



The Crucible Considering a Writer's Choices

Playwrights carefully consider each scene in a play. Sometimes a writer's choices are based on what she or he thinks is best for the plot or the characters. Other times, choices are driven by what is best for the audience. In the Appendix of *The Crucible*, you'll find Act Two, Scene II, a scene excised from the play. Read Act Two, Scene II, and then complete this worksheet.

1. Summarize the scene.

2. Decide whether including this scene would have added or taken away value from the play. In making your assessment, be sure to consider how this scene would change the reading of the play. Record your ideas.

3. Gather with classmates who are arguing the same viewpoint and compare notes. Add more ideas after discussion with your group.

4. Have a class debate about why this scene should or should not have been included in the play.

Answer Key

Sample Student Response

1. Summarize the scene.

John Proctor and Abigail meet in the woods to discuss the trial and their relationship. The conversation begins in a friendly manner but ends in conflict. John observes that Abigail has been going out to the tavern frequently and is attracting the attention of other men. Abigail talks of her physical suffering, caused, she believes, by those who worship the devil. She wants to continue to cleanse the town of the devil's influence. Abigail tells John that their affair made her see the hypocrisy in others. She believes that she is now doing God's work through her accusations of devil worship and that she is going to become John's wife when the trials are over.

John tells her that if his wife is not freed from prison by the next day, he will tell the court that Abigail is a fraud who knew that the poppet did not belong to his wife and who asked Mary Warren to stab the poppet with a needle. He promises to confess his affair with Abigail in front of the court to explain Abigail's motivation. John calls Abigail a whore and thinks she has gone mad. Abigail insists John will be happy to see his wife hang so he can be with Abigail. She thinks she is saving him from himself.

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.5 Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.