

**National
Theatre**

The Crucible

Learning Guide

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About

This learning guide supports the National Theatre's production of **The Crucible**, directed by **Lyndsey Turner**, which opened on **14 September 2022**, at the **National Theatre**.

Our packs are designed to support viewing the recording on the **National Theatre Collection**. This pack provides links to the UK school curriculum and other productions in the Collection. It also has a plot synopsis with timecodes to allow you to jump to specific sections of the play.

Here you'll find all the information you need to enable you to study the production and write about it in detail. This includes notes about all the key elements from performance style to design. You'll also find pointers for further research.

Background Information

Recording Date – 12 October 2022

Location – The Olivier, National Theatre

Age Recommendation – 15+

Cast:

Tituba.....	Sophia Brown
Reverend Samuel Parris.....	Nick Fletcher
Betty Parris	Evie Marner
Abigail Williams	Erin Doherty
Susanna Walcott	Gracie McGonigal
Ann Putman / Sarah Good.....	Zoë Aldrich
Thomas Putnam.....	Alastair Parker
Mercy Lewis	Anushka Chakravarti
Mary Warren	Rachelle Diedericks
John Proctor	Brendan Cowell
Rebecca Nurse	Tilly Tremayne
Giles Corey.....	Karl Johnson
Reverend John Hale	Fisayo Akinade
Elizabeth Proctor	Eileen Walsh
Francis Nurse.....	Colin Haigh
Ezekiel Cheever	Nathan Amzi
Marshal Herrick	Raphael Bushay

Matthew Hopkins David Ahmad

Martha Corey Stephanie Beattie

Judge Hathorne Henry Everett

Deputy Governor Danforth..... Matthew Marsh

Lucy Una Hermann

Ensemble Halle Brown, Grace Cooper Milton,
Hero Douglas, Aoife Haakenson, Martin Johnston, Joy Tan and Ami
Tredrea

Creative Team:

Director Lyndsey Turner

Set Designer Es Devlin

Costume Designer Catherine Fay

Lighting Designer..... Tim Lutkin

Sound Designer (Content Design) Tingying Dong

Sound Designer (System Design) Paul Arditti

Composer and Arranger Caroline Shaw

Music Director and Arranger Osnat Schmool

Fight Director Bret Yount

Lead Intimacy Director Ita O'Brien

Intimacy Director Louise Kempton

Teaching Information

This production is particularly suitable for:

- Drama students who are studying the play as part of a GCSE course
- English Literature students who are studying the play as part of an A Level course
- Drama students in Scotland who are studying the play as part of a Higher course
- Production arts students who are exploring technical theatre and design
- Anyone with an interest in the works of Arthur Miller
- Anyone who is studying the work of theatre director Lyndsey Turner.

In particular you might like to explore:

- The resonance of the play for a contemporary audience
- How design elements come together to support the narrative
- The relationship between performers and audience, particularly when the ensemble directly address the audience
- This production in relation to productions of other Arthur Miller plays on the NT Collection.



Production Notes

The following notes have been compiled to help guide you through the significant design and performance aspects as you watch the production, or to remind you of them after you have watched it. You may also want to make your own notes and form your own opinions on the effectiveness of these aspects as you explore the production.

Contextual Information:

- These notes were written by experienced Drama and English Teacher and Arts Education Consultant Susie Ferguson. They are designed to support students as they watch the National Theatre's 2022 production of *The Crucible* on the National Theatre Collection.
- The play is performed in a naturalistic style. However, the set design is non-naturalistic. There is a sung and recorded score throughout.
- The context of Arthur Miller's original play is well documented, and it is helpful to use a copy of the play to understand his key ideas. The foundation of the play is the real life Salem Witch Trials of 1692–3, with which Miller was drawing a parallel with the US government's anti-Communist investigations. People were asked to 'name and shame' those who were allegedly connected with Communism. Joseph McCarthy's 1950 speech instigated investigations which seriously disrupted people's lives. 'McCarthyism' is now synonymous with the 'Red Scare' in post-war America.
- *The Crucible* depicts the Puritan community of Salem (which is Hebrew for 'peace' which adds an element of dramatic irony). In it, witchcraft is the most serious accusation that could be made. It demonstrates how accusations can lead to mistrust, suspicion, betrayal and even hysteria.
- All of the characters depicted in the play are based on real people. Arthur Miller visited Salem in 1952, where some of the houses still stand (including that of Rebecca Nurse).

Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Set

- The production was performed in the Olivier Theatre, the largest of the National Theatre auditoriums. The scale of the stage allows for the equally imposing scale of the set. The lack of flats serves to create a sparse environment in keeping with 17th century Salem, but also highlights the exposure and vulnerability of the characters throughout the narrative.
- The stage is formed of a raised, raked platform which represents the patch of land on which Salem exists. Its inhabitants have had to fight and toil to create a living from this hostile land.
- The most prominent feature of the set is the rain curtain, which is used at the very beginning of the play and then at various moments of dramatic climax and/or transition throughout the performance.
- The floor is tiled in dark colours, creating a harsh environment with no visible signs of comfort or luxury.
- The space is free of any significant fixed pieces of set. Instead, furniture such as high-backed wooden chairs, dressers, an altar and a dining table are used to suggest location. These are often moved during a blackout or very low lighting.
- The meeting house at the beginning of the play is formed of an altar upstage centre, and the congregation sits in wooden chairs, facing upstage, either side of a narrow aisle.
- Betty's bedroom is formed of a bed stage right, with a wooden trunk at the foot of the bed. The rest of the girls sit upstage in a line, appearing to observe the action. There is a colourful patchwork quilt folded on the bed which adds a rare splash of colour in the room. There is a small wooden table stage left on which glasses and some wildflowers are seen.
- The Proctor kitchen has a large kitchen table centre stage. It is dressed with candles, fruit, bread and other kitchen items. There is a freestanding wooden counter stage right, on which the stew is being cooked. There is a drying rack for clothes upstage left, as well as a few baskets which indicate domestic activity.

- The upstage space is sometimes used for the younger female characters to sit in a line that stretches the breadth of the stage, as they watch the action. There is also an exit upstage centre, through which key characters enter and exit in each act.
- The upstage centre space is also used several times to provide glimpses of other incidents such as when Abigail is ‘stabbed’ in the stomach, whilst Mercy and Elizabeth are downstage in the Proctors’ kitchen.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Costume

- The design concept for the costumes has a number of important principles:
- Colour, shape and fabric assists in creating a sense of community
- The range of colour and shape is narrow – you will see the same piece of clothing with small variation.
- The shape of the costumes defines role and authority: look specifically at the religious and justice costumes in particular and compare them to the shape of the girls' dresses, for example.
- The relationships between the characters – for example the married couples – are demonstrated in the corresponding colour palettes.

There are two influences on the costumes for this production:

- Historical, isolated religious communities
- Contemporary clothing which reproduces rustic style: look specifically at the collaboration with Laura Ashley by designer Batsheva Hay which was particularly influential when included in the mood boards for this design concept.

Costumes and Character:

- The young girls wear floral patterned dresses, all of which have hem lines below the knee. Some dresses are ruffled with high collars (sometimes also with a ruffle). Others have a pinafore style with a blouse or shirt underneath. They also wear thick white stockings and brown boots. Their clothing is functional and in-keeping with a very conservative attitude to behaviour and gender expectations: consider the fact that Abigail is 17 years old, for example but her dress makes her look younger.

- Whilst their dresses are not completely historically accurate, they reflect the youth of the girls and therefore makes their behaviour even more disturbing.
- Abigail's dress has a more striking pattern than some of the other girls' dresses: it is a William Morris print called Golden Lily.
- The adult women wear longer dresses, often with long sleeves. Again, some are pinafore style and are often at ankle length.
- John Proctor wears a dark blue jacket and trousers with a red neckerchief and a dark shirt.
- Reverend Samuel Parris wears a black minister's robe with white bands (the two oblong pieces of cloth worn at the neck).
- Danforth wears a black justice robe, with a white jabot.
- Reverend Hale wears a black jacket over a white shirt. His clerical collar is black. He wears black trousers and a black hat.
- Ezekiel Cheever wears a grey jacket, brown waistcoat, grey trousers and a white buttoned up shirt. He carries a leather satchel.
- Elizabeth wears a green wrap-over pinafore dress with a floral blouse underneath. In Act 4 her pregnancy is showing. Elizabeth's sleeves are visibly dirty in Act 4, demonstrating the conditions in which she has been imprisoned.
- Tituba wears a blue pinafore over a grey, collared long-sleeved dress. Her hair is also covered in a blue hair wrap. Notice that her skirt is much fuller than the other women in the community. She is marked out as different by her costume as well as her accent.
- Ann Putnam wears a dark blue belted dress which is ankle length. She wears a grey high-necked blouse underneath it, which is frilled.
- Thomas Putnam wears a blue suit made of a linen-type fabric. He wears a grey shirt underneath the jacket.
- Rebecca Nurse wears an ankle length skirt with a floral green blouse that has a Peter Pan collar. She wears a jacket which is a longer length than any of the other female characters wear. It gives her a sense of authority.
- Giles Corey wears a blue jacket over a grey shirt and brown overalls. He wears dark shoes.
- Marshal Herrick wears a black suit, with the jacket buttoned up to the collar.
- The colour palette of the costume design is very limited for the adults in particular.

Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Lighting

- Much of the lighting is high angle and comes from the upstage corners of the set.
- There is also a large lighting panel/awning directly above the performance space which reflects different colours to create a sense of location and atmosphere. At some points the colour across the panel is consistent. At other times there is an ombre effect with the upstage area being more intense and/or brighter than the downstage section.
- During the scene in Betty's bedroom, the lighting hue is a dusky pink.
- The Proctor kitchen is lit with an orange hue, perhaps to suggest the warmest, busiest part of the house (although it is still a practical environment rather than comfortable).
- Lights along the lines of the rain bars also help create atmosphere as well as creating a striking reflection as the rain hits the stage floor. On the three sides of the rain bars, there is sometimes a white-blue light which creates an eerie atmosphere.
- Much of the harsher white light comes from high angle lanterns in the upstage corners of the stage.
- Notice how the colour of the lights at the end of Act 2 rapidly change from a very dim orange, to a harsh bright light as the rain begins.



Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Sound

- The soundtrack for this production of *The Crucible* consists of a number of choral songs, and pieces of music which include vocalisations rather than full lyrics. At some points the singing provides an underscoring to the scene(s) and is barely noticeable. At other points, the volume increases in order to create tension and there are moments where the music becomes discordant to further the tense atmosphere.
- Singing and/or vocalisation often takes place during the transitions between acts.
- We also hear a drone note (the same note played continually) at several points in the play. Its effect is to indicate we are moving towards a moment of conflict or climax. Increases and decreases in volume heighten this effect.
- The opening of the play includes the singing of a hymn as Parris leads the parish in worship at the meeting house. This is clearly a song that the congregation has sung regularly and creates a sense of the tight knit (but claustrophobic) atmosphere of the Salem community.
- There is recorded bird song at the beginning of Act 2 to assist in locating the action of this act to the Proctor farm. The recorded sound of strong winds is used at the beginning of Act 4 – a sense of desolation and foreboding is created for the audience as Tituba and Sarah are seen lying on the floor under blankets whilst they are imprisoned. Other characters are wrapped up warm against the cold so the sound effects enhance the sense of cold conditions.
- During the scene between John and Elizabeth in Act 2, the singing and vocalisation returns, and increase in volume as the tension and fear in the scene increases.

Production Notes

Key Design Elements: Wigs, Hair and Make-up

- Hair is worn to appear natural but conservative. The girls' hair is often plaited, either in two plaits left to sit past their shoulders. Mary and Abigail both wear their hair plaited across the top of their heads.
- The older female character also have long hair, but it is rolled across the nape of the neck.
- The male characters all have short hair.
- Hair becomes messier and appears dirtier as characters are imprisoned and tried.



Production Notes

Performance Style

- The performance style is in keeping with the original style of *The Crucible*.
- Accent is important in his production – the characters are first, second and third generation immigrants from England.
- In keeping with a naturalistic style of performance, it is worthwhile tracking the use of voice, particularly in moments of heightened tension between different characters. For example, John Proctor very rarely raises his voice, and his final speeches remain calm. This has a much greater emotional impact than if he were to be directed to shout to demonstrate anger and frustration. The same can be said for Act 2 when Elizabeth and John discuss his relationship with Abigail.
- Notice the speed at which the transitions take place: each one is less than 20 seconds long.
- At the beginning and end of the play, the ensemble address the audience directly. In particular, the ending of the play in which we are told of the fates of a number of characters serves to remind us that they are real, historical figures. This increases the level of emotional and intellectual response an audience has towards the subject matter and allegory of this play.

Production Notes

Key Moments

- The exposition of the play takes place between 00.00.00 to 00.17.42, when Mercy leaves the room and Abigail and John speak privately. This includes an early change in location from the meeting house to the Parris house.
- The conversation between John and Abigail in which they discuss their past adultery takes place between 00.17.42–00.20.47.
- Abigail's accusations against Tituba begin at 00.36.23 and the scene ends at 00.42.44. This section includes the accusations from the various girls, and Betty's movement from her bed.
- Proctor and Parris argue between 00.24.34–00.27.08. This is also the section in which Parris complains about his salary and wood allowance.
- The discovery and discussion of the poppet in the Proctor house is between 00.50.25–01.18.40 when Giles Corey leaves. The discussion of the poppet, and the upstage portrayal of Abigail being 'stabbed' is between 01.11.24–01.13.12.
- Act 2 begins at 01.20.40. Note how the set has changed, and the atmosphere is created with the use of song. The girls enter at 01.41.48 and singing/vocalisation is once again used to create a tense and foreboding atmosphere.
- The ensemble work between the actors playing the girls in the courthouse is a key scene which can be found from 01.49.47 when Abigail begins to convulse, and ends at 02.01.02
- John's refusal to sign, and then display his declaration is found from 02.21.00 until 02.32.17 when he walks upstage to be executed. His interaction with Elizabeth as he is condemned can also be found in this section.
- The epilogue to the play is delivered from 02.32.18.

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act One – Salem, Massachusetts 1692

Act 1 Scene 1

(4.16) A small upper bedroom in the home of Reverend Samuel Parris, kneels Reverend in front of his daughter's bed. Betty Parris, aged ten, lies in an unresponsive state. Parris is a power hungry, paranoid man praying for his daughter to wake up as his niece Abigail walks in to let him know Susanna has arrived from Doctor Griggs. The rumour running around Salem is that Betty is a victim of witchcraft, Parris had found his daughter and niece dancing in the forest while slave Tituba was waving her hands around making nonsense sounds.

(9.07) Ann enters shortly followed by her husband, Thomas Putnam. Ann addresses that her daughter Ruth is just as spiritless as Betty, except her eyes are open and she walks. She also reports that Betty was seen flying over her neighbours barn.

(11.10) Ann informs Parris she had seven babies that each died within the night of their birth. She turned to Tituba to speak to the dead, to find an answer. Furious, Parris cries that it is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead. The Putnam's servant, Mercy Lewis enters and explains that Ruth has improved and is with her grandma. Parris then agrees to speak to the crowd but will not mention witchcraft until he speaks to Reverend Hale.

Act 1 Scene 2

(14.08) Abigail and Mercy are left alone with Betty, Abigail updates her. In a state of distress, Mary Warren the servant of the Proctors enters. Breathless, she explains that everyone will label them as witches and that they need to tell. Betty wakes and screams for her mother, even though she is dead and buried. Abigail tells the girls that Parris knows that they danced but Betty yells that she did not tell him that Abigail drank

a charm to kill John Proctor's wife. Abigail smacks Betty as she returns back to her unresponsive state, she threatens that if any of them were to breathe a word to anyone, she would kill them.

Act 1 Scene 3

(17.06) John Proctor storms in, as Mary Warren and Mercy leave. Abigail reminds John that she waits for him every night even though John made no promises. She cries that feelings are still there as she's seen him looking up at her window, John admits that he has done so but the relationship is over. Furious, Abigail pokes at his 'cold, sniveling' wife in which Proctor reacts by threatening to whip her.

Act 1 Scene 4

(20.40) Betty sits up holding her hands to her ears and wails. Concern erupts as Parris, The Putnam's and Mercy arrive. Ann assumes that Betty is bewitched and cannot hear the Lord's name without pain. Rebecca Nurse enters alongside Giles Corey, Rebecca sits beside Betty which calms her down. Shock is amongst the rest, she explains that she has 11 children and 26 grandchildren and Betty is just going through a silly spell. Proctor asks Parris if he has consulted the wardens prior to inviting Reverend Hale to look for devils. An argument erupts, conversations flying about sending the minister back and to wait for the doctor, peace needs to be kept in the community, this sparks even more tension involving politics and religion.

Act 1 Scene 5

(29.22) Reverend Hale arrives with a handful of books, Parris introduces him to the rest. The Putnam's explain to Hale that their child's soul has also gone. Parris re visits what he witnessed that night, the girls dancing in the forest. Ann admits she sent her child there to conjure up the dead. Hale flicks through his books and Rebecca decides that she is too old to sit in on proceedings and leaves.

(33.11) Giles informs Hale that his wife reads strange books and hides them from him.

(34.20) Hale sits beside Betty, questioning her. He sits her up while she is still lifeless. Returning to his books, he begins questioning Abigail on their dancing which Parris interrupts by explaining that he saw a kettle in the grass. Abigail nervously explains that a frog jumped in the kettle and Tituba spoke to the devil.

(36.56) Tituba rushes in, Abigail blurts out that Tituba made her drink blood and speak to the devil. Abigail and Tituba argue and place blame on each other. Tituba is certain that someone else is bewitching the children as the devil has many witches. Mr Putnam starts pointing fingers at people around the village, like Sarah Good or Goody Osburn which sparks conversation on who else to blame. Betty rises from her bed and shouts more names along with Abigail.

Act 2 Scene 1

(43.13) John Proctor sits down with his wife Elizabeth, for dinner. Servant, Mary Warren has gone to Salem for the witch trials despite Elizabeth's orders to stay home. Fourteen people are in court, if they don't confess to witchcraft, they'll be hanged. Elizabeth asks John to go to Salem to testify that the accusations aren't true. Elizabeth finds out that Proctor was alone in a room with Abigail which issues an argument.

Act 2 Scene 2

(51.05) Mary Warren returns from Salem, she gives Elizabeth a doll she sewed in court. She explains that there are now 39 people in court and Sarah Good confessed. The Proctors argue with Mary and tell her she will not go back to the court, Mary stands her ground. Threatening to be whipped, Mary shouts that she saved Elizabeth's life as she was also accused. Mary goes to bed.

(56.29) Elizabeth is certain that Abigail has accused her of witchcraft, to replace her.

Act 2 Scene 3

(59.26) Hale appears, he wants to speak to everyone that has been accused in court. Hale wants to ask some questions about the Christian character of the Proctor's

house, why they hardly attend church and why their son isn't baptized. Proctor goes on to say they have nothing to hide, he prays at home and doesn't trust Parris. Hale then asks him to recite the ten commandments. He does so but forgets the commandment prohibiting adultery.

Proctor confesses that Abigail told him the children's sickness has nothing to do with witchcraft to which Hale replies many have already confessed. Proctor then explains that they would be hanged without confession, so of course they will confess.

(1.08.22) Giles Corey and Francis Nurse enter distressed, they cry that their wives have been arrested. Rebecca Nurse has been charged for the supernatural murder of Mrs Putnam's babies. Martha Corey has been accused of bewitching Walcott.

Act 2 Scene 4

(1.10.25) Ezekeil Cheever and Marshal Herrick walk in, with a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest. Hale is surprised as last he heard; Elizabeth wasn't getting charged. Cheever wants to search the house for dolls and finds one, Elizabeth lets him know it's Mary's. Elizabeth fetches Mary. Cheever finds a needle inside the doll and tells the rest that Abigail had a fit at dinner, finding a needle in her abdomen. Abigail accused Elizabeth of witchcraft.

(1.13.25) Mary comes downstairs, she informs them that she made the doll and stuck the needle in herself. Proctor tears the warrant and tells Cheever to leave, Elizabeth holds Proctor's hand and tells him she will go with them. Hale, Giles and Francis leave.

(1.18.49) Mary tells John she cannot accuse Abigail of murder, otherwise Abigail will kill Mary, and charge lechery on John. Proctor is shocked that she knows about the affair. Proctor explains that they will both go and testify anyway.

Act 3 Scene 1

(1.21.13) Back in Salem, the court is in session. Martha is on the stand and Giles interrupts shouting that he has evidence to prove that Putnam is only doing this for

more land. Herrick carries Giles out into the vestry room. Judge Hathorne, Deputy Danforth, Reverend Hale and Parris join Giles and Francis to get to the bottom of the matter.

Act 3 Scene 2

(cont. 1.21.13) Mary and Proctor enter. Mary tells them that she and the girls were pretending to do witchcraft. Danforth is poking questions at Proctor about his beliefs. He is concerned to know that he only attends church once a month.

(1.29.14) Danforth explains to Proctor that his wife will not be hanged as she claims she is pregnant. She will be once she has delivered the baby. This isn't good enough for Proctor, he submits a deposition by 91 land owning farmers declaring their good opinion on Rebecca, Martha and Elizabeth. Proctor also hands Mr Corey's deposition over to Danforth.

(1.33.48) Parris brings in Thomas Putnam to answer an allegation by Giles explaining that he told his daughter to accuse George Jacobs of witchcraft. Giles will not give the name of the man who told him this information. Danforth arrests Giles. Proctor hands Danforth Mary's deposition, and they all examine it.

Act 3 Scene 3

(1.41.50) All the girls enter. Abigail denies Mary's deposition and tells Danforth Elizabeth always kept dolls in the house. Hathorne asks Mary to pretend to faint, she said she cannot because she has no sense for it. She explains that she pretended to faint because she thought she saw spirits. Abigail is pressured to tell the truth. Abigail shivers and the girls follow her actions, accusing Mary of bewitching them with a cold wind.

(1.50.30) Proctor leaps for Abigail and calls her a whore. He tells the court about their affair and explains that Elizabeth fired her when she found out. Proctor goes on to say that she wants Elizabeth hanged so she can take her place. Elizabeth is sent to the court, to see if Proctor is lying. She tells them that he has never committed lechery.

Proctor cried out that he confessed this sin and Elizabeth was covering it to protect him.

(1.56.50) Abigail screams and looks towards the ceiling, the girls do the same. They are accusing Mary of sending her spirit at them. Mary screams out and calls Proctor the devils man. She accuses him of consorting with the devil and wanting her to join him in his evil ways. Proctor is arrested.

Act 4 Scene 1

(2.01.42) In a Salem jail, Sarah Good and Tituba have discussions with Herrick about going to Barbados once the devil arrives with feathers and wings. A guard arrives and takes Sarah, Herrick follows with Tituba.

(2.04.07) Herrick, Hathorne, Danforth and Cheever walk in to see Parris. They want to know why Reverend Hale has returned to Salem.

Act 4 Scene 2

(2.06.03) Parris enters. He reassures Hathorne and Danforth that Hale has returned to Salem to bring prisoners to God. He informs them that Abigail and Mercy have vanished, taking all his money. Parris has asked if the hangings can be postponed now that Hale has returned.

Act 4 Scene 3

(2.10.14) Hale walks in and pleads that the judges must pardon the prisoners, they will not budge. He needs more time with them. He then goes on to explain that from imprisoning all these people, crops are rotting, orphans are wandering from house to house and cows are abandoned.

(2.13.22) Elizabeth is brought in by Herrick. Hale is yet to speak to Proctor and hopes that Elizabeth can persuade him to confess. Elizabeth agrees but can't promise anything.

(2.16.58) Proctor is brought in. Everyone leaves to give Proctor and Elizabeth time. Elizabeth explains that 100 people have confessed to witchcraft. She also mentions that Giles was killed by being pressed to death by stones. His last words were 'more weight'. Proctor agrees to confess. The confession has been written down to put on the church door.

Act 4 Scene 4

(2.24.08) While Proctor is confessing, Rebecca Nurse is brought in to witness. Danforth asks if Proctor has seen Rebecca in the devil's company, he states he did not. He will only speak about his own sins. He signs his name but snatches the sheet from Danforth, he refuses to have his name on the church door. After arguing, he tears the confession. Herrick takes the prisoners.

Epilogue: Parris is voted out of office. He leaves Salem, never to be heard from again. Rumors have it that Abigail became a prostitute in Boston. Elizabeth remarries a few years after her husband's execution.



Find out More

Watch:

How We Made It: The Olivier Rains for The Crucible

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvNxesAUI1E>

The Crucible: The Fis and Erin Chat Show

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITM3DB3vuoo>

Explore:

Learning Hub

You can find more resources for schools and teachers on the National Theatre's Learning Hub. Search by key stage, subject, theatrical style or practitioner and discover an ever-growing library of short films, learning guides and digital exhibitions.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/learn-explore/schools/teacher-resources/>

National Theatre Archive

More materials relating to the production including the costume bible, poster, prompt scripts, programme, stage management reports and more are held at the National Theatre Archive, which is free to visit.

Find out more: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/archive>

We hope that you have enjoyed watching and studying **The Crucible**. Don't forget that there are many more fantastic productions to explore as part of the NT Collection. We hope that watching this recorded production has made you feel inspired to see and make live theatre. [Why not find out what's happening at your local theatre and how you can get involved?](#)

Suggestions for Further Research/Activity

This video offers a brief introduction to McCarthyism:

pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/arthur-miller-mccarthyism/484/

Miller's play uses past historical events to examine more recent ones.

Do you think it's possible to relate *The Crucible* to more recent events? Debate this idea.

To take this discussion further, you could consider how a recent historical event of your choice could become an inspiration to portray current social issues.

You may wish to explore the reviews and material available online about the Old Vic's 2014 production of *The Crucible*. This was a production by Yaël Farber. A review from the *Guardian* is a good place to start your exploration as well as the Old Vic's own resources: theguardian.com/stage/2014/jul/04/the-crucible-review-old-vic-london and oldvictheatre.com/teacher-resource-packs/

Lyndsey Turner has directed several productions for the National Theatre including [Top Girls](#), which is also available on the NT Collection. You may wish to watch that production, and consult the learning notes to compare how Turner has approached the two plays, including the historically real characters in Act 1 of *Top Girls*.

You may wish to visit the [National Theatre's Archive](#) to explore recordings of Turner's other plays for the National Theatre including *Saint George and the Dragon* and *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*.

Lyndsey Turner is also well known for her production of *Hamlet* starring Benedict Cumberbatch (Barbican Theatre) and *Chimerica* (Almeida Theatre). Explore reviews of this wide range of productions and discuss what you consider to be Turner's key interests and theatrical style.

When exploring the romantic relationships in this play, Lyndsey Turner highlighted two poems that were pertinent to the complexities of the relationships. 'Letters to a Young Poet' by Rainer Maria Rilke and 'The Canonization' by John Donne. Discuss how the first poem informs our understanding of the relationship between John and Elizabeth at the start of their marriage, and how the second suggests how Abigail might look to John.

In the first week of rehearsals for *The Crucible*, Associate Artistic Director of the NT, Clint Dyer, shared this quotation from bell hooks: 'If any female feels she need anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power to be self-denying, her agency.' Research bell hooks' work, and discuss how this quotation in particular is pertinent to Lyndsey Turner's production of *The Crucible*.

Lyndsey Turner was inspired by a variety of paintings which are emotionally charged. These include *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* which can be found here: nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-wright-of-derby-an-experiment-on-a-bird-in-the-air-pump and *The Dance Foyer at the Opera on the rue Le Peletier* by Degas which can be found here: edgar-degas.net/the-dance-foyer-at-the-opera.jsp *The Night Watch* by Rembrandt is explained here: beleefdenachtwacht.nl/en.

Explore these paintings and discuss how you think they have influenced the production's design and directorial decisions.

Explore the collaborations between Laura Ashley and Batsheva Hay which inspired some of the designs for the younger female characters in the play. What do you think this aesthetic lends to the production?

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Thank you