The Crucible Study Guide Answers

Act I:

1. As the play begins, why has Reverend Parris sent for a doctor?
   His daughter Betty is “sick” – as if in a coma

2. What advice does the doctor send back?
   That he can find no medical reason for her illness, and he should look for an “unnatural reason.”

3. What does Reverend Parris question Abigail about?
   If her name in the village is “white” – meaning, is her reputation good.

4. What is Parris’ main concern?
   His reputation as a minister and material possessions.

5. What/Who did Parris see in the woods the night before?
   He saw Abigail, Betty and other girls dancing in the woods.

6. What has Elizabeth Proctor said about Abigail?
   Elizabeth knows that Abigail and her husband had an affair, so she fired her from their service. Abigail believes that Elizabeth has spread “rumors” about the affair.

7. Why does Abigail say she was dismissed by the Proctors’?
   She claims that she was dismissed because she refused to be treated like a slave. She calls Elizabeth a “…bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman…”

8. What rumors have circulated about Betty Parris? What proof later occurs that “proves” that she is a witch?
   Villagers say they saw her flying over a barn. When Betty has a fit as people downstairs sing a psalm (a religious song), Mrs. Putnam claims that Betty cannot bear to hear the Lord’s name because she is a witch.

9. Why did Mrs. Putnam contact Tituba?
   She has lost 7 children in childbirth and wants to know who is “killing” her babies.

10. Who does Abigail accuse of conjuring spirits at this point?
   Tituba

11. What does Betty Parris reveal about what happened in the woods?
   Betty reveals that Abigail drank blood as a charm to kill Elizabeth.

12. What threat does Abigail make to the other girls?
   She threatens to “…come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you.” In other words, she threatens to hurt them physically if they tell.
13. What happened in the past between John Proctor and Abigail? How do they feel about it now?
   They had an affair when she worked at the Proctors’. John has put a stop to it, but Abigail still pursues him.

14. What is the function of Rebecca Nurse in the play?
   Rebecca is a voice of reason and common sense. She believes that the girls will tire of their “game” and that they are in a “silly season – she believes the girls are going through a stage.

15. How does John Proctor feel about Reverend Parris?
   He does not like him. He dislikes Parris’ sermons because he ... "hardly ever mentions God anymore.” John doesn’t like Parris’ concern for material things, pointing out his preoccupation for the deed to the house that the village has provided for the minister.

16. What is the dispute between John Proctor and Thomas Putnam?
   They are fighting about land and boundaries.

17. Why is Reverend Hale in Salem?
   He has been called by Parris to stop the rumors of witchcraft.

18. What does Giles Corey reveal to Reverend Hale?
   He is worried because his wife reads “strange” books at night. One night he couldn’t pray until she stopped reading a book. He suspects witchcraft.

19. When Abigail is questioned by Reverend Hale, who does she blame? What proof does she offer?
   She blames Tituba. For proof, she claims that Tituba has caused her to laugh during prayer. Parris confirms that Abigail does indeed laugh during prayer. To then, this is proof.

20. What ultimatum is given to Tituba?
   Confess to witchcraft, bless the Lord, and name others who are witches with her (or she will be hanged).

21. Who does Tituba accuse of being a witch?
   Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn

22. Why does Abigail start accusing people at this point?
   When Tituba saves herself by “confessing” Abigail decides to do the same.

23. Why does Betty Parris start accusing people?
   She follows Tituba’s and Abigail’s example.
ACT II

1. At the beginning of this act, John Proctor says, “It is winter in here yet.: Why is this pertinent to what is going on?
   
   John and Elizabeth’s relationship is still strained from his affair with Abigail. Elizabeth’s demeanor is “frosty” and “cold” towards John.

2. Why has Mary Warren disobeyed her employers and gone to Salem?
   
   She has been named an official of the court. This makes her feel more important than a servant.

3. What did Abigail Williams reveal to John Proctor? Elizabeth reminds him of this.
   
   That the girls were just playing around in the woods and no witchcraft was involved.

4. Why hasn’t John Proctor told the court what he knows? What does Elizabeth attribute his not telling?
   
   John worries how he would prove what Abigail said (since they were alone). Also, he is aware of the power she has gained. “If the girl’s a saint now, I think it not so easy to prove she’s fraud.”

5. What lie did John Proctor tell to Elizabeth which makes her more suspicious of him?
   
   He didn’t tell Elizabeth that he was alone with Abigail when they talked.

6. What news does Mary Warren reveal to John and Elizabeth about the trials?
   
   Goody Osburn will hang and Goody Good confessed.

7. How does Mary Warren behave towards her employers?
   
   She embraces her new “authority” and demands John’s and Elizabeth’s respect because she is an “official of the court.”

8. What does Mary Warren mean when she says, “I saved her life today!”?
   
   Abigail has accused Elizabeth of witchcraft, but Mary claims that she has never seen any indication of it. Because of her claim, the court dismisses the accusation.

9. What does Elizabeth realize when she finds out that she has been accused?
   
   That Abigail wants her dead so she can have John.

10. What does Elizabeth ask John to do?
    
    She wants John to go to Salem and tell the court what Abigail had said to him about the incident in the woods.

11. Why does Reverend Hale visit the Proctors?
    
    He is investigating the stories (and some rumors) heard in the court. Earlier, he was at Rebecca Nurse’s house.
12. How does John Proctor respond to questions about why he has not been to church? He claims that his wife has been sick, that he doesn’t agree with Parris on theological matters (“I see no light of God in that man.”), and he thinks Parris is too concerned with material possessions.


14. Discuss the meaning of Elizabeth saying “Adultery, John.” While reciting the Ten Commandments, he forgets the one sin we know he is guilty of – adultery. Since it is always on her mind, Elizabeth reminds him of it.

15. What information does John Proctor reveal to Reverend Hale? Mr. Parris discovered them “sportin’” in the woods. They were startled and took sick.”

16. What does Reverend Hale want John to do with this information? Hale thinks John should testify in court.

17. Why does Elizabeth say she doesn’t believe in witches at this point? “I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it.”

18. What news does Giles Corey reveal to the Proctors and Reverend Hale? Giles says that his wife, Martha, and Rebecca Nurse have been taken to jail.

19. What has Rebecca Nurse been accused of? “For the marvelous and supernatural murder of Goody Putnam’s babies.”

20. Why has Martha Corey been accused? Walcott (a neighbor) claims that Martha has bewitched his pigs (thus killing them) with her books.

21. Why do Ezekial Cheever and Marshal arrive at the Proctor home? They have a warrant to arrest Elizabeth.

22. Explain why Cheever is both astonished and afraid when he finds the “poppet” with the needle in it. Earlier, Abigail had a fit and Parris pulled a needle out of her midsection. Cheever believes the poppet with the needle in it is proof that Elizabeth performed witchcraft on Abigail and caused her to injury.

23. What does John ask Mary Warren to do? He wants her to explain to the court that she made the poppet – not Elizabeth.

24. Why is Mary so afraid to do as he asks? She says that Abigail will kill her.
25. Why does Mary warn John about testifying against Abigail?
   *Mary tells John that if he testifies against her, she will “charge lechery” and ruin him.*

26. What does John decide to do?
   *He tells Mary that they will both testify in court against Abigail. Although it will ruin him, he can’t allow Elizabeth die.*