

## The Crucible: Background/History Research and Presentation



For this assignment you will research background information related to Arthur Miller's drama, *The Crucible*. This assignment is worth a test grade.

Each group member must use a **minimum of three sources** in their research. A pathfinder providing links to subscription databases, e-books, and free websites has been created for this project. You can access the pathfinder through the Media Center home page:

<http://www.nhvweb.net/nhhs/MediaCenter/electronic/pathfinders/english/arthur-miller-crucible.htm>

You will be given two days in the Reading/Writing Lab to research. You are expected to continue your research on your own since you can access the pathfinder via any internet connection (you just need to make sure you have the Media Center passwords).

The Media Center also has an excellent inventory of actual books related to The Salem Witch Trials, The Cold War, and McCarthyism. They can be checked out for a two-night maximum. I encourage you to make use of these resources.

The following items must be submitted on the presentation day:

1. Printout of power point (can be black and white) including a works cited page as the last slide.
2. Completed "research responsibility" tracking chart stapled to back of presentation.
3. A worksheet including questions for the audience (students in the class) to be able to answer while presentation is given. **\*Note: Use "high incidence" words as guide (see chart in classroom).**

*Presentation Requirements:*

*-All topical questions must be answered thoroughly.*

*-Power point must include images related to topic.*

*-5-10 minute presentation, each group member must present aspect of research.*

**Note: Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Take good notes. Don't wait until the last minute. See me for help. But do not compromise your academic integrity, or risk a zero on the assignment, by plagiarizing.**

**Topic 1: Arthur Miller**

- ❖ What are some key events in Arthur Miller's life?
- ❖ What were Arthur Miller's beliefs and political views, especially regarding communist connections and activities
- ❖ What other works did Arthur Miller write, and why is he considered a significant American playwright?
- ❖ What was Arthur Miller's encounter with the House Un-American Activities Committee?
- ❖ Why did Arthur Miller write *The Crucible*?

**Topic 2: The Cold War & Communism**

- ❖ What was the Cold War?
- ❖ What are the tenets of Communism and why were they a threat to the United States?
- ❖ What were Cold War policies of the United States and the Soviet Union?
- ❖ What caused the Cold War to escalate during the post-World War II period?

**Topic 3: McCarthyism and the Red Scare**

- ❖ Who was Joe McCarthy?
- ❖ What was McCarthyism?
- ❖ What was HUAC? Why was it created? When was it abolished?
- ❖ What were McCarthy's aims and methods, and who were his victims?
- ❖ What events led to his downfall?

**Topic 4: The Puritans**

- ❖ What type of people were the Puritans, and what is Puritanism?
- ❖ What was their social structure, i.e., government, laws, hierarchies?
- ❖ What was their daily existence like?
- ❖ What was the *Bay Psalm Book*? What is *The Day of Doom*? Why are these important works of American literature?
- ❖ How were the New England settlements different from the Southern colonies in values and culture?

**Topic 5: Background of Witchcraft**

- ❖ What is witchcraft?
- ❖ Who practiced witchcraft in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries?
- ❖ What social and religious factors are given to account for the harsh response to witchcraft?
- ❖ What were the signs of witchcraft?
- ❖ Where, and in what capacity, is witchcraft practiced today?

**Group 6: The Salem Witch Trials**

- ❖ What events led to the Salem Witch Trials?
- ❖ Who are the major players in the trials: accused, accusers, and magistrates?
- ❖ What were the prison conditions like for the accused?
- ❖ What were the outcomes of the trials? How long did the trials last?
- ❖ How do historians interpret these events today?