Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*The Crucible* Act Two

1. Compare and contrast the setting of this act with that of Act One. How are the two settings different?

How are they similar in atmosphere or mood?

1. One of Miller’s most powerful devices in the play is his use of irony. Irony is a contrast or discrepancy between expectation and reality. There are three categories of irony that we typically use in literary studies:

* verbal irony – a writer or speaker says one thing but really means the opposite
* situational irony – what actually happens is the opposite of what is expected or appropriate
* dramatic irony – the audience or the reader is aware of something important that a character does not know

Explain how each of the following is an example of verbal, situational, or dramatic irony.

1. John’s words to Elizabeth at the beginning of the act, “Pray now for a fair summer.”
2. Mary’s gift of a poppet to Elizabeth.
3. Proctor’s reliance, early in the act, on the good offices of Ezekiel Cheever.
4. The one Commandment out of ten that John Proctor can’t remember.
5. Proctor’s statement toward the end of the act about Abigail, “Good. Then her saintliness is done with.”
6. Hale’s statement about Parris, “The man’s ordained, therefore the light of God is in him.”
7. How does Miller use diction (word choice) to characterize John Proctor? Include examples of Proctor’s diction in your answer.
8. Explain John Proctor’s allusion as he tells Hale, “Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!”
9. The scenes in this act are calculated to produce a rising curve of suspense or tension revolving around Elizabeth’s safety. How does the introductory conversation between John and Elizabeth establish suspense?

How does the scene with Mary increase the tension?

What further increase in suspense results from Hale’s visit and the reasons for it?

Where does the tension peak in this act?

1. John Hale is one of the most important characters in the play. Do you find any hints in this act that suggest he will develop into a dynamic character (one who changes under the pressure of events and conflicts)?
2. Although the play presents many conflicting forces and characters, the end of this act hints that the most important conflict, leading up to the climax of the play, will take place between two specific characters – a protagonist and an antagonist. Who are these characters?

What hints can you detect in this act about the resolution of the conflict?