Dear teachers:

Thank you for joining Steppenwolf Education for our 2017/2018 Steppenwolf for Young Adults season featuring two plays in conversation: When does a lie become the truth?

For our first show of the season, we are excited to present a fresh take on a familiar entry to the canon. Written in response to the spread of McCarthyism, Arthur Miller’s classic work The Crucible explores a paranoid witch hunt and its very real consequences in the town of Salem, Massachusetts. This play, while first performed over 60 years ago, has remained eerily relevant, and its exploration of the dangers of group think and mob mentalities seems as much a conversation today as it did when it was first published in response to the Red Scare of the 1950s.

Our production asks audience members to consider the very real circumstances that would lead a community to turn inward against itself. We will shine a light on the ascension of Abigail Williams, a young girl who begins the play deeply burdened by her given circumstances but who, throughout the story, is able to manipulate the fear of her neighbors, fed by a series of distrustful and escalating accusations, into a source of individual agency. In our theater, and in your classrooms, we hope that this story will spur conversations and encourage a careful examination of the ease in which a lie might become accepted as reality.

This season, we are also excited to announce the creation of Steppenwolf Education, a new department under which Steppenwolf for Young Adults will be housed and continue its tradition of creating world-class productions for teen audiences. In addition to these productions, Steppenwolf Education will oversee educator training, teen programming, and an expanded model for community partnerships allowing Steppenwolf to reach neighborhoods and communities in new ways. We are excited to continue working with you and your students, and to explore new opportunities for partnership and learning.

See you at the theater!

The Steppenwolf Education Team
Maybe you’ve read The Crucible. Maybe you’ve seen it on stage or on screen. Maybe you’ve never even heard of it! Arthur Miller, the playwright, is known for his famous works such as All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and of course, The Crucible. He lived his adult life during a politically turbulent time, which influenced the themes and content included in his plays. The Crucible is arguably one of Miller’s most controversial plays because of the way in which he challenged the US government with his writing at a time when dissenting artists were literally being put on trial. Keep reading to learn something new about the play, the playwright, and the events that provided the foundation for The Crucible.

1. WHAT’S IN A NAME?
A crucible can refer to a severe test or trial or a metal container used for heating and purifying substances. Both definitions make a fitting title for Miller’s play; the court of Salem tried and punished a myriad of people for witchcraft in order to purify the nature of their town.

2. A FAILING SUCCESS
When The Crucible first premiered on the Broadway stage, critics were unforgiving. A New York Times review offered a particularly harsh analysis of the play: “It may be that Mr. Miller has tried to pack too much inside his drama, and that he has permitted himself to be concerned more with the technique of the witch hunt than with its humanity.” However, despite receiving less than favorable reviews, The Crucible went on to win the Tony Award for best play that year and has since been a highly acclaimed play.

3. A NOT SO FOREIGN LANGUAGE
The unique language in The Crucible mimics the language written in the King James Bible. Miller familiarized himself with the 1611 version of this Bible in order to accurately portray the speech rhythms and patterns used at the time.

4. AUTHOR TO AUTHOR
Arthur Miller always had the intention of commenting on communism and McCarthyism, but the inspiration for using the Salem Witch Trials as an allegory came from a book: “…it was not until I read a book published in 1867 – a two-volume, thousand-page study by Charles W. Upham, who was then the mayor of Salem – that I knew I had to write about the period.”

5. MATTER OVER MIND
If Betty and Abigail weren’t possessed by the devil, what caused their unusual behavior? Linnda Caporael, a doctor of psychology, came up with a theory in 1976 that the chaos leading up to the Salem Witch Trials was caused by ergasism, a type of food poisoning caused by infected grains that can cause symptoms eerily similar to the ones Betty, Abigail, and the other girls experienced. Studies published afterward discarded the idea of ergasism, and what actually afflicted these girls remains a mystery.

6. ARTISTIC LIBERTIES
In The Crucible, John Proctor is described as a farmer in his middle thirties and Abigail Williams as a 17-year-old girl. At the time of the Salem Witch Trials, however, John Proctor was actually 60 years of age while Abigail was only 11-years-old! Arthur Miller altered their ages on purpose. Why? Well, he took artistic liberty with their relationship. The affair between John and Abigail never actually existed, but Miller incorporated it in order to heighten the drama and focus the story of the play.

7. THE MILLER FAMILY TREE
The 1996 movie based on The Crucible featured Daniel Day-Lewis as John Proctor. Did you know that Lewis is Arthur Miller’s son-in-law? While on set for The Crucible, Lewis was introduced to Rebecca Miller, the playwright’s daughter. Later that year, they tied the knot!

8. INACCURACY & CONTROVERSY
In the movie adaptation of The Crucible, John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, and Martha Corey recite The Lord’s Prayer just before they are hung. This scene was added for dramatic effect, but the inspiration for it came from the trials. Reverend George Burroughs, accused and executed for witchcraft, was heard praying just before he was hung. This confused and troubled the citizens of Salem; it was commonly believed that a witch could not speak in prayer.

9. A CONDUCTOR’S BROOM
The Crucible has been produced on Broadway three times (most recently in 2016), but did you also know it is an opera? In 1961, The Crucible, written by Robert Ward, premiered at the New York City Opera. It received a Pulitzer Prize for Music as well as a citation from the New York Music Critics Circle.

10. PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH
In 1956, Arthur Miller was called before The House Un-American Activities Committee in regard to his leftist political leanings. When asked to give the names of other pro-Communists, he said to the court: “I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him.” As a result, Miller was found guilty of contempt of Congress, disallowed a US passport and blacklisted by Hollywood. Fortunately for him, his plays were still performed on the Broadway stage.

BONUS FACT
A STAR STUDDED ROMANCE
Did you know that Arthur Miller was married to Marilyn Monroe? While they never had kids, they were married for five years, from 1956 to 1961.
Betty Parris has been in a coma-like state since midnight when her father, Reverend Parris, discovered Betty, her cousin, Abigail Williams, and several other young girls dancing naked in the forest. Reverend Parris has called Reverend Hale, a young minister specializing in the supernatural, to Salem to explore for signs of the devil, who he believes is the cause for his daughter’s current condition.

Members of the town come in to check on Betty’s condition including Mary Warren and Mercy Lewis, two more of the girls who were dancing in the woods, and John Proctor, a local farmer who we learn had a brief extramarital affair with Abigail while she was their servant. Despite John insisting that the affair is over, Abigail is still in love, and flirts with John during his visit, revealing to him that while she was dancing the night before, there was no witchcraft involved.

Reverend Hale arrives, and interrogates Tituba, the Parris’ slave, about her involvement with the dancing in the forest. After an interrogation, frightened and intimidated, she confesses to having conversations with the Devil, and shares a list of names of other townspeople she also saw with the Devil. Abigail joins in with her own list, and Betty awakens from her deep sleep and adds her own names.

Eight days later, 39 women have been arrested and accused of witchcraft by Abigail. John’s wife, Elizabeth Proctor urges her husband to tell the court about Abby’s confession to him denying witchcraft, but he is nervous to do so for fear of repercussion. Mary Warren, the Proctors’ new servant, brings the news that Abigail has accused Elizabeth of witchcraft but explains that she intervened, saving Elizabeth’s life. She offers Elizabeth a small doll (a poppet) as a gift, which she has made while sitting at court and listening to daily proceedings.

Ezekiel Cheever arrives with an arrest warrant for Elizabeth Proctor – Abigail Williams has accused her of witchcraft, and attempted murder through use of spells and poppets. Elizabeth and John deny ever owning any poppets, but Cheever discovers the poppet that Mary Warren gave Elizabeth just moments before and brings her to trial on charges of witchcraft and attempted murder. Mary Warren warns John that Abigail plans to blackmail him – if he tries to expose her lies, she will expose him as an adulterer (someone who has taken a lover out of marriage).

The night before Elizabeth’s trial, John goes to meet with Abigail in the woods where she promises to be the perfect wife to him once Elizabeth is gone. John rejects her, and asks that she come clean with the truth, but she refuses to do so.

Suddenly Abigail feels a “chill,” which Susanna and Mercy feel in turn. The cold seems to worsen and they accuse Mary Warren of conjuring this punishment. In an effort to put an end to the lies, John comes forward and admits to the affair, explaining that Abigail is accusing Elizabeth as an act of revenge. Danforth invites Elizabeth into the court to confirm John’s story, but, not knowing John has confessed, she denies he had an affair in order to protect him.

Reverend Hale feels that Danforth has gone too far, and insists that he listen to John. At this moment, Abigail looks at the ceiling, and Mercy and Susanna follow. They claim to see Mary Warren’s spirit in the rafters in the form of a terrifying yellow bird that is readying itself for the attack. Mary Warren begs them to stop, and the girls start to mimic her, supposedly at the hand of Mary Warren’s supernatural power. The chaos increases until Mary Warren finally breaks, turning on John, and accusing him of forcing her to go to the court with false confessions in order to save Elizabeth. Danforth arrests John and sentences him to execution.

Elizabeth visits John in his prison cell where he asks for her guidance. She says will not tell him what to do, but tries to offer the comfort that he is a good man and whatever choice he makes will reflect that.

John agrees to confess to his accused partnership with the devil but, he refuses to indict any other town people in exchange for his freedom. When Danforth asks John to sign his confession, John refuses. He will allow them to take his soul through a false confession, but not his name. John withdraws his confession, and after sharing one final embrace with Elizabeth, he is taken away to be hanged.
Our production of *The Crucible* will feature double and triple casting of roles, meaning some actors will play more than one character which may include actors stepping outside of their gender, racial or generational identity. You will see the actors switching characters on stage with the change of a costume piece between, or even within, scenes. Over the course of the play, we see Abigail’s little lie grow until the entire town is lost in the fear of witchcraft. At a certain point the truth is so lost within the chaos that it almost does not matter who is accused, and the choice to double/triple cast reflects that confusion.

Martha Corey (Played by Stephanie Shum)  
Giles Corey’s third wife. Her love of reading unwittingly contributes to her arrest as a suspect of witchcraft.

Ezekiel Cheever (Played by Avi Roque)  
The clerk of the court, documenting the witch trials who strictly adheres to the law.

Deputy Danforth (Played by Michael Patrick Thorton)  
The deputy governor of Massachusetts. He firmly believes that he is in the right by bringing these women to trial, and is overly cautious about evidence that proves the accusations to be false.

Sarah Good (Played by Larry Baldacci)  
A homeless woman in Salem. Sadly, she is the first individual accused of witchcraft.

Reverend John Hale (Played by Erik Hellman)  
A young minister considered to be an expert in witchcraft and supernatural forces called to Salem. His arrival sparks hysteria in the town and adds fuel to the witch hunt.

Judge Hathorne (Played by Echaka Agba)  
A powerful and well respected judge in Salem presiding over the witch trials with Deputy Danforth.

Francis Nurse (Played by Millie Hurley)  
A wealthy, well-respected man in Salem who is often called upon to be an impartial observer. He assists in attempting to stop the witch trials after his wife is arrested.

Rebecca Nurse (Played by Millie Hurley)  
Known to be wise and pious, she is well-respected in Salem. Rebecca is accused of witchcraft and arrested, but refuses to lie and confess for these “sins” as she has done nothing wrong.

Reverend Parris (Played by Peter Moore)  
The minister of Salem’s Church, and disliked by many town members, including John Proctor. Parris is considered to be greedy and paranoid. He is highly concerned about his reputation in the town.

Betty Parris (Played by Kristina Valada-Viars)  
Reverend Parris’ young daughter who falls into a coma-like state after Parris catches her and Abigail dancing in the forest. Her illness sparks the witch trials, and the chaos that follows in Salem.

Elizabeth Proctor (Played by Kristina Valada-Viars)  
Wife of John Proctor, Elizabeth is known to be honest, like her husband, but also a little cold. She dismissed Abigail from her position after suspecting the young girl’s affair with John Proctor.

John Proctor (Played by Travis Knight)  
A local farmer in Salem married to Elizabeth Proctor who recently engaged in an affair with Abigail Williams. He is known to society as honest man who is outspoken in his hatred of hypocrisy. John does not frequent Church, and is a vocal critic of Reverend Parris. This behavior makes him an outcast and a suspect in the witch trials that consume Salem.

Abigail Williams (Played by Naima Hebrail Kidjo)  
An orphan without any family wealth or marriage prospects living in Salem. Abigail was recently fired from her job as the Proctor’s maid after her affair with John Proctor was exposed. She still loves John Proctor and wishes to be his wife in place of Elizabeth. Abigail is at the center of the witch trials in Salem, after being discovered dancing in the woods at night with Tituba. To protect herself, and gain a sense of agency, she gives to the court names of individuals to arrest who she declares are conspiring with the Devil.

Tituba (Played by Echaka Agba)  
Reverend Parris’ slave from Barbados who is found dancing with Abigail and Betty in the woods. She confesses to witchcraft and conspiring with the devil because she is scared and without agency, given her circumstances.

Mary Warren (Played by Taylor Blim)  
One of the girls in Abigail’s group. Mary Warren is quiet and shy. She becomes an official of the court when the witch trials begin. This is the first time she experiences this type of power and agency.
Inside the Mind of Abigail Williams: An Actor Creates Backstory

By Naima Hebrail Kidjo, who plays Abigail Williams

In any show that you see on stage, it is the responsibility of an actor to make choices and create a character that will allow them to tell the story of the play. This process, which happens leading up to and all throughout rehearsal, involves carefully reading (and re-reading!) the script and working with the director to develop a backstory and understand the character’s motivations, or what they are fighting for. The playwright doesn’t always give the full story, so an actor has to fill things in for themselves. We stopped by rehearsal to check in with Naima Hebrail Kidjo, the actor playing Abigail in our production of The Crucible, to see what she’s been thinking about during the rehearsal process in bringing this complicated character to life. Check out what Naima has to say!

In Abigail there is a tension between an absence of agency and a need to be in control. I have imagined that when she was a child she witnessed her parents getting murdered. This not only means that she is an orphan in a town of families, but it also tells me that she is deeply in tune with the destructive power of individuals.

Her environment is harsh in many ways. Salem is cold and isolated, not unlike the people who populate the town. In her own personal life, there is a definite lack of warmth. She depends on people who do not love her as their own. She even suspects that her uncle, Reverend Parris, begrudges her presence in his household. Despite all of this, she has a fire in her soul. In fact, it’s all the time she spent on the outside, looking in, that allowed her to hone that instinct for people’s weakness as well as her “endless capacity for dissembling.” Where others wilted, she found a way to thrive. She puts on a cold and tame exterior for the village-folk, but comes into a fiery and powerful persona with John Proctor and the girls of the town.

It is precisely her social powerlessness that enables her to create a new status for herself. Because Abigail feels that she has nothing to lose, she is free to chase emancipation and love with abandon. Religious, patriarchal, and condescending, Salem may see uniqueness as both suspicious and dangerous, but no one individual sees her uniqueness–until John Proctor. He embodies the power that a home and a sense of belonging gives a person. Something that she never had.

Abigail is the embodiment of the permeability of truth and lie. Which is the real Abby: the quiet God-loving orphan, or the dancing Devil-worshipping witch? Do we all fall somewhere in the middle? Perhaps Abigail is the only one who is brave enough to live both fully? Either way, like in all seventeen-year-old girls, there is more than meets the eye if only someone took the time to look.

Applications are available on March 1, 2018.

Like the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council on Facebook and Instagram!
Or visit steppenwolf.org/youngadultcouncil for more information.
“I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!”

The 17th century Salem, Massachusetts that Arthur Miller sets his play in is one that is not kind to Abigail and the other young women who reside in the town. Puritanical Salem was a patriarchal society – one that was structured to give men, and only men, the power and authority to exert dominance over women in all aspects of life. Puritans believed that women should be subservient to men, and that men should maintain complete authority over, not only their homes, but all facets of the public sphere. The Law’s Resolutions of Women’s Rights, a book published by an anonymous source in 1632 in order to help women understand how the law might impact a woman throughout her life, clarified for any who might be unclear:

“That which a husband hath is his own... That which the wife hath is the husband’s.”

Young people also existed at the bottom of the Puritan social hierarchy and were often ignored or passed over in favor of more respected voices. Girls and young women especially were deprived of any kind of power or agency. Puritan girls were told from a young age that their role in society was domestic in nature: to be in service to their husbands, to perform household duties, to bear children and to raise a family. This expectation of young women to exist within the domestic sphere is evident in Miller’s The Crucible: with Abigail Williams, Mary Warren and Mercy Lewis, the three young women at the center of the accusations, all employed as servants in the homes of Salem.

Interestingly, the majority of people accused and found guilty of witchcraft in Salem in 1692 and 1693 were women – it took much less for a woman to be considered “out of line”, and women who veered from the role that was set for them, who were considered stubborn or antagonistic were often accused of consortining with the devil. In The Crucible, Abigail lashes out against those suffocating restrictions but in doing so, throws an entire community into turmoil – perhaps because the cycle of oppression which she inflicts is all she knows.

When those who have been systemically oppressed respond in kind, how do we make sense of what is left behind?

DISCUSS – After seeing the show, discuss the following as a class:

1. How did Abigail’s status in her community impact her decision to accuse individuals of witchcraft? Why do you think Abigail responded in the way that she did?

2. In The Crucible, Abigail threatens the other girls, “And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it... I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down!” Why would someone who has been oppressed use their newfound powers to emulate the oppression that they themselves have experienced?

3. As an enslaved woman of color, Tituba has the lowest status among all of the characters in the play. How is her response to being accused of witchcraft different than Abigail’s? How is it similar?

4. Why is it that Abigail is able to gain power so quickly over the course of the play? What elements about the status quo exist at the start of the play that allow for accusations to command such authority and spread so quickly?

WRITING PROMPT – Respond to the following prompt:

In The Crucible, Abigail’s standing in society leaves her practically voiceless. Frustrated by her lack of agency and power, Abigail acts out and thrusts the town of Salem into a deep and dangerous spiral. Write about a time in which you felt powerless in regards to your own life and attempted to or wanted take matters into your own hands. Make sure to identify the moment that made you feel powerless, and the action(s) that you took in response to this feeling.

Example Response:

In my US History class, we were randomly assigned partners to complete a group project with. While I worked long and hard on my portion of the project, my partners failed to meet even the basic expectations and as a result, we received a failing grade. I felt as though my teacher refused to recognize the work I put in – I don’t have control over other people, and yet, my hard work was not recognized. In fact, I was punished! Because of this frustration, I stopped paying attention in the class, my grades slipped, because if my work wasn’t going to be recognized, I wasn’t going to work hard.

REFLECT – After writing about this experience, discuss the following questions in small groups:

1. Why did you feel powerless in this situation? Were you limited in action? Language? Access? Resources? How might the loss of control in any one of these categories impact your agency as an individual?

2. How did feeling powerless affect the way you responded to the situation? How might you have responded differently if you felt powerful in that situation?

3. Reflecting on this situation, would you have done anything differently? Did feeling powerless in the moment cause you to make a decision that you would not have made otherwise? Why?

ACTIVITY TIME: This activity (as outlined) is designed for 30 minutes.

In this activity, students will read the article below, exploring how Abigail’s lack of agency might have led to feelings of powerlessness that impact the events of the play. They will reflect on how the given circumstances in their own lives might shape their decision making. This activity should be used after seeing the play.

In Arthur Miller’s The Crucible, we are introduced to a world in which women and young girls have very little agency when it comes to their own lives. As a young orphan without a family’s inheritance to her name, Abigail Williams is incredibly limited by the avenues by which she might improve her own standing in society. Spurned by John Proctor and eager to take control of her life following the end of a brief love affair that she believed meant he would leave his wife for her, Abigail takes matters into her own hands and hurls a dangerous accusation that shatters the status quo of the small, sleepy town of Salem:

“I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!”

In the moment cause you to make a decision that you would not have made otherwise? Why?

How might you have responded differently if you felt powerful in that situation?

As an individual?

A Loss of Agency, A Loss of Control: The Young Women of The Crucible

By Education Manager Jared Bellot

Costume Design by Izumi Inaba

This activity should be used after seeing the play.
Jared Bellot: Jon, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about the upcoming production of *The Crucible* that you are directing for Steppenwolf for Young Adults. I’m curious, what initially drew you to this story?

Jonathan Berry: *The Crucible* is a play that has been on my directing wish list for a while, but it’s also a play that is done frequently, so I figured I probably wouldn’t be able to direct it for some time. When Hallie Gordon, [the Artistic Director of Steppenwolf for Young Adults] brought it to me and asked if it was something I might be interested in, I felt like this remarkable gift had been dropped in my lap. I immediately sat down and re-read it to re-familiarize myself with the play and was amazed at what I discovered - I think that *The Crucible* is one of those pieces that everyone thinks they know, but there is so much more to it.

Jared: What was it like to reread the play?

Jonathan: It was thrilling to sit down with Arthur Miller’s words again. He wrote an incredibly good play, which seems so sort of silly to say, but the fact is, when I first read it in high school, it was very difficult to get through. I think there is an immediate sort of distancing that happens for high school students because of when and where this play takes place and how the characters talk. Re-reading this play, I was able to see a really tense, important, driving story about a lie that grew and took over this town like a fever and the people who stood up against it. There wasn’t any dust on this story. The distance that I had felt twenty years ago in high school wasn’t there anymore.

“*The Crucible* is one of those pieces that everyone thinks that they know, but there is so much more to it. Re-reading the play...there wasn’t any dust on this story.”

Jared: What about re-reading the play now made it feel more relevant than it had when you read the story back in high school?

Jonathan: I think *The Crucible* is frequently reduced to: “John Proctor is a good man, and he’s standing up for truth. He begins the play as a hero and he ends the play as a hero.” The more time I spend with this play, the more clear it becomes that it is a piece that is as complex as our national conversation right now. *The Crucible* feels like a necessary story for the time that we’re living in right now.

“The more time I spend with this play, the more clear it becomes that it is a piece that is as complex as our national conversation right now.”

Jared: What do you hope that this production offers to conversations that are happening in our communities today?

Jonathan: The thing that Arthur Miller did, which I am really leaning into, was reach backwards in order to speak to his present moment. I think that’s what any good dramatist does, open up the opportunity for growth in perspective and compassion in response. During McCarthyism and the Salem Witch Trials, he saw people in power using differences in ideologies to further their own personal gains. Miller used this play as a forum to reflect on that part of society. We see those same ideologies being used to divide us today, whether it be political ideology, or race, or gender. My hope is that by reaching back, we’re actually able to see our present moment a little bit more clearly. By reaching backwards and by examining something that is a little further away, I hope maybe we can get a little bit closer to some shared and common ground in our current moment.

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For a person who has no other prospects, no agency, and no voice in the community, to tell this lie and suddenly find herself in a position of power where she is suddenly now lifted up—for me it’s no wonder that she grabs ahold of that.

For a person who has lost both her parents, which means she’s not supported in any kind of way. She does not own any land nor has she inherited a great fortune, which means, that in Salem in the 1690s, no one is interested in marrying her. For a person who has no other prospects, no agency, and no voice in the community, to tell this lie and suddenly find herself in a position of power where she is suddenly now lifted up— for me it’s no wonder that she grabs ahold of that. I think for Abigail, the lie that she tells grows into something that is real for her. I think that she comes to believe the lie that she tells, because to disbelieve it starts to discount her position and take her back to that place where she doesn’t have any agency and where she doesn’t a say or voice in this community.

I’m really trying to invest in what’s driving Abigail’s behavior, because I think it’s important to always ask ourselves “How did this thing happen? What are the circumstances that got us here?” I hope that audience members will ask themselves this question and perhaps recognize themselves Abigail and then ask the question: “Would I do what Abigail does?”

Jonathan: How do we open up our ideas in a way that lets us see and hear other people and other perspectives? The Crucible asks us to really question where our ideas are coming from and interrogate what we accept as the truth. To ask where are we holding onto things because we’re afraid of the unknown. I think we cling to ideas sometimes because we are afraid to experience the possibility of change—and whether that’s a fear of being wrong or fear of being an outcast or fear of being someone in society who is shunned for what they’re holding onto. There are all different kinds of reasons that fuel our tight, tight grasp on what we believe. Certainly in the McCarthy era, there was an incredibly hard line that was drawn, which was: if you believe this thing, then you are the enemy. And I think any time you make that kind of absolute statement that draws a hard line and makes basically monsters out of people, I think any time there’s not some opportunity to interrogate ideas or approach with compassion, I think we’re in dangerous territory.

Jared: Except that our theater won’t be completely empty, it will be filled by members of the cast portraying this story. Anything that we should keep an eye out for in terms of the casting of this production?

Jonathan: The script asks for twenty-three actors, which is a monumental number, so we’ve actually limited the cast size. I saw this as an opportunity to start a conversation about casting the same actor in multiple roles in a way that creates significance for the audience. For instance, the actor playing the role of Tituba will also be playing the role of Judge Hathorne, two people of really, really different positions of power, almost opposite ends of the power spectrum. When we’re having a conversation about power and how it’s wielded, who has it and how you control it, I’m hoping that this doubling will ask us from a really modern perspective what it means to have a black woman playing Tituba and that same black woman playing Judge Hathorne and how we experience that differently. I’m hoping this doubling is going to build a little bit of resonance about what it means when an actor is in one role and what it means when that same person is in another role and how they behave differently.

Jared: I’m curious to hear your take on the character of Abigail – you’ve spoken about how the driving force of the action in the play is her attempt to gain agency for herself. Can you speak more to this idea?

Jonathan: Abigail is a person who has lost both her parents, which means she’s not supported in any kind of way. She does not own any land nor has she inherited a great fortune, which means, that in Salem in the 1690s, no one is interested in marrying her. For a person who has no other prospects, no agency, and no voice in the community, to tell this lie and suddenly find herself in a position of power where she is suddenly now lifted up— for me it’s no wonder that she grabs ahold of that. I think for Abigail, the lie that she tells grows into something that is real for her. I think that she comes to believe the lie that she tells, because to disbelieve it starts to discount her position and take her back to that place where she doesn’t have any agency and where she doesn’t a say or voice in this community.

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What Makes a Witch Hunt?  
Mapping the History of the Salem Witch Trials

By Education Intern Hanna Samawi

Welcome to Salem, MA... three centuries ago.

The Salem Witch Trials began in 1692 and lasted just over a year, but were the product of a frenzy that was a long time in the making. Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* is a dramatization of these historical events, but a lot of what he wrote is based in historical fact. Salem may be remembered as a relic of the past, but check out the article below as we map out the history of Salem, MA 325 years ago.

Witchcraft was declared a crime punishable by the British government in 1641. English Protestants, also known as Puritans, were certain that the devil was a spirit capable of pervading the bodies and souls of the innocent. Any association with the devil could send you to the court.

In the law of the time stated: “if any man or woman be a witch – that is, hath or consulteth with a familiar spirit – they shall be put to death.”

In 1647, Alice Young, a 47-year-old woman living in Connecticut, became the first individual to be hanged for witchcraft. Over the next 45 years, over 60 individuals were tried for witchcraft, 20 of whom were executed.

In Salem in 1692, cousins Elizabeth Parris (9 years-old) and Abigail Williams (11 years-old) were recorded as exhibiting abnormal behavior. “They screamed, threw things, uttered peculiar sounds, and contorted themselves into strange positions.” Reverend Parris, Elizabeth’s father, requested that a local doctor pay a visit to understand what was ailing these young girls. Unfortunately, even this medical professional couldn’t conjure up a conclusive diagnosis. He declared that they were not suffering from a physical illness, rather, a spiritual one: the devil had entered their souls.

In March of 1692, Tituba became the first of the accused women to confess to witchcraft. She described for the court vivid dreams and hallucinations of the devil. She claimed to have been visited by the devil himself, which the court deemed as valid evidence. She also confessed that she and the other witches were plotting to destroy the Puritans. The three women were sent to jail.

After the first incarceration, accusations became more frequent and flagrant. The court needed little to no proof to indict; a simple proclamation was enough. Throughout the year, approximately 200 people were tried and 20 executed based on these false accusations: Bridget Bishop, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Good, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, Sarah Wildes, George Burroughs, George Jacobs, Martha Carrier, John Proctor, John Willard, Giles Corey, Martha Corey, Mary Eastey, Mary Parker, Alice Parker, Ann Pudeator, Wilmot Redd, Margaret Scott, and Samuel Wardwell, Sr.

The executions halted in September of 1692, but the accusations continued for a few more months. There was no definite end to the Salem Witch Trials. In 1693, testimonies based on dreams or hallucinations became invalid. Because of this, none of the accusers had reliable evidence to disclose to the court, and the chaos dwindled soon after. Some say the governor demanded an end to the trials after his wife was accused. Ultimately, the witch hunt ceased.

In 1702, the trials were deemed illegal. Four years after, Ann Putnam, who stood firmly in her accusations against the innocent, publicly apologized.

“...I desire to lie in the dust, and earnestly beg forgiveness of God, and from all those unto whom I have given just cause of sorrow and offence, whose relations were taken away or accused.”

It was not until 1711 that the names of those executed were cleared. Their families were given financial compensation, 600 pounds to be exact, which today would amount to about $120,000.

In 2001, five of the accused and executed women (Bridget Bishop, Susannah Martin, Alice Parker, Wilmot Redd, and Margaret Scott) were exonerated by the state of Massachusetts. A group of their descendants fought to make this happen. Shari Kelley Worrell, the eighth great-granddaughter of Susannah Martin, told the *New York Times*, “I want to make sure that people know she was not a witch. History will now record her as being what she really was.”

As proven with Salem, a witch hunt doesn’t need start with a mob; it only takes one lie.

In background: Map of Salem, MA (1692)
By Teaching Artist Sindy Isabel Castro

The Crucible was written in response to Arthur Miller’s experience during the infamous McCarthy era of the 1940s and 50s in the United States. The United States was concerned about the rise of Communism abroad and feared its takeover. During this time period, The Red Scare, the fear of Communism took over America. Communists were often referred to as Reds because of the red flag of the Soviet Union. A Senator named Joseph McCarthy accused communists of infiltrating the U.S government and spearheaded the expansion of the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Many people were accused, interrogated, and jailed. During a trip to Salem in 1952, Miller’s discovery of old transcripts from the witchcraft trials in Salem of 1692 sparked inspiration for his allegorical response. Arthur Miller used the Salem Witch Hunt as an allegory for the Communist Witch Hunt of the McCarthy era. He used the characters and events in The Crucible to symbolize the hysteria around communism. On the next page is a comparison between the events of the Salem Witch Trials and the McCarthy Era which inspired Miller’s political allegory.

The Crucible

COMMUNISM

The fear of the other

THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

7. The community of Salem feared that there were witches living among them.

8. Accusations grew from month to month. People were brought in for questioning from Salem and surrounding villages in Massachusetts. It was difficult to prove innocence once accused.

9. The trials grew larger and many accused witches were sent to jail or hanged.

COMMUNISM

The fear of the other

THE RED SCARE

1. Anti-Communist hysteria took over the United States.

2. The U.S. government was determined to find Communist infiltrators. People were questioned in publicized trials and even an unsubstantiated accusation could lead to the destruction of a career.

3. Entertainers and writers that were seen as Communist sympathizers were blacklisted and unable to work. Many lost their jobs or were imprisoned. When questioned, those on trial would have their passports taken away or jailed for refusing to name other communists.

THE FAIR TRADE

5. The trials grew larger and many accused witches were sent to jail or hanged.

6. The trials were conducted in public. Suspects were interrogated and accused of witchcraft.

7. There were still descendants of some of the families living in Massachusetts. As recently as November of 2001, five women that were hanged during the Salem Witch Trials were exonerated by the state.

THE AFTERMATH

1. It wasn’t until spectral evidence was discontinued that many accused witches were released and pardoned.

2. Governor William Phipps disbanded the trials in October of 1692 and would eventually pardon all that were charged by 1693. Over time, apologies were given to the victim’s families and restitutions were made.

3. There are still descendants of some of the families living in Massachusetts. As recently as November of 2001, five women that were hanged during the Salem Witch Trials were exonerated by the state.

THE AFTERMATH

1. 320 artists were blacklisted, among them Arthur Miller, Charlie Chaplin, Lillian Hellman, and Lena Horne.

2. After televised hearings showcased McCarthy’s increased abuse of power, the Senate censured McCarthy on 46 charges for abuse of legislative powers in 1954.

3. It wasn’t until the 1960s that those blacklisted could begin to work in their fields again. For some even longer. In 1997, the Writer’s Guild of America went back to correct 24 films written during the blacklist era, replacing pseudonyms with the true writers of the films.

THE RED SCARE

1. The Red Scare occurred during the 1940s and 1950s. The McCarthy hearings occurred in 1954.

2. During the 1940s, the Soviet Union was expanding. China had a new communist leader in Mao Zedong, and Western Europe was becoming more Communist. It seemed like more of the world was leaning towards Communism.

3. During the 1930s and 1940s, a growing discontent with Capitalism led to an increase in support for the Communist Party in the United States. People feared the rise of Communism and sympathy for the Soviet Union.

4. The House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was founded in 1938 to protect the United States from Nazi sympathizers, but later became the driving force in targeting suspected Communists. The movement was led by Senator Joseph McCarthy who publicly claimed that Communists were infiltrating the U.S. government.

THE FAIR TRADE

1. The Salem Witch Trials occurred in colonial Massachusetts between 1692 and 1693.

2. Many Christians believed that the Devil could give power to people (witches) in exchange for their loyalty. The persecution of witches spread across Europe before it hit the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

3. New colonists were moving in to the Massachusetts Bay Colony causing a strain in resources and relationships in Salem. The Puritans believed that the rifts were the work of the Devil.

4. In January of 1692, Reverend Samuel Parris’ daughter, Elizabeth, and niece, Abigail, became suddenly ill. A local doctor blamed a supernatural power for their illness. The young girls named other women in their community of bewitching them. This set in the motion what is now known as the Salem Witch Trials.

5. It wasn’t until spectral evidence was shown that many accused witches were released and pardoned.

6. Governor William Phipps disbanded the trials in October of 1692 and would eventually pardon all that were charged by 1693. Over time, apologies were given to the victim’s families and restitutions were made.

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THE FAIR TRADE

An Allegorical Response: The Crucible and Communism

“The more I read into the Salem panic, the more it touched off corresponding images of common experiences in the fifties: the old friend of a blacklisted person crossing the street to avoid being seen talking to him.”

- Arthur Miller

“...”
The Truth in Our Actions
A classroom activity

By Teaching Artist Sindy Isabel Castro

ACTIVITY TIME: This activity (as outlined) is designed for 50 minutes.

Arthur Miller’s play The Crucible highlights the chain reaction of events that unfold after the first accusation of a witch in Salem. Fear among a small group led to the widespread hysteria during the Salem Witch Trials and McCarthy hearings.

In this activity, students will explore the chain reactions that lead to events in their own lives. This activity can be used before or after seeing the play.

STEP ONE – READ AND DISCUSS
Have students read through the article “An Allegorical Response” on page 20 comparing the Salem Witch Trials and the McCarthy Trials. Reflect and discuss the following as a class or in small groups:

- What was the chain of events that led to the Salem Witch Trials? The McCarthy hearings?
- How did the events escalate or become more widespread along the way?
- What were the consequences of this chain of events?

STEP TWO – ANALYZE ACTIONS
Have students think of a time in their own lives when something small grew bigger than ever imagined. This can be a positive experience or a negative experience. For example:

- A fight with a friend that began over something small that led to not speaking for a week
- The international women’s march in January where a small protest grew into a national movement
- The controversy over the Pepsi ad with Kendall Jenner that prompted viral criticism

STEP THREE – ART MAKING
Have students use the chain template on page 24 to work their way backward from their chosen event to discover why the small event ended up growing into something so large. They can write sentences or use images to represent each link of the chain. After students have filled out their chain of events, have them cut out the template to create a chain link. See page 23 for examples of what these links might look like.

STEP THREE – REFLECTION
Have students display their chains on their desks or around the room and notice one another’s. Then reflect on the following questions:

- What did you notice about the decisions that led to the final event and outcome?
- Would things have occurred differently if certain parts of the chain had been missing? Why or why not?
- What did you notice about your decision making process as you created your own chain?
- What do these chains and examples from history show us about the relationship between decisions and consequences?

THE MAJOR EVENT (THE END OF THE CHAIN THAT GREW INTO SOMETHING LARGE)
I was grounded for a month by my parents and was told that I had lost their trust.

THE MOMENT BEFORE
I had to admit to my parents that I had snuck out of the house and borrowed the car without permission.

THE MOMENT BEFORE
During the concert, someone smashed into the side of my car while it was parked on the street.

THE MOMENT BEFORE
My parents were out of town the weekend of the show, so I took the car anyway and drove to the concert.

THE MOMENT BEFORE (THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAIN THAT STARTED SMALL)
My favorite band was playing a concert in a town an hour away that I really wanted to attend, so I bought tickets to the show.
Meet the Steppenwolf Education teaching artists who will work on exploring the themes of *The Crucible* with thousands of students across the Chicagoland area as a part of our in-school Residency Program!

Interested in learning more about our In-School Residency Program? Email Education Manager Jared Bellot at jbellot@steppenwolf.org.
The Burn leaves us with the question – how are our own identities influenced by the things that our peers say about us? If someone tells you something about yourself enough times, do you accept their version of yourself and become who they say you are? We see a possible answer to this question in the journey of Mercedes, but also in the arcs of the other girls who, over the course of the play, we discover have identities dictated and shaped by the realities of peer pressure. With *The Burn*, we will be able to explore our season theme, *When does a lie become the truth*, on a very personal level – do we let outside influences take over and determine our fate, or do we fight back in order to preserve those sacred, authentic truths that make us who we are?

**QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT IN PREPARATION FOR THE BURN?**

1. Where do you see the line between fact and fiction intentionally being blurred in your own life? How are your friendships/relationships shaped or affected by untruths?

2. What is the role of gossip in the process of a lie becoming accepted as the truth? How do rumors alter our reality? What are the dangers in accepting the lies that other people might spread about you as your reality?

3. What does the role of technology (the internet, Facebook, Twitter, texting) play in rewriting the truth? How does today’s technology make this process easier? More difficult?
Chicago Public Library Recommends...

We at Steppenwolf Education are thrilled to work once again with the Chicago Public Libraries as a part of our City Connections partnership—a new program model rooted in building authentic and mutually beneficial community partnerships and bringing Steppenwolf programming outside of the walls of the theater and into new social and geographic communities throughout the Chicagoland area.

As a part of this partnership, we turned to the CPL staff to provide their expert opinions on ways teachers and students might dive deeper into the world of The Crucible. The following lists have been prepared by CPL librarians as a resource guide to help you and your students explore themes and topics related to Arthur Miller’s work and Steppenwolf’s production.

Learn more about what CPL has to offer at chipublib.org

FICTION

How to Hang A Witch
Mather, Adriana
Written by a real-life member of the Mather family, this novel follows a teen descendant of Cotton Mather as she returns to Salem to break a curse.

The Minister’s Daughter
Hearn, Julie
When a minister’s daughter gets pregnant, she claims it’s the result of the town healer’s practice of witchcraft.

Wicked Girls: A Novel of the Salem Witch Trials
Hemphill, Stephanie
This novel in verse is told from the perspective of three girls living in Salem during the witch trials.

NONFICTION

The Age of Anxiety: McCarthyism to Terrorism
Johnson, Haynes
Haynes explains how McCarthyism relates to America’s current struggles with extremism and threats to civil liberties.

Arthur Miller: 1915-1962
Bigsbys, C. W. E.
This detailed biography of Miller’s early years was written by a close friend who was given access to Miller’s personal papers.

The Rise and Fall of Senator Joe McCarthy
Giblin, James Leonard
This biography of McCarthy written for teens focuses on his time in the Senate and his use of intimidation tactics to gain power.

The Witches: Salem, 1692
Schiff, Stacy
In this popular history of the witch trials, Schiff examines the roots of the hysteria in Salem.

Chicago Public Library Celebrates Banned Book Week

Chicago Public Library will be celebrating the freedom to read literature such as The Crucible during Banned Book Week, Sept. 24-30, with special programs at select branches, Banned Book selfie stations and reading lists featuring challenged and banned books. In partnership with Steppenwolf Education, CPL will raffle tickets for a student matinee performance and after-party of The Crucible the scene event on October 14. Go to www.chipublib.org/BannedBooksWeek for information about how high school students can submit an entry.

Chicago Public Library is committed to nurturing learning for all ages. As part of our commitment to adolescents, CPL staff and mentors have created engaging and welcoming spaces with interest-driven and age-appropriate programs across the city. Workshops and events take place year round, and are designed to inspire collaboration and creativity, while emphasizing mentorship, hands-on making, digital media and connections to college and career pathways.

Visit chipublib.org or call (312) 747-4050 to learn more.
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOSE WHO PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FOR STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS.

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Steppenwolf for Young Adults is a citywide partner of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) School Partner Program.

Common Core State Standards Aligned With Activities in This Study Guide

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 2:
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See Play Synopsis and Character Descriptions, pages 6 and 8

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 1:
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

See ‘A Loss of Agency, A Loss of Control Activity’ page 12

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 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.

See ‘The Truth in Our Actions Activity’ page 22

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 1:
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

See Examples throughout guide

If you need further information on how grade-specific standards fit into these anchor standards, please let us know.

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THE SCENE

THE SCENE is a special opportunity for high school students to score an affordable ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet Chicago’s most celebrated artists and connect with other teens who are passionate about theater. Each ticket includes dinner and post-show discussion with the actors.

TICKETS ARE JUST $10

Purchase tickets at the door 30 minutes before the show, or in advance by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services at 312-335-1650. Use code 35026

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE SCENE: THE CRUCIBLE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14
AT 3PM (post-show)

THE SCENE: THE BURN
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24
AT 7:30PM (post-show)

STEP IN

STEP IN is a new series that offers teens from all over the city the chance to participate in hands-on theatre workshops alongside some of the most exciting theatre artists working in the city right now while learning more about the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council, an afterschool program for teens interested in careers in the arts.

ADMISSION IS FREE!

To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Education Manager Jared Bellot at jbellot@steppenwolf.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11
WEDNESDAY, MAY 2
All events last from 4:30-6:00pm

Questions? Please contact Steppenwolf for Young Adults Education Manager Jared Bellot at 312-654-5643 or jbellot@steppenwolf.org.