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Dear AP Language Student,

Your summer assignment this year is to read and annotate *The Crucible*, a play by Arthur Miller. I would strongly encourage you to purchase a copy of the book so you can write in it, but you can sign out a copy from me in room 309. Please read all of the accompanying handouts and complete your assignments in the order I've provided below. If you have any questions, read your directions first. If you cannot figure out the answer, email me at the address above.

1. Go to the following interactive link: education.nationalgeographic.com. In the search bar at the top right, type *Salem Witch Trials*. Follow the directions and complete the "trial" to discover your fate if you are accused of being a witch.
2. Read the **Helpful Background Information for *The Crucible*** (Hand-out in packet).
3. Read **What is McCarthyism?** (Hand-out in packet).
4. Read **How to Annotate** and study the annotated example: a brief Joan Didion passage on Santa Ana winds. (Hand-outs in packet).
5. Go to Dictionary.com or have a dictionary on hand as you read. **Define the following words as they are used in the play. You are responsible for knowing them.**

providence	abomination	deposition	daft
prodigious	contention	calamity	naught
defamation	anarchy	warrant (n)	pretense
iniquity	afflicted	beguile	lechery
quail (v)	probity	effrontery	covenant
purged	intimation	licentious	citadel

6. Read and annotate *The Crucible*. Be sure to read all stage directions.

Helpful Background Information for *The Crucible*

Puritan Beliefs:

- **Theocracy** – Government based on religion where a governor had religious authority, and a minister had legal authority.
- No ostentation – plainness of church and person
- No work on Sundays (the Lord's Day)
- Due to the shorter life span of the time, women were usually married with children by the age of fifteen.
- Women did not argue, debate, vote, speak publicly regarding laws, etc. Their main duty was to have children and keep house. Women were expected to obey the man of the household.
- "Guilty until proven innocent" instead of "innocent until proven guilty"
- Cultural symbolism: **Forest** = darkness = Devil/evil ; **Village** = light = God/truth
- Witches were agents of the devil.
- If an accused "witch" denied being a witch, he/she was executed regardless.
- If an accused "witch" admitted to being a witch (even if innocent) they spared his/her life; however, the "witch" was imprisoned for life.
- Contrary to popular belief, "witches" were not burned at the stake; they were hanged or pressed to death (crushed from stones).
- Although women were accused more frequently (especially if they were going to inherit valuable land) "witches" could be women or men.
- Witchcraft constitutes the central plot of *The Crucible*. A crucible is a vessel/container used for melting materials at high temperatures.

What is McCarthyism?

Mass hysteria has reared its ugly head for as long as humans have existed. Adolf Hitler worked enough people into a frenzy to justify the murder of millions of Jews. Jesus Christ, known by all as peaceful, if controversial, was brutally nailed to a cross because a few high-ranking officials felt threatened by him. Although one would hope that people would learn a lesson or two from the mistakes of the past, it seems that history, as the old cliché goes, is forever doomed to repeat itself.

Enter Senator Joseph McCarthy. While he may not have caused genocide or murdered a prophet, he was able to whip up hysteria in America in the early 1950s. McCarthy's issue of choice? **Communism**. The American Heritage Dictionary defines McCarthyism as "the political practice of publicizing accusations of disloyalty or subversion with insufficient regard to evidence."

Communism, in simple terms, is an economic system designed to equally benefit everyone in the society. The idea is that everyone contributes to the society and gets an equal share of property and goods. Communist systems are generally controlled by dictators and totalitarian governments -- think China, Cuba, and North Korea.

By the '50s, communism wasn't exactly a new worry for the United States. In the aftermath of World War I, the country had experienced the First Red Scare ("red" is slang for communism). Russia had a new communist government as a result of the **Bolshevik Revolution** in 1917, and dictator Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) had brutally slaughtered about 9 million of his people for resisting his ideals [source: The History Guide]. All of this upheaval upset Americans, so lawmakers decided to prevent the spread of communism to the United States by enforcing the Sedition Act and the Espionage Act. The First Red Scare was characterized by the ferocity with which the U.S. government identified and attacked suspected communists.

By the time McCarthy won a Senate seat in 1946, World War II was over and the Cold War was beginning. Communist governments had gained hold in Eastern Europe and China, and Americans were increasingly concerned about it -- and about rumors of high-ranking U.S. government officials who were secret communists. McCarthy took advantage of the mounting fear, but because it isn't actually illegal to be a communist, he started charging people with the act of **subversion** -- the "systematic attempt to overthrow or undermine a government or political system by persons working from within" [source Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Law]. Then he got to work prosecuting them for selling or giving American security secrets to communist governments.

McCarthy was a relative unknown, but once he lit the fire under America's fear of communism, there seemed to be no stopping it. There had already been some cases of communist spies selling and giving secrets to the Soviet Union about the American government and nuclear program. McCarthy claimed that liberal officials knew of other threats to national security but were taking a soft approach toward identifying them.

Two things happened almost immediately after McCarthy's speech:

- Americans became frantic to identify and remove communists from positions of power. Many believe this hysteria to have been generated not completely by McCarthy, but rather by the events that preceded his speech. Communists, led by Mao Zedong, had gained control of China two months earlier. The Soviet Union had exploded an atomic bomb in 1949. And leaders of the Communist Party of the United States had recently been convicted of conspiring to violently overthrow the U.S. government. McCarthy's speech was the icing on the cake.
- Politicians of all parties began to attack McCarthy's claims.

McCarthy then embarked on what is often described as a "witch hunt" to root out and prosecute communists and sympathizers -- using controversial techniques and often making accusations with scant evidence.

Many of the people whom McCarthy suspected of having communist ties were Hollywood figures, including major actors, screenwriters, directors and producers. Here are a few common terms associated with McCarthy's attack on Hollywood:

- **Entertainment industry blacklist:** This is the list of members of the entertainment industry who had suspected or real ties to communism. Those on the blacklist were refused employment based on their political ties. A full list of the artists blacklisted is available at Bookrags.com.
- **The Hollywood Ten:** The first 10 members of the Hollywood film industry questioned by McCarthy decided not to cooperate with the investigation, choosing instead to claim their First Amendment right to free speech. Unfortunately for them, they were not successful. Eight were sentenced to a year in prison for contempt of Congress. The other two received six-month sentences. A full list of the Hollywood Ten and their credentials is available at the Library at the University of California Berkley.
- **The Waldorf Statement:** This was issued by Hollywood executives announcing the firing of the Hollywood Ten.
- **Fifth Amendment Communists:** After the Hollywood Ten debacle, future suspects often claimed the Fifth Amendment, which protects against self-incrimination. Many of their bosses considered that as good as a guilty plea, and most were fired.
- **The \$64 Question:** "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party of the United States?"

McCarthyism's effect on Hollywood and the world has been documented on film numerous times, most recently in the movie "Good Night, and Good Luck." The blacklisted artists have written many memoirs, and there are plenty of nonfiction works describing the era in great detail. One of the most famous works is Arthur Miller's 1953 play *The Crucible*, written during the height of McCarthyism. Miller used the Salem witch trials as a metaphor for McCarthy's communist "witch hunt," earning the ire of McCarthy. The playwright was questioned and found guilty of having communist beliefs, but the conviction was overturned in 1957.

How to Annotate

A close reading technique we will use frequently this year is annotating the text. Annotating a text requires reading with a **pencil** in hand. If you are not allowed to write in your book, then write on sticky notes. As you read, listen to the voice in your head, and write down what that voice is saying.

Here are some suggestions of what to mark in your book:

- ✓ Circle words you don't know, or write them on sticky notes and look them up.
- ✓ Identify words, phrases, or sentences that appeal to you, that seem important, or that you don't understand.
- ✓ Look for **figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, and personification** – as well as vivid images and striking detail.
- ✓ Look for how the writer uses diction (word choice). Is it formal? Informal? Technical? Slang? Emotionally evocative?
- ✓ Look for anything unusual in punctuation usage. What punctuation marks does the writer use and for what effect? Ex: Dashes for tension or breathlessness.
- ✓ Look for important words or images that are repeated throughout the text. Ex: light, fire, etc.
- ✓ Even in tragedy, look for humor. Why is it being used?

