ANSWER KEY: SHORT ANSWER STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS - *The Crucible*

Act One

**1. "So now they and their church found it necessary to deny any other sect its freedom, lest their**

**New Jerusalem be defiled and corrupted by wrong and deceitful ideas." What is the irony in that statement?**

*The Puritans came to this country for religious freedom; however, when they got here, they persecuted others as they had been persecuted.*

**2. Explain how the witch-hunt years were a time of "general revenge."**

*The witch hunts were a chance to get revenge on neighbors for whatever petty squabbles they had been having.*

**3. Identify Tituba, Abigail, Betty**

***Tituba*** *- Parris's slave from Barbados; went with the girls into the forest; accused of conjuring spirits and being a witch; she confessed to being a witch to save her life.*

***Abigail*** *- Parris's orphaned niece who lived in his home; main instigator of the witch hunt; enjoyed the attention and tried to get revenge on several people in the village; had an affair with John Proctor and wanted to take Elizabeth's place as his wife.*

***Betty*** *- Parris's daughter; had some sort of a fit and won’t wake up; only explanation the people of Salem can find for her condition is the presence of witchcraft in their village.*

**4. Why does Mrs. Putnam believe there are witches in Salem?**

*She has lost 7 babies in their first few days of life, and her only living child (Ruth) is acting peculiar; witchcraft is her answer to these strange events.*

**5. What is Mary's argument to Abby?**

*She wants Abby to tell the truth about what happened in the woods. The worst that can*

*happen to them would be that they would be whipped and reprimanded; if the lies go on, things could get out of hand and the punishment would be far worse (jail or hanging).*

**6. Describe Proctor.**

*Proctor is a strong, fit man in his thirties; a farmer; even-tempered, soft-spoken, yet full of authority and confidence; had an affair with Abigail.*

**7. What happened between Abigail and John Proctor prior to the opening of the play?**

*They had an affair.*

**8. What was the "sign" that Betty was bewitched?**

*She could not stand to hear the Lord's name.*

**9. What does Rebecca do to Betty?**

*She stood over Betty and quieted her.*

**10. What is Rebecca's explanation of the girls' behavior?**

*She thinks the girls have made up their story to get attention; they’re acting like children*

**11. What is Proctor's reason for his not regularly attending church?**

*He doesn't like Parris or the way he preaches; he also doesn't think Parris is a very good minister because he seems too concerned with material wealth.*

**12. What does Parris want?**

*Parris wants the deed to his house, and firewood in addition to his salary.*

**13. What do Putnam and Proctor argue about? What does this show?**

*They argue about lumber and the ownership of a piece of land on which the lumber grows; Putnam is a land-grabbing man who will use devious means to get what he wants.*

**14. Who is Rev. John Hale, and why does he come to Salem?**

*Rev. John Hale is an expert in witchcraft. He comes to Salem to help the town rid itself of witchcraft.*

**15. Hale says, "They [the books] must be [heavy]; they are weighted with authority." What is the significance of this remark?**

*The books are filled with information about the devil and witchcraft (and how to get rid of it).*

**16. To what does Tituba confess? Why?**

*Tituba confesses that she conjured spirits, met with the devil, signed his book. If she had not "confessed," she would have hanged.*

**17. What do the girls do at the end of Act One?**

*They admit that they are bewitched, and they start naming the names of people they had “seen with the devil.”*

Act Two

**1. How much time has elapsed between Acts I and II?**

*Eight days*

**2. Describe how Proctor and Elizabeth interact over dinner. Characterize their relationship.**

*Their conversation is tense, reserved; their relationship seems strained, there is a sense of separation*

**3. Describe the allusion Elizabeth uses on page 1293. What does it reveal about Abigail's new standing in the community?**

*She compares Abigail to Moses as he parted the sea; Abigail has emerged as a key figure in the trials*

(4)

**5. Describe Elizabeth's changing emotions as she challenges John. Why does she feel this way?**

*She becomes more persistent in asking John to go to the court; she is concerned John may have lingering feelings for Abigail*

**6. What does Elizabeth want John to do?**

*She wants him to go to Ezekiel Cheever and tell him the girls are frauds*

**7. John compares Elizabeth to a judge in court. How does she respond?**

*She responds that the judge sits in John’s heart.*

**(8.)**

**9. What has Mary made for Elizabeth?**

*A “poppet” (doll)*

**10. Why is Mary in such a shaky physical condition?**

*She has spent the day in court proceedings*

**11. How many women will be arrested?**

*39*

**12. Why was Goody Osburn convicted?**

*She was accused of mumbling curses; she tried to say her commandments but could not*

**13. What change has Mary's participation in the court proceedings brought in her attitude with the Proctors?**

*She has an air of authority, importance*

**14. Why does she say the Proctors should be nice to her?**

*She is an official of the court; she saved Elizabeth’s life when her name was mentioned in the court*

**15. When Proctor says, without conviction, "They dismissed it," what does that tell you? (page 1298)**

*John thinks Elizabeth is no longer accused or under suspicion*

**16. Who accuses Elizabeth?**

*Abigail Williams*

**17. What does Elizabeth want John to do?**

*Confront Abigail and tell her their relationship is over*

**18. Describe Reverend Hale's entrance. What is the mood surrounding his appearance?**

*John and Elizabeth are in a heated discussion when he appears in their doorway; it is tense, highly emotional*

**(19.)**

**20. How often is Proctor in church?**

*26 times in 17 months*

**21. Explain the significance of the golden candlesticks.**

*Parris preached at length about the need for golden candlesticks on the church altar; Proctor is offended by Parris’s greed*

**22. Why hasn't Proctor's third son been baptized?**

*Proctor does not want Parris touching his child; Proctor sees nothing godly in him*

**23. What does Hale ask John to do to prove he [John] is a Christian?**

*Recite the 10 Commandments*

**24. What is ironic about John's response?**

*He omits “Thou shalt not commit adultery”; he committed adultery with Abigail*

**25. Proctor says, "I have no witness, and cannot prove it, except my word be taken." Why is this line significant?**

*People who accuse the innocent of witchcraft have been taken at their word, even with no evidence, other witnesses, or proof*

**26. What does John Proctor tell Reverend Hale about Abigail Williams?**

*They were “sporting” in the woods; they were startled when they were caught by Parris*

**27. What metaphor does Francis use when referring to his wife? (page 1304)**

*She is the “brick and mortar” of the church (she is a godly, religious woman)*

**28. How do you know Cheever does not first believe the charges against Elizabeth?**

*He says he does not like the sound/thought of her being accused*

**29. Earlier, Hale said the Devil was in Salem. According to Proctor, what is walking in Salem? (page 1307)**

*Vengeance*

**30. Elizabeth is accused. Describe the crime and the proof.**

*Abigail was stabbed by a needle; there is a needle in the doll in Elizabeth’s house (the doll Mary Warren gave her); Elizabeth is accused of stabbing Abigail*

**31. Why is Hale so unwilling to believe Abigail is guilty of fraud and murder?**

*He believes the court is just/fair/right in its dealings*

**32. What is John Proctor going to do?**

*Force Mary Warren to explain she stuck the needle in the poppet; to say Abigail is lying*

**33. Of what is Mary Warren most afraid?**

*Abigail will turn on her and kill her (and Abigail will charge lechery against Proctor)*

**34. What is the only way an accused person can save herself?**

*Confess to witchcraft, even if she is innocent*

**35. What is ironic about Ezekiel Cheever's being the one who arrests Elizabeth Proctor? (see question #6)**

*Cheever is the person Elizabeth encouraged John to tell that the girls were frauds; he was initially a trusted, reliable official*

Act Three

**1. What is the setting of Act III?**

*The Salem meeting house 🡪 the courtroom*

**2. What new testimony does Mary Warren Give (pg. 1318)**

*The girls were all pretending*

**3. Elizabeth is pregnant, so she will have a year’s reprieve. Why does Proctor continue with his charge that the girls are lying? (pg. 1320)**

*Other innocent people have been wrongly accused*

**4. How many signatures has Francis Nurse collected on behalf of Rebecca, Elizabeth, and Martha?**

*91*

**5. What is going to happen to those who signed the testament?**

*They will be summoned for questioning*

**6. What does the judge expect from the defenders that he does not expect from Abigail.**

*He expects those accused to show proof of their innocence; he does not expect Abigail to show proof of their guilt*

**7. What argument does Proctor use to defend Mary Warren’s statements about the poppet?**

*Elizabeth never kept any poppets in their home*

**8. How does Mary Warren explain her fainting?**

*It was pretense (fake)*

**9. What is ironic about Abigail’s speech on page 1331?**

*She accuses the court of mistrusting her and questioning her (she has lied throughout the proceedings)*

**10. How does the Act end for the following characters?**

*a. Mary Warren and Abigail – they are somewhat reconciled; Mary Warren claims to go “back to God” and turns on Proctor*

*b. John Proctor and Giles Corey – they are taken to jail*

Act Four

**1. According to Parris, why is Hale talking to Rebecca Nurse?**

*He is trying to get her and others to confess to witchcraft to save themselves*

**2. What have Abigail and Mercy Lewis done? Be specific.**

*They both said they were spending the night at the other’s house; Parris has heard they may have boarded a ship; his strongbox (safe) has been broken into, he thinks the girls have robbed him and left with his money*

**3. What does Parris propose? What is Danforth’s response?**

*Parris proposes a postponement to the hangings. Danforth says twelve have already died; to postpone the hangings would reflect badly on him as a judge and make those who had already died look innocent.*

**4. Why does Hale say he has returned to Salem? What does he mean by this statement?**

*He has “come to do the Devil’s work”; he is trying to convince innocent people to confess to witchcraft*

**5. Why has Elizabeth been brought out of her cell?**

*To convince Proctor to confess to witchcraft to save his life*

**6. What happened to Giles Corey? Why wouldn’t he answer yes or no to his indictment?**

*He was pressed to death; he could not be condemned a witch if he didn’t answer, he would die a Christian and his sons would inherit his farm*

**7. What does Elizabeth confess to John?**

*She was a cold wife; she was the reason he had an affair with Abigail*

**8. How does Rebecca react when she sees Proctor?**

*She is initially happy to see him alive, but is shocked when he confesses to witchcraft*

**9. Proctor will lie about his associations with the Devil. What won’t he lie about?**

*Seeing others with the Devil (Arthur Miller wouldn’t name associates in McCarthy’s Communist “witch hunt”)*

**10. What does Proctor do to his signed confession? Why? Be specific.**

*He grabs it and refuses to let it be hung in the village; his says his confession (a lie) does not need to be made public, that it blackens the names of those who refused to confess; he begs to keep his name; he tears his confession, condemning himself to hang*

**11. How do you know Proctor has forgiven himself?**

*He sees some shred of goodness in himself by not lying to save himself*

**12. Why won’t Elizabeth plead with John one last time?**

*He has shown goodness and she will not take that from him*