

## EXAMPLES: BODY PARAGRAPHS

Definition:  
Severe Test

John Proctor is tested to the very limit of his character, demonstrating that a crucible is an appropriate title to represent this play. An example of one such test is when Proctor's strict morals and his promise to Elizabeth are tested by his attraction to Abigail. When they speak at Reverend Parris' house he says, "I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again" (23). John's decision to do what is right despite his temptation is a very difficult one for him to make. It tests both his loyalty to God, because he has promised never to commit the sin of adultery again, and the strength of his marriage, because he has promised Elizabeth the same. John is determined to keep his promise to his wife and to God, and passes this test. A second example is when Proctor must make the choice whether or not to confess to witchcraft. If he confesses to witchcraft, it will appear to Danforth and Parris the witchcraft hysteria must be true, and the trials will continue even longer and with greater vigor. Since John Proctor is a respected man in the community, they will assume he is telling the truth. His choice risks the lives of many innocent people who may be killed if the witch trials continue. John Proctor supports that *The Crucible* is an apt title for Arthur Miller's play because he is put through severe trials both in and out of the courtroom.

Definition:  
Severe Test

One final reason that Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* is appropriately titled is that one of the central ideas in the play – honesty - is severely tested several times. One instance in which honesty is tested starts before the events of the story, and continues throughout it is [evident due to] the actions of the accusing girls. In the play, the girls, led by Abigail Williams, are caught by Reverend Samuel Parris dancing, and performing other activities that were, in 1692 Salem, seen to be extremely sinful (Abigail was drinking chicken blood to try to kill Elizabeth Proctor). To attempt to avoid blame for their misbehavior, the girls begin claiming that they have been bewitched, and this leads to a full scale witch hunt. This is a test of honesty because the girls' lies cause the madness. Had they simply told the truth and accepted their punishment, nothing major would ever have come of their actions, but in lying, they cause the deaths of many innocent people. Another instance in which honesty is tested features one of the girls whose deceit had started the madness – Mary Warren. Mary, the servant of the Proctors, is brought by Proctor to court to recant her earlier claims of witchcraft. Mary does attempt to retract her lies, but during the testimony, her fellow accusers, most notably Abigail, pretend that she is attacking them with her spirit. Knowing that she will be charged with witchcraft if she continues to testify, Mary breaks, claiming that Proctor is "the Devil's man!" (124). This lie saves her but dooms Proctor, who is later hanged for witchcraft. This sequence of events shows that, during the trials, being honest was about the worst move a person could make for him or herself. So it is clear that honesty becomes useless and therefore undergoes a severe test [and fails]. The title of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller is appropriate in part because of one of the play's central themes – honesty - is connected to the definition of a crucible.

Definition: a vessel used for melting a substance that requires a high degree of heat

One character who melts down and changes, like the material inside a crucible, is Mary Warren. Mary is ordered by John Proctor to confess before the court that the girls made up all the accusations of witchcraft; and she agrees to confess. "I cannot lie no more. I am with God" (102) is what Mary says when she makes the decision to confess to the charade. Mary intends to reveal the truth to all of Salem. Had she actually confessed to the court, it would have most likely put an end to the witch hysteria in Salem. But she changes, like the material in a crucible, and chooses to lie. In court, as Mary is attempting to reveal the truth, Abigail and her friends turn on her and pretend she is attacking them with her spirit. As a result of this Mary melts down emotionally. This betrayal from her friends prompts her to say that John Proctor has been forcing her to deal with the Devil, which is untrue. She tells this lie to prevent herself from being imprisoned or executed, but abandons her morals in the process. She begins [by] wanting to tell the truth and be forgiven by God but frantically lies to protect herself once her life is put in jeopardy. The change in Mary's character from her good intentions to dishonesty is [figuratively/symbolically] comparable to the changes within a crucible.

*What are the positive aspects of these paragraphs?*