

Words from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

Avocabo Word List 27

AFFIDAVIT, APPARITION, BEGRUDGE, COVENANT, CRUCIBLE, DEFAMATION, EFFRONTERY, EXCOMMUNICATE, FACTION, GIBBET, IMMACULATE, INCULCATE, INDICTMENT, INTIMATE, LECHERY, LICENTIOUS, PENITENCE, PRODIGIOUS, PROVIDENCE, PURITANICAL, THEOLOGY



The Salem tragedy, which is about to begin in these pages, developed from a paradox. It is a paradox in whose grip we still live, and there is no prospect yet that we will discover its resolution. Simply, it was this: for good purposes, even high purposes, the people of Salem developed a theocracy, a combine of state and religious power whose function was to keep the community together, and to prevent any kind of disunity that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies. It was forged for a necessary purpose and accomplished that purpose. But all organization is and must be grounded on the idea of exclusion and prohibition, just as two objects cannot occupy the same space. Evidently the time came in New England when the repressions of order were heavier than seemed warranted by the dangers against which the order was organized. The witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward the greater individual freedom.

When one rises above the individual villainy displayed, one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. It is impossible for man to organize his social life without

repressions, and the balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom.

The witch-hunt was not, however, a mere repression. It was also, and as importantly, a long overdue opportunity for everyone so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims. It suddenly became possible – and patriotic and holy – for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that, while his wife was sleeping at his side, Martha laid herself down on his chest and “nearly suffocated him.” Of course it was her spirit only, but his satisfaction at confessing himself was no lighter than if it had been Martha herself. One could not ordinarily speak such things in public.

Long-held hatreds of neighbors could now be openly expressed, and vengeance taken, despite the Bible’s charitable injunctions. Land-lust, which had been expressed before by constant bickering over boundaries and deeds, could now be elevated to the arena of morality; one could cry witch against one’s neighbor and feel perfectly justified in the bargain. Old scores could be settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord; suspicions and the envy of the miserable toward the happy could and did burst out in the general revenge.

The closing paragraphs of Arthur Miller’s introduction to “The Crucible”.

Exercise 27-1: Fill-in-the-blanks

Complete each sentence from the play with the defined list word. (21 marks)

1. *Abigail*: Do you _____ my bed uncle?

Parris: No – no.

Abigail: My name is good in the village! I will not have it said that my name is soiled!

DEFINITION: *resent the fact that somebody has something*

2. *Mrs. Putnam*: Reverend Parris, I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born. And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth. I have spoke nothin’ but my heart has clamored _____. And now, this year, my Ruth, my only – I see her turning strange.

DEFINITION: *formal announcements of something*

3. *Abigail*: I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their _____ men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot!

DEFINITION: *bound together in a pact or agreement*

4. *Giles*: Think on it. Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit. I have been six time in court this year –

Proctor: Is it the Devil's fault that a man cannot say you good morning without you clap him for _____?

DEFINITION: *an attack on somebody's good name, character, or reputation*

5. *Parris*: There is a party in this church. I am not blind; there is a(n) _____ and a party.

Proctor: Against you?

Putnam: Against him and all authority.

DEFINITION: *a group that is a minority within a larger group and has specific interests or beliefs that are not always in harmony with the larger group*

6. When it is recalled that until the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area, that all gods were useful and essentially friendly to man despite occasional lapses; when we see the steady methodical _____ into humanity of the idea of man's worthiness – until redeemed – the necessity of the Devil may become evident as a weapon, a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into a surrender to a particular church or church-state.

DEFINITION: *something firmly fixed in somebody's mind through frequent and forceful repetition*

7. Sex, sin, and the Devil were early linked, and so they continued to be in Salem, and are today. From all accounts there are no more _____ mores in the world than those enforced by Communists in Russia, where women's fashions, for instance, are as prudent and all-covering as any American Baptist would desire.

DEFINITION: *adhering to strict moral or religious principles*

8. *Parris*: How can it be the Devil? Why would he choose my house to strike? We have all manner of _____ people in the village.

Hale: What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants, and who is better than the minister?

DEFINITION: *pursuing desires aggressively and selfishly, unchecked by morality, especially in sexual matters*

9. *Hale*: In the book of record that Mr. Parris keeps, I note that you are rarely in church on Sabbath day . . .

Proctor: I surely did come when I could, and when I could not I prayed in this house.

Hale: Mr. Proctor, your house is not a church; your _____ must tell you that.

DEFINITION: *a religious theory, school of thought, or system of belief*

10. *Hale*: Excellency, he claims hard evidence for his wife's defense. I think that in all justice you must –

Danforth: Then let him submit his evidence in proper _____. You are certainly aware of our procedure here, Mr. Hale.

DEFINITION: *a written declaration made on oath before somebody authorized to administer oaths, usually setting out the statement of a witness for court proceedings*

11. *Danforth*: Now sir, the government and central church demand of you the name of him who reported Mr. Thomas Putnam a common murderer.

Hale: We cannot blink it more. There is a(n) _____ fear of this court in the country –

Danforth: . . . Are you afraid to be questioned here?

DEFINITION: *great in amount, size, or extent*

12. *Giles*: Say nothin' more, John. He's only playin' with you! He means to hang us all!

Danforth: This is a court of law, Mister. I'll have no _____ here!

DEFINITION: *behavior or an attitude that is so bold or arrogant as to be insulting*

13. *Hale*: Excellency, I have signed seventy-two death warrants; I am a minister of the Lord, and I dare not take a life without there be a proof so _____ no slightest qualm of conscience may doubt it.

DEFINITION: *showing faultless perfection*

14. *Danforth*: These will be sufficient. Sit you down, children. Your friend, Mary Warren, has given us a deposition. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, _____, nor any manifest of the Devil. She claims as well that none of you have seen these things either.

DEFINITION: *appearances of ghosts or ghostly things*

15. *Danforth*: Your husband – did he indeed turn from you? . . . Look at me! To your knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of _____? Answer my question!

DEFINITION: *lustful behavior especially by a man that is regarded as distasteful*

16. *Parris*: Excellency, hear me. It is a(n) _____. Reverend Hale has returned to bring Rebecca Nurse to God.
Danforth: He bids her confess?

DEFINITION: *the wisdom, care, and guidance believed to be provided by God*

17. *Parris*: It cannot be forgot, sir, that when I summoned the congregation for John Proctor's _____ there were hardly thirty people come to hear it.

DEFINITION: *the exclusion of somebody from the Christian community*

18. *Elizabeth*: He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his _____; for if he denied the charge they'd hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons will have his farm.

DEFINITION: *formal accusation before grand jury*

19. *Proctor*: It is a pretense, Elizabeth. . . . I cannot mount the _____ like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing's spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before.

DEFINITION: *hanging post; gallows*

20. *Proctor*: I have confessed myself! Is there no good _____ but it be public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!

DEFINITION: *regret or sorrow for having committed sins or misdeeds*

21. Arthur Miller uses the idea of the scientific instrument of purification known as the _____ in the play as a symbol for the strict purification that the townspeople of Salem underwent through the menacing witch trials.

DEFINITION: *a heat-resistant container in which ores or metals are melted*

Exercise 27-2: Synonyms

From the three choices, circle or underline the one that is closest in meaning to the list word (in boldface) in the context shown. (21 marks)

1. gladly signing the **affidavit**
(a) legislation (b) written statement or declaration
(c) verdict

2. the **apparition** of Jacob Marley
(a) wall (b) sudden, unusual sight (c) phantom

3. **begrudging** his great wealth
(a) coveting (b) sully (c) exhausting

4. the lawyers finally settled the **covenant**
(a) compact (b) God's promise to the human race (c) contention

5. foreseeing a **crucible** of Depression following September 11, 2001
(a) graphite or porcelain vessel (b) purification (c) time of conflux of social, political, and economic forces

6. causing a severe **defamation** of the cheerleader's reputation

- (a) protection (b) vilification (c) cleansing

7. you have the **effrontery** to ask for a brain

- (a) courage (b) compliance (c) gall

8. proposing to **excommunicate** the murderers

- (a) admit (b) repent (c) censure

9. the threat of the revolutionary **faction**

- (a) coterie (b) discord (c) veracity

10. the rapist was **gibbeted** in the square

- (a) detained (b) executed by hanging (c) gallows

11. the teenager's bedroom was **immaculate**

- (a) faultless (b) spotless (c) blemished

12. having **inculcated** ideas of patriotism into the troops

- (a) instilled (b) threatened (c) implicated

13. having presented an **indictment** before the tribunal

- (a) deposition (b) appeal (c) accusation

14. **intimating** that he had laundered money

- (a) private (b) insinuating (c) inculpating

15. the guilt of once committing the sin of **lechery**

- (a) perjury (b) blasphemy (c) adultery

16. preaching to the **licentious** parishioners

- (a) lascivious (b) pretentious (c) sanctimonious

17. exhibiting true **penitence** for her crime

- (a) contrition (b) reverence (c) rumination

18. the **prodigious** roar of laughter

- (a) diminutive (b) interminable (c) gargantuan

19. praying for some **providence** to direct him

- (a) hindsight (b) divine guidance (c) God

20. the town became a **puritanical** society

- (a) wanton (b) strictly pious (c) theocratic

21. pouring through books of catechetical **theology**.

- The study of: (a) religious doctrines (b) pagan religions (c) bureaucracy

Exercise 27-3: Antonyms

Provide an antonym for the following list words. (5 marks)

1. effrontery: _____

2. immaculate: _____

3. licentious: _____

4. prodigious: _____

5. puritanical: _____

Exercise 27-4: Etymologies

Provide the list word that originates from the word described. (5 marks)

1. Which list word comes from a Latin word meaning *omen*?

2. Which list word is derived from the Frankish for *forked stick*?

3. Which list word originates from the Latin of *to blemish*?

4. Which list word comes from the Latin word meaning *to pledge*?

5. Which word derives from the Old French of *to agree*?

Exercise 27-5: Parts of Speech:

Change the given list word (in boldface) to the part of speech that is indicated. If the word cannot take that form of speech, write "Ha ha, you cannot trick me!" (or X for short). (12 marks)

1. The adjectival form of **apparition**:

2. The adverb form of **begrudge**:

3. The verb form of **covenant**:

4. The verb form of **defamation**:

5. The adjectival form of **effrontery**:

6. The other noun form of **faction**:

7. The verb form of **gibbet**: _____

8. The verb form of **immaculate**: _____

9. The adjectival form of **lechery**: _____

10. The adverb form of **penitence**: _____

11. The adjectival form of **providence**: _____

12. The noun form of **puritanical**: _____



Exercise 27-6: Making Connections

In a few sentences, describe the relationship between each pair of words. Use a good dictionary to clarify any unclear words. (5 x 3 marks)

1. affidavit jurat

2. apparition wraith

3. effrontery chutzpah

4. gibbet gallows

5. immaculate besmirched

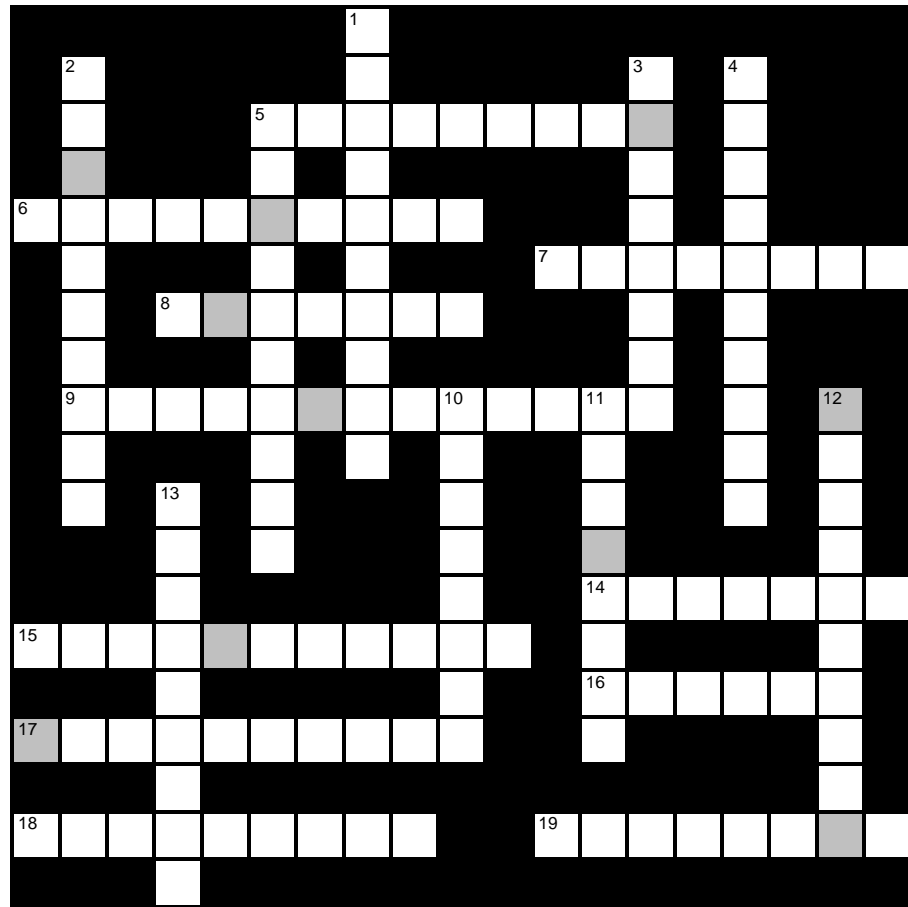


The text and sentences used in this Avocabo unit are taken from the 1976 Penguin Books Edition of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible". Avocabo Unit by Joseph Recchia.

Words from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* – Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

5. To teach or impress upon thoroughly or repetitively.
6. Divine power or care; frugality or economy.
7. A trying test of patience or beliefs.
8. A clique, coterie, or partisan group.
9. To eject from the communion of a church by an ecclesiastical sentence.
14. The act of being lewd, lascivious, or lustful.
15. Strict, austere, or precise in religious or moral matters.
16. To hang and expose on the gallows to ridicule, scorn, or infamy.
17. Unsullied, spotless, pure, faultless, or cleansed.
18. The act of remorsefulness or contrition.
19. The promises of God given to Abraham as recorded in the Bible.



10. To allude, suggest, implicate, or insinuate.
11. The study of religious philosophy and doctrine.
12. The act of appearing, or a sudden, strange sight.
13. A written declaration or statement notarized by an authority.

DOWN

1. Wanton, loose, lascivious, lewd, or lustful.
2. Impudence, boldness, or audacity.
3. To envy, covet, or give unwillingly or grumblingly.
4. Extraordinarily great in size, degree, complexity, or intensity.
5. A written accusation of a crime or a misdemeanor presented upon oath to a grand jury.

Unscramble the grey letters from the solution to come up with the only missing word from this Avocabo Unit.

Hint: It means *a malicious attack*

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