criticize the proceedings. *The Crucible*, however, has timeless appeal as gripping drama and is as powerful today as it was in the 1950s. Miller did not deny the obvious contemporary relevance of his play, but he insisted that he was concerned with the larger problem of the dangers of mass hysteria.

Gospel	story and teachings of Jesus Christ in New Testament of the Bible
I'd as lief	I'd prefer
Pontius Pilate	Roman procurator who condemned Jesus to be crucified
poppet	rag doll
pray	please
we must look to cause proportionate	we must look for a reason of equal seriousness

### Act Three

at the bar	practicing as a lawyer
broke charity	violated a vow of good faith
<i>ipso facto</i>	Latin for "by that very fact"
Lynn	town near Salem
Marblehead	town near Salem
pound	unit of currency in Britain's American colonies
tittle	very small part
what the angel Raphael will said to the boy Tobias	reference to the Book of Tobias, which teaches that God eventually bless those who are faithful, honest, and charitable

### Act Four

Andover	town near Salem
belie themselves	show themselves to be false
fearsome	awesome
gibbet	gallows
greatcoats	heavy overcoats
Joshua	Moses' successor as the leader of the Israelites who led his people in the conquest of Canaan
riles him up	angers him