

Contents

	Page	Handouts
Introduction	v	
Teacher Notes	vii	
Synopsis of <i>The Crucible</i>	viii	
Arthur Miller Chronology	x	
1 Background on <i>The Crucible</i>	1	1, 2, 3
2 Introducing Act 1	7	4, 5
3 Focus on Act 1	13	6, 7, 8, 9
4 The Proctor Home	21	10, 11, 12
5 Focus on Conflict	27	13, 14
6 In the Courthouse	31	15, 16
7 Cause and Effect in <i>The Crucible</i>	39	17, 18, 19, 20
8 Irony	49	21, 22
9 <i>The Crucible</i> and the McCarthy Hearings	55	23, 24, 25
10 Symbolism and Themes	63	26, 27, 28
Supplementary Materials		
Vocabulary—Acts 1 and 2	70	
Vocabulary—Acts 3 and 4	71	
Answer Key—Vocabulary	72	
Objective Test	73	
Essay Test	78	
Answer Key—Tests	79	
Culminating Activities	80	
Bibliography	81	

Lesson 5

Focus on Conflict

Objectives

- To identify basic types of conflict
- To identify multiple conflicts in *The Crucible*
- To recognize emotions involved in key conflicts

Notes to the Teacher

Conflict is central to fiction and drama. Conflict involves tension between opposing forces and is often classified into four types. Person vs. person conflict pits one individual against another. Person vs. society is similar, but here the individual conflicts with the group. Person vs. nature often results in an adventure story. Finally, person vs. self moves the arena of conflict inward, as the individual struggles with thoughts and emotions. Sometimes people identify other types of conflict, e.g., person vs. the supernatural, but these other types can usually be classified as examples of one or more of the basic four.

The first two acts of *The Crucible* reveal many conflicts, all of which come to a head in the subsequent acts. While person vs. nature was a constant struggle for the Puritan settlers, it plays little role in the play. The other three types of conflict operate in multiple ways. Person vs. self is dominant with John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor, and, later, Reverend Hale. Everyone who faces trial is engaged in person vs. society, a conflict in which the individual is nearly always the underdog. Finally, there is a vast interplay of person vs. person: Proctor vs. Parris; Elizabeth vs. Abigail; Proctor vs. Abigail; Putnam vs. Proctor; Proctor vs. Mary Warren; etc.

In this lesson, students identify and describe the four main types of conflict. They then pinpoint conflicts operating in *The Crucible* and motives underpinning those conflicts.

For procedure 1 you will need two pairs of boxing gloves, a picket sign protesting something, an umbrella, and a stool. Before the lesson starts, get two volunteers to mime a boxing match; have one person carry a picket sign, as if at a protest; seat one student on a

stool in the corner in the position of a thinker; finally, have one student huddle under an umbrella, as if avoiding being pelted by rain.

Procedure

1. Position student volunteers (see Notes to the Teacher) in front of the classroom. Focus on the boxers, and encourage them to do a little careful sparring. Write on the board *person vs. person*.
2. Focus attention on the student with the picket sign, and have that person march up and down as if in a protest action. Write on the board *person vs. society*.
3. Focus on the person seated in the corner; have that person scratch his or her head, frown, and look up as if for insight. Write on the board *person vs. self*.
4. Focus on the person with the umbrella; have that person huddle and shiver, as if trying to avoid rain and wind. Write on the board *person vs. nature*.
5. Distribute **Handout 13**, and have students complete it individually.

Suggested Responses:

1. *Person vs. person* pits two individuals against each other; an example might be *Jack vs. Ralph* in *Lord of the Flies*.

Person vs. nature involves a struggle for survival against a natural force such as a flood, blizzard, or tornado. An example might be *The Call of the Wild* or “*The Open Boat*.”

Person vs. society makes one person confront the group, perhaps in an effort to cause a social change. An example might be *Atticus Finch* in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Person vs. self is an internal struggle, often involving maturation or decision-making. An example might be found in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

2. *The outcome depends on the severity of the natural elements, the skill and tools of the person involved, and, often, luck.*

3. *Key factors include strength, bravery, and intelligence.*
 4. *It is difficult for the individual to win because society is so much stronger. This conflict often leads the individual to even the odds by gathering others in support.*
 5. *Person vs. self is internal; for the reader or audience to understand what is happening, the character has to express the conflict in some way.*
6. Distribute **Handout 14**, and direct students to complete it with partners.
- Suggested Responses:**
- Person vs. Person
- There are numerous person vs. person conflicts, including the following:*
- *Abigail vs. Elizabeth for John*
 - *Abigail vs. John over their relationship*
 - *John vs. Elizabeth over his indiscretion*
 - *Proctor vs. Parris over the minister's acquisitive behaviors and hell and brimstone sermons*
 - *Putnam vs. Proctor over land boundaries*
 - *Proctor vs. Hale over the family's religious standing*
- Person vs. Society
- Person vs. society involves all of the persons who are accused and, later, Mary Warren against the combined power of the other girls; from the outset Tituba is on her own against everyone white in New England.*
- Person vs. Self
- Person vs. self is evident in John's dealing with his attitudes toward Abigail and Elizabeth dealing with her knowledge that her husband was not faithful.*
- Person vs. Nature
- Person vs. nature is not a significant element in this play although its potential to erupt in both weather and illness is always present.*
7. Use the following questions to engage students in predictions about the outcomes of the conflicts.
 - *What do you think will happen when Mary tries to go against the other girls in court? (She may not have the strength or courage to persevere.)*
 - *What do you expect to happen to Tituba? (She is powerless and alone against the authorities confronting her.)*
 - *Will Proctor stay with Elizabeth, or will Abigail win him over? (If Elizabeth is executed, Proctor is unlikely to forgive Abigail. Still, Abby is a wily woman with cunning ways.)*
 8. Assign students to read act 3.

The Nature of Conflict

Directions: Conflict is at the heart of plot, which is an essential element of drama and fiction. Use the following questions to clarify your understanding of conflict.

1. Describe each of the following types of conflict, and give examples from life or fiction.

Person vs. person

Person vs. nature

Person vs. society

Person vs. self

2. When the conflict is person vs. nature, what determines the outcome?
3. What are the key factors when the conflict is person vs. person?
4. Which side is most likely to win when the conflict is person vs. society?
5. How does person vs. self differ from the other types of conflict?

Conflict in *The Crucible*

Directions: Use arrows to indicate conflicts among the following characters. Along each arrow, write the type of conflict involved.

