

The Crucible MLA Information

Background: As begin our unit on the *The Crucible*, we must first discuss the topics available to you for your MLA paper due in approximately four to five (4-5) weeks. Please see Mr. Hampton directly or email (jonathan.hampton@marion.k12.fl.us) with any questions.

Topics: Use the information below to help you select a topic. Your paper will require you to use one of the critical lenses (“criticisms”) we have applied to the *The Crucible*. Try to select a topic that interests you personally; a well-constructed paper is both easier for you to work on and more pleasurable for me to read. If you feel led to create your own topic, see Hampton *before* you begin writing.

1. **Historical Criticism:** Similar to World War II's involvement in the creation of Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*, *The Crucible* is also a product of its time period. In this paper topic, you will focus on how historically accurate *The Crucible* is compared to actual historical events. You can approach this topic by comparing fictional characters (such as John Proctor, Abigail Williams, etc.) to their historical counterparts, or by analyzing fictional situations (like the trials or deaths of certain characters) to their historical counterparts. This topic will require citations from external sources other than *The Crucible*. See Hampton for a list of resources.
2. **Biographical Criticism:** As the name “biographical” suggests, works of literature are often the product of an author's upbringing and life experiences. In this paper topic, you will focus on how Arthur Miller's actual life and his experiences with McCarthyism and the Red Scare influenced his writing of *The Crucible*. This topic will require citations from external sources other than *The Crucible*. See Hampton for a list of resources.
3. **Moral/Ethical Criticism:** Can watching a violent television program make you a violent person? Can a work of literature be considered immoral? These and other questions can be answered through the application of moral criticism. In this paper topic, you will focus on the moral implications of teaching *The Crucible* in a high school classroom. Should it be treated as literature and taught in high school due to its historical nature, or should it be banned on moral/ethical grounds based on its content?
4. **Feminist:** Throughout history, literature has been a field dominated and controlled by men. In fact, most successful authors are men and most heroes within a story are men. Women, it would seem, have played quite a subordinate role—reduced to slaves, helpers, or even “women of the street.” In this paper topic, you will focus on Arthur Miller's treatment of women within *The Crucible*: are they portrayed positively, negatively—and what does this perhaps say about Arthur Miller and/or the time period (1950s) he was writing in?
5. **Other:** Like the last MLA paper, you may choose your own topic. You may also use another criticism, such as Formalist, Philosophical, or Genre criticism if you wish. Please see Hampton to discuss your idea for your own topic.