

## EXAMPLES OF CONCLUSIONS

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller clearly was chosen well because it symbolically relates to the characters and their experiences during the Salem Witch Trials. Characters, like John Proctor, Abigail Williams, and Reverend Hale, all display the qualities similar to an actual crucible. Like a crucible causes its contents to break down under high heat, Proctor and Hale broke down under the intensity of the trials themselves and changed who they were. While in the case of Abigail, she forced the changes in others. These changes, and consequently the pressure of the Salem Witch Trials, clearly were difficult for the residents of the village. How else to explain any situation where one's life or the life of a loved one is on the line? The residents of Salem could either change to deal with the times, and the hysteria, or end up being hanged. What type of choice was that? Clearly, it was not an easy one.

### **Definition 1:**

- 1. a vessel  
[a pot/cauldron]  
used for melting  
a substance that  
requires a high  
degree of heat**

*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller was a well-chosen title because it accurately describes the circumstances surrounding the characters portrayed in this play. Characters like John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor, and Reverend Hale all experienced extreme tests often surrounding the miracle of life. The most important element of these tests was not the fact that they held control over someone's life; rather, it was what they did or did not do with them. Like a crucible is the interaction of rigorous forces, the characters in *The Crucible* constantly clashed over the most commanding of forces, life or death. It is difficult for one to place himself in their positions because the decisions they made were so important. They had their lives taken for doing the most difficult thing of all: the right thing. The characters confronted with these intense challenges always had a way out, by lying, and yet they did not choose this path. It is interesting to wonder just how the people closest to us would react if faced with the same situation, with the choice of right and wrong, good or evil, truth or death.

**Definitions 2 and 3:**

- 2. a severe test**
- 3. a place or situation in which concentrated forces interact to cause or influence change or development**

The characters in *The Crucible* that underwent dramatic changes and severe tests prove the validity of the title. John Proctor changed from being a sinner, a man convinced of his own moral flaws into a man with a deeply held belief in his moral superiority. Reverend Hale's change was also dramatic. He morphed from a lead investigator of the Salem courts into one who openly opposed the judges' decisions, and in the end, a man convinced that lying to save a life was better than telling the truth in order to die. Elizabeth Proctor changed from being a cold, uncaring wife to a loving heart sick woman who missed her husband. These changes all show how the title is a symbolic representation of the experiences of the characters. What would you have done if you were John Proctor?

**Definitions 1 and 2:**

- 1. a vessel  
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used for melting  
a substance that  
requires a high  
degree of heat**
- 2. a severe test**

The severe tests that characters such as Mary Warren, Giles Corey, and John Proctor experienced throughout the play of *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller help to prove the title is appropriate. John Proctor and Giles Corey both faced severe tests when they had to decide between saving their lives or doing what was morally right. Both men chose to die for what they believed in to help the prosperity of others. Mary Warren experienced tests when she made decisions between telling the truth and protecting herself. Ultimately, she chose to harm others in order to save her life. Although not all of the crucibles that these characters faced ended the same way, the title of the play symbolizes the severe tests that took place throughout the trials. The witch trials brought out the true qualities, good and bad, in the citizens of Salem when they were faced with troubling decisions. Would you have been able to look past the terrifying realities and stand up for what you believed in or would you have lied to save yourself?

WHICH DEFINITION(S)?