**The Crucible**

**Act I: A Close Reading**

Directions: Answer each of the following questions by citing specific lines from the text. Be sure to provide thorough explanations for each.

1. Susanna: “Dr. Griggs he bid me come and tell you, Reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.”

Parris: “Then he must search on.”

Examine Parris’ response. Discuss why his answer is so terse. Why can’t he accept/understand what Susanna has told him, especially considering that the information has come from a doctor (a reputable source)? Discuss the connotative meanings of what he’s saying.

1. Susanna: “…but he bid me tell you, that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.”

Defend why the townspeople would consider “unnatural causes” a feasible answer. What does the phrase “unnatural causes” suggest?

1. Parris: “No-no. There be no unnatural causes here.”

If the people believe in witchcraft, why doesn’t Parris believe it’s possible? Is he being rational or scientific?

1. Evaluate Parris’s character. How would you describe him? What inferences can you make about him? (Be sure to find specific lines to support your claims.)
2. If Parris is so adamant about there not being any witchcraft present, explain why he would call for Reverend Hale.
3. Re-read and annotate the dialogue between Parris and his niece.
   1. It seems as though Parris has shifted his focus from his ailing daughter to his own reputation and finally to Abigail and her recent past. Discuss this transition.
      1. What is his goal? What information is he trying to uncover?
   2. Parris exclaims that he cannot “blink” what he saw. What does he mean?
   3. When Parris asks Abigail if her name is “entirely white,” what might he be suggesting?
   4. Knowing that we must discover the root of the problem (why the girls are sick/unconscious), who are we expecting – or hoping - will lead us to the answer? Why? (Consider who the protagonist is/might be.)