

Crucible and Red Scare Logic

Background:

This activity is typically used as a corollary to Arthur Miller's "The Crucible". Students are given two articles relating to the identification of "radicals" (witches or communists) of the author's time period. This activity is best completed after some basic background knowledge of the Crucible and the Red Scare have already been completed so they are aware of the complexities of the issues at hand.

Teacher Task:

Explain to the students that we are aware that the events of "The Crucible" were based upon what were understood as "facts" in the time period of the events. Inform them that we are going to examine those facts in class by using the primary sources the citizens of Salem and the McCarthy era would have used.

Distribute articles

"How to identify a witch" by Adam Goodheart

"How to identify a communist" by US Army Headquarters

Students read through and create list of the "logic" or "proofs" used in the articles. Guide students through each article and discuss proofs (be aware that the witch article talks about having three nipples and less mature classes may want to edit this out). Explain the breadth of "marks on skin" and "intellectual discourse".

Students complete assignment by writing two (2) half page arguments (with claim, proofs): one for "proving" they are/aren't a witch and the other for "proving" they are/aren't a communist.

Differentiation:

Teachers can adapt instruction for varying students through grouping or more in depth class analysis of one article instead of two separate articles.