

SAMPLE OPEN-RESPONSE

QUESTION: In Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, explain why it could be said that truth did not serve Salem's citizens well. Use relevant and specific information from the story to support your answer.

RESPONSE:

In Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, it can be said that the truth did not serve Salem's citizens well because it seems that lying is more beneficial and effective than honesty. In Act I when Tituba is questioned by Rev Hale, she lies in fear that telling the truth will just end in her being hanged. To save her own life, she pretends that she conjured spirits, met with the Devil, and signed his book while in the forest with the girls. It is not surprising that her confession leads to even more lies as Abigail and other girls begin to realize that lying brings more rewards than truth ever would have. Later in the play Giles Corey learns that honesty does not pay when he admits that his wife Martha likes to read books secretly. He is truly curious when he asks Rev. Hale what this might signify; but, when Martha Corey is arrested as a witch, Giles learns that in Salem this kind of honesty can only lead to trouble for him and his wife. Unfortunately, Giles never guesses that his honest questions will become evidence that his vengeful, selfish neighbors can use against him. Mary Warren is another citizen of Salem who learns that honesty is not rewarded. To help John and Elizabeth Proctor, Mary agrees to go to court and admit that she and the other girls are frauds. It is not surprising that the truth only works against Mary, and Abigail and the girls accuse her of using a familiar, a yellow bird, to harm them. Over and over again characters in *The Crucible* show that truth is a friend to no one in Salem.