Crucible SAT Essay Prompt and Passage Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SAT Directions:** The essay gives you an opportunity to show how effectively you can read and comprehend a passage and write an essay analyzing the passage. In your essay, you should demonstrate that you have read the passage carefully, present a clear and logical analysis, and use language precisely.

**As you read the passage below, consider how Arthur Miller uses:**

* evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
* reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
* stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.
* Consider: comparisons (including allusions or metaphor), tone, syntax (repetition, punctuation, sentence structure), personal narrative, historical examples... etc.

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| Passage: Background notes from The Crucible, Arthur Miller, 1952. | Annotations: "Hows" |
|  We conceive the devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an Earth without "sky." Since 1692 a great but superficial change has whipped out God's beard and the Devil's horns, but the world is still gripped between two diametrically opposed absolutes. The concept of unity, in which positive and negative are attributes of the same force, in which good and evil are relative, ever-changing, and always joined to the same phenomenon--such a concept is till reserved to the physical sciences and to the few who have grasped the history of ideas. When it is recalled that until the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area, that all gods were useful and essentially friendly to man despite occasional lapses; when we see the steady and methodical inculcation into humanity of the idea of man's worthlessness--until redeemed--the necessity of the devil may become evident as a weapon, a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into surrender to a particular church or church-state.  Our difficulty in believing the--for want of a better word--political inspiration of the Devil is due in great part to the fact that he is called up and damned not only by our social antagonists but by our own side, whatever it may be. The Catholic Church, through its Inquisition, is famous for cultivating Lucifer as the arch-fiend, but the Church's enemies relied no less upon the Old Boy to keep the human mind enthralled. Luther was himself accused of alliance with Hell, and he in turn accused his enemies. To complicate matters further, he believed that he had had contact with the Devil and had argued theology with him. I am not surprised at this, for at my own university a professor of history--a Lutheran, by the way--used to assemble his graduate students, draw the shades, and commune in the classroom with Erasmus. He was never, to my knowledge, officially scoffed at for this, the reason being that the university officials, like most of us, are the children of a history which still sucks at the Devil's teats. At this writing, only England has held back before the temptations of contemporary diabolism. In the countries of the Communist ideology, all resistance of any import is linked to the totally malign capitalist succubi, and in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God.  |  |

SAT Prompt:

Write an essay in which you **explain how Arthur Miller builds an argument** in the passage to persuade his audience that humanity (i.e. Americans) cannot exist morally without its necessary counterpart—sin...and **choose one of the allegorical concepts OR one of the social issues explored** in *The Crucible* to include in your analysis as textual evidence and support

In your essay, analyze how Miller uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

**Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Miller's claims, but rather explain how Miller builds an argument to persuade his audience.**