***The Crucible* and Rhetoric**

Use this handout to aid you in writing your rhetorical analysis of *The Crucible*. We will discuss these questions in class the week we return from break.

1. In Act I and II, Miller cleverly uses various objects to provide insights into the characters. Explain the following:
2. What do candlesticks disclose about Rev. Parris?
3. What does the forgotten commandment reveal about Proctor? About Hale?
4. What does the poppet and the needle reveal about Abigail? About Mary? About Cheever/Herrick?
5. What does the warrant expose about the court in Salem? About Proctor?
6. In Act II, there are numerous examples of irony that build the tension. Cite five prominent examples and how they tie to Miller’s purpose for writing *The Crucible*.
7. In Act III, Judge Danforth uses language to suit his purpose. Review the following sections of dialogue between Danforth and the character(s) to breakdown his rhetorical strategies and his ultimate purpose:

Reverend Hale pg 100 Mary Warren pg 102 Abigail and the girls pg 102

Elizabeth Proctor pg 112-113

1. By the end of the play, some characters have philosophical arguments for their beliefs. Explain the reasoning behind these beliefs. Then, connect this to Arthur Miller’s purpose in writing the Crucible.
2. Hale’s counseling prisoners to lie
3. Danforth’s refusal to postpone the hangings
4. John’s decision to sign the confession
5. Elizabeth’s refusal to counsel John on what to do
6. Rebecca Nurse’s and other’s refusal to admit to witchcraft
7. John’s decision to rip up the confession
8. Several of the main ideas developed in the play are found in the following quotations. Explain the implications of each quote and then indicate whether or not Miller agrees or disagrees with what his characters are saying.
9. On authority – Parris: “There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning!” Act I
10. On legal responsibility – Herrick: “I have nine men outside. You cannot keep her. The law binds me, John, I cannot budge.” Act II
11. On ethics –Danforth: “But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there is no road between.” Act III
12. On personal convictions –Proctor: “A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face and yours, Danforth!....God damns our kind especially and we will burn, we will burn together!” Act III
13. On life –Hale: “Life, woman, life is God’s most precious gift; no principle, however glorious may justify the taking of it….God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride.” Elizabeth: “I think that may be the Devil’s argument.” Act IV
14. Review Miller’s use of allusions throughout the play. Given the background information given to you, what might be his purpose in employing this form of figurative language? Be specific and cite references from the play.
15. Consider the following characters and which appeal (ethos, logos or pathos) is most at work in their dialogue/character:

Abigail Reverend Parris Reverend Hale Judge Danforth

John Proctor Elizabeth Proctor Mary Warren Rebecca Nurse

Be specific to the text.

1. Many people in seventeenth century Salem believed that their problems were attributable to an external force – the Devil. However, Arthur Miller implies these problems were actually caused by an internal force – that of human nature. How does this allegory relate to contemporary society? What is Arthur Miller warning readers about? Be specific in your response