

Lesson Ideas

The Crucible: Exploring Citizenship

Overview

Although these learning materials do not require the teacher or learner to have read *The Crucible* or to have seen the 2004 Birmingham Rep Theatre production, reading the play, and/or looking at the film of it directed by Nicholas Hytner in 1996, would enhance the learning experience.

These activities are linked to the Citizenship and PSHE programmes of study at Key Stage 4, however may also be used with Key Stage 3 students. Relevant excerpts from the play have been included along with links to suggested video footage of interviews with members of the cast.

The materials include:

An instruction sheet for each of the three main activities containing:

- Summary of the activity
- Learning objectives
- Key words
- Key questions
- National Curriculum links
- Suggestions for starter and extension activities
- Guidance on how to implement the activities

Worksheets are in both Word and PDF format.

Activities:

1. Standing up to the girls of Salem
2. Rough justice in Salem
3. Justifying the Salem trials
4. Threats to society
5. Anti-terrorism in the UK: Your opinion

Overview of activities

Each of the four activities uses the events described in *The Crucible* to ask students to consider the citizenship themes of justice and human rights. The activities begin with a personal, student-centred approach before broadening out to require students to adopt a political perspective.

Activity 1 asks students to consider the power of peer pressure and bullying and asks what personality traits and personal circumstances would be needed to enable an individual stand up to the girls of Salem. Activity 2 looks at the nature of justice and what safeguards exist today which would prevent the summary justice meted out in the play.

Activity 3 requires students to look at what reasons there may have been to justify the Salem witch trials

Activity 4 builds upon this by asking students to think about the threat posed to Britain by terrorism today and whether they think that the measures laid down in the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 are justified.

Curriculum Context

In many schools Citizenship is taught through core curriculum subjects such as Maths and English. These activities can be used by the English teacher who wishes to take a citizenship approach to the study of *The Crucible* or can be used in discreet Citizenship or PSHE lessons. Whilst it is envisaged that each of the four activities are used sequentially, they can, where necessary, be used as standalone activities. For example, Activity 1 could be introduced into a PSHE scheme of work on bullying and Activity 2 could be used in a Citizenship lesson on the British criminal justice system.

The Programme of study for Citizenship at Key Stage 4 has three components:

- 1) Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens
- 2) Developing skills of enquiry and communication
- 3) Developing skills of participation and responsible action

The main aspects of the programme of Study addressed in these materials are as follows:

Pupils should be taught about:

- 1a the legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and how they relate to citizens, including the role and operation of the criminal and civil justice systems

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2a research a topical political, spiritual, moral, social or cultural issue, problem or event by analysing information from different sources, including ICT-based sources
- 2b express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events
- 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussion, and take part in formal debates
- 3a use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express, explain and critically evaluate views that are not their own

The activities also address the following elements of the PSHE National Framework:

Pupils should be taught to:

- 1d recognise influences, pressures and sources of help and respond to them appropriately
- 3b be aware of exploitation in relationships

Activity 1: Standing up to the girls of Salem

Summary

Create a character who would be able to stand up to the girls of Salem. The girls of Salem are central figures in the play; their actions (dancing in the woods) aroused suspicion of witchcraft and their accusations result in many people from their community being accused and hanged. They carry some responsibility for the tragic events at the end of the play. Although it is unlikely that these consequences were intended, this activity gives students the opportunity to think about the motivations, behaviour and relationships of the girls and how this contributed to the hangings. The main activity asks students to create their own character who may be able to prevent the terrible consequences. In so doing they will consider what makes groups behave the way they do, and what kind of person may have been able to stand up to the others. This activity should encourage students to think about peer pressure, bullying and moral courage.

Learning objective: To consider the power of peer pressure and bullies and the personality traits needed to stand up to them

Key Words: peer pressure, group dynamics, moral courage, conscience, bullying

Key Questions: How did the relationships between the girls help to bring about tragic consequences?
What prevented any of the girls doing the right thing?
Do you think the actions of the girls are realistic?
What kind of person would have been able to stand up to Abigail Williams and the others?
Have you ever experienced a group situation where the dynamics of the group have meant that events have got out of hand and something bad has happened as a consequence?

National Curriculum Links

Citizenship Programme of Study: 2a, 2c, 3a
PSHE National Framework: 1d, 3b

Guidance on how to carry out this activity in class

Starter: Introducing the concepts of peer pressure and bullying

To introduce the concepts of peer pressure and bullying, ask the students if they have ever been involved in a situation with a group of young people which has got out of hand because no member of the group put a stop to the activity. An example of this could be a fight in the playground or a bullying situation.

Main activity: Create your own character for *The Crucible*

Students will create a new character for the play who will stand up to the girls. The aim of this activity is to encourage students to think about the individual

personalities of the Salem girls and how this led to the situation getting out of hand. A key question in this activity is: What made the girls behave the way they did?

You could approach this activity in 3 stages:

1. Check the students' factual understanding– what did the girls actually do?
2. Discuss the reasons for their behaviour – bullying? Peer pressure? The group dynamics/relationships between the girls? Draw out the differences in the behaviour of Abigail, Mercy and Mary.
3. Create a new character who would be able to help to avert the tragic outcome. What kind of person would it be? What is their motivation for behaving in that way? (a) Show the class the factfiles on Abigail Williams, Mercy Lewis and Mary Warren (it would be good to use an interactive whiteboard here). (b) Look at the video footage as this provides background information about the behaviour of the girls. (c) Explain that the task is to create a similar factfile for a new character. (d) A slide has been provided with questions to guide thinking. (e) Students should present their characters to the class who could select the most realistic one.

Plenary: Making it real

As a plenary, you could ask the students to imagine they have the chance to spend a minute with the girls of Salem – what would they say to them?

Alternatively, you could ask if there are any lessons to be learnt from how the girls behaved.

Extension activity: Write a scene including your new character

Students write a scene, including their character, which immediately follows the scene of the girls in Betty's bedroom. It might help if the students imagined what they themselves would say to persuade the girls to tell the truth. This scene could then be acted out in class.

Activity 1: Factfiles

FACTFILE FOR ABIGAIL WILLIAMS

Insert
still of
Abigail
here

Age: 17 YEARS

Appearance: STRIKINGLY BEAUTIFUL

Family: ORPHAN, NIECE OF REVEREND PARRIS

Position amongst girls of Salem: LEADER

Key personality traits: MANIPULATIVE, SHREWD, BRAVE, STRONG, DETERMINED, PERSUASIVE, VENGEFUL, SINGLEMINDED, CLEVER, MODERN FOR THE TIME

History:

WITNESSED HER PARENTS BEING KILLED
HAD A SHORT AFFAIR WITH JOHN PROCTOR

Motivation for her actions:

WANTS ELIZABETH PROCTOR DEAD SO SHE CAN HAVE JOHN PROCTOR, SEEKS JOHN PROCTOR'S LOVE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ABIGAIL LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING VIDEO CLIPS:

The Crucible – Performance - In the bedroom of Betty Parris

The Crucible – The Girls - Abigail's Journey

The Crucible – The Girls - Getting into her character

FACTFILE FOR MARY WARREN

Insert
still of
Mary
Warren
here

Age: 17 YEARS

Appearance: NO DETAILS GIVEN

Family: NOT KNOWN, SERVANT OF THE PROCTORS

Position amongst girls of Salem: FOLLOWER

Key personality traits: SUBSERVIENT, NAÏVE

History: NO DETAILS GIVEN

Motivation for her actions: TERRIFIED ABOUT BEING ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT, AFRAID OF ABIGAIL, DEEP DOWN SHE KNOWS THAT THE RIGHT THING TO DO IS TO TELL THE TRUTH

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MARY WARREN TAKE A LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING VIDEO CLIPS:

The Crucible – The Girls - Mary Warren's journey

FACTFILE FOR MERCY LEWIS

Insert
still of
Mercy
Lewis

Age: 18 YEARS

Appearance: FAT

Family: NOT KNOWN,
SERVANT OF THE PUTNAMS

Position amongst girls of
Salem: FOLLOWER OF
ABIGAIL WILLIAMS, BULLIES
MARY WARREN

History: THE PUTNAMS BEAT HER

Motivation for her actions: WANTS TO IMPRESS
ABIGAIL BECAUSE SHE DESPERATELY WANTS HER
FRIENDSHIP, SEEN DANCING NAKED ON THE NIGHT
IN QUESTION SO WANTS TO SAVE HERSELF FROM
CHARGES OF WITCHCRAFT

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT MERCY LEWIS,
LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING VIDEO CLIPS :**

The Crucible – The Girls - Role of Mercy Lewis

The Crucible – The Girls - Mercy Lewis' Journey

**The Crucible – Performance - Motivation of Mercy
Lewis**

**The Crucible – The Girls - Background work to
develop character**

FACTFILE FOR ?

?

Please
insert a
silhouette
image of a
head and
shoulders

Age:

Appearance:

Family:

Position amongst girls of
Salem:

Key personality traits:

History:

Motivation for her actions:

**Answer these questions to
help you create your
character for the play:**

- Is your character male or female? Who would he/she be able to exert most influence over the girls?
- How old is your character?
- What is his/her position amongst the girls of Salem?
- What are his/her key personality traits?
- What motivates this person to act in the way they do? Is this person acting simply from his or her conscience or do they have some other more complex history which motivates them?

Activity 2: Rough Justice in Salem

Summary

This activity is comprised of two exercises. The first uses video footage of interviews and text from the play to establish the flaws in the justice system in Salem. The second exercise asks student to match these flaws to a feature of the British justice system.

Key Words: Criminal Justice System, objectivity, fairness

Key Questions: Why could some of the people involved in the Salem trials not be trusted to tell the truth? How did innocent people end up in court? What features of the court contributed to the miscarriage of justice?

National Curriculum Links:

Citizenship Programme of Study: 1a, 2b

Guidance on how to carry out Activity 2 in class

Starter: Introducing the concept of miscarriages of justice

Prior to the main activity, teachers should ask students to think about examples from their own life of when they have been blamed for something they didn't do. Students can also draw upon knowledge from history of famous miscarriages of justice. Students should try to explain how these situations come about.

Main activity: Identify the flaws in the justice system in Salem

Students should be given Worksheet 1 and, by referring to the suggested video footage and the excerpt from the play provided, identify 5 flaws in the Salem justice system.

The teacher should then give the students Worksheet 2. This worksheet has a list of features of the British Criminal System that serve to protect citizens from flaws like those of Salem. The students' task is to match up the flaw with the feature.

Extension activity: Write a lawyer's speech

Students could be asked to imagine they were a lawyer going into the Salem courtroom. They must write a speech to the court in defence of those accused of witchcraft, pointing to the weaknesses in the process by which they have been accused and tried.

Activity 2: Worksheet 1

FLAW 1

Watch "Fine tuning the role of John Hale"

Read the following excerpt from *The Crucible*:

[Enter REVEREND JOHN HALE of Beverly.]
Mr Hale is nearly forty, a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual. This is a beloved errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at last been publicly called for.

Now finish these sentences:

John Hale was not the best person to investigate the accusations of witchcraft in Salem

because_____

This means the justice system in Salem was flawed because_____

FLAW 2

Read the following excerpt from *The Crucible*:

BETTY [calling out hysterically and with great relief]: I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! [It is rising to a great glee.]

PUTNAM: The Marshal, I'll call the marshall! [PARRIS is shouting a prayer of thanksgiving]

BETTY: I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil! [the curtain begins to fall.]

HALE [as PUTNAM goes out]: Let the marshal bring irons

Now finish these sentences:

The way in which people were accused of witchcraft in Salem was unfair because _____

FLAW 3

Watch "Mary Warren's journey"

Read the following excerpt from *The Crucible*:

MARY WARREN [in a fearful squeak of a voice]: Mr Proctor, very likely they'll let her come home once they're given proper evidence.

PROCTOR: You're coming to the court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court.

MARY WARREN: I cannot charge murder on Abigail.

PROCTOR [moving menacingly toward her]: You will tell the court how that poppet came here and who stuck the needle in.

MARY WARREN: She'll kill me for sayin' that!

Now complete this sentence:

Mary Warren was not a reliable witness because _____

FLAW 4

Read the following excerpt from *The Crucible*:

ELIZABETH: You – have been tortured?

PROCTOR: Aye. [...]

ELIZABETH: Giles is dead.

[He looks at her incredulously.]

PROCTOR: When were he hanged?

ELIZABETH [quietly, factually]: He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they'd hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons will have his farm. It is the law, for he could not be condemned a wizard without he answer the indictment, aye or nay.

PROCTOR: Then how does he die?

ELIZABETH [gently]: They press him, John.

PROCTOR: Press?

ELIZABETH: Great stones they lay upon his chest until he plead aye or nay.

Now finish this sentence:

Confessions of guilt were not reliable in Salem because _____

FLAW 5

Watch "Class differences"

Read the following excerpt from the *Crucible*:

HALE: I cannot say he is an honest man; I know him a little. But in all justice, sir, a claim so weighty cannot be argued by a farmer. In God's name, sir, stop here; send him home and let him come again with a lawyer –

DANFORTH [patiently] Now look you, Mr Hale –

....

HALE: I have this morning signed away the soul of Rebecca Nurse, Your Honour. I'll not conceal it, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I pray you, sir, *this* argument let lawyers preset to you

DANFORTH: ...In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is ipso facto, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims – and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring out?"

Now finish these sentences:

Danforth's comments about the nature of the crime of witchcraft mean that a fair trial is impossible because_____

The justice system in Salem is flawed because_____

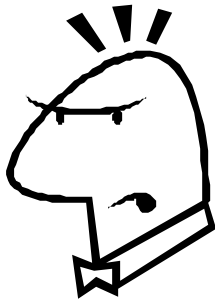
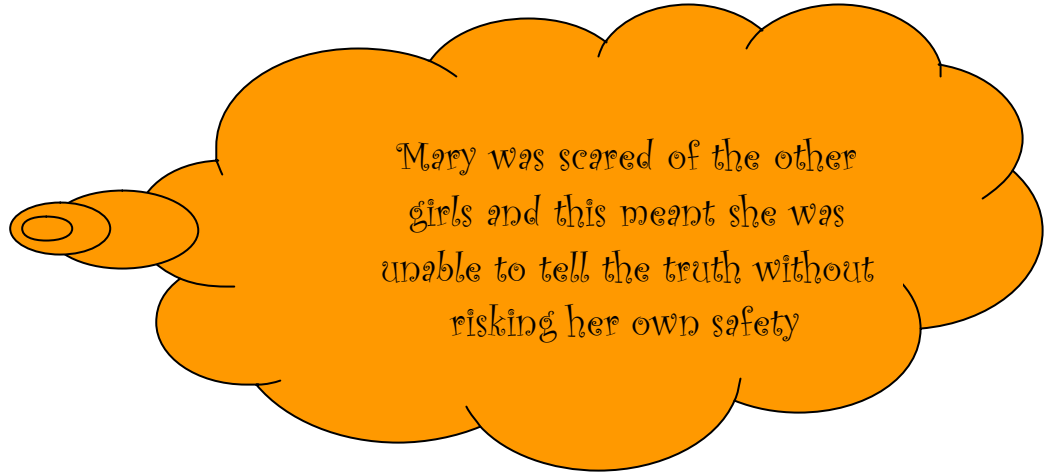
Activity 2: Worksheet 2

Look at these 5 flaws in the justice system in Salem that you identified using Worksheet 1. Now look at the 5 features of the British justice system today that give protection from these flaws.

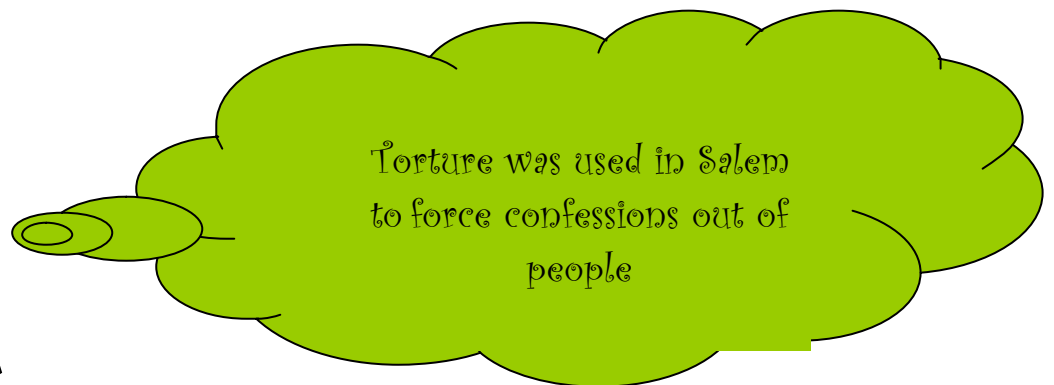
Can you match the feature to the flaw?

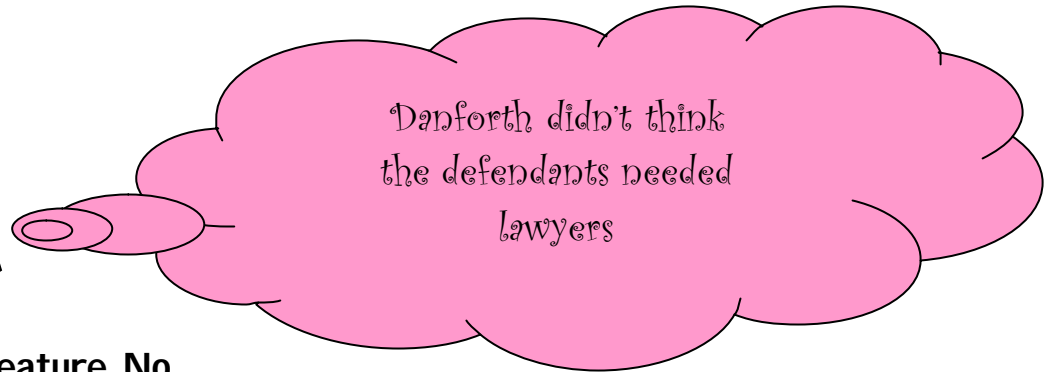
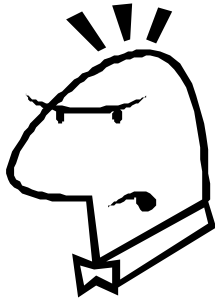


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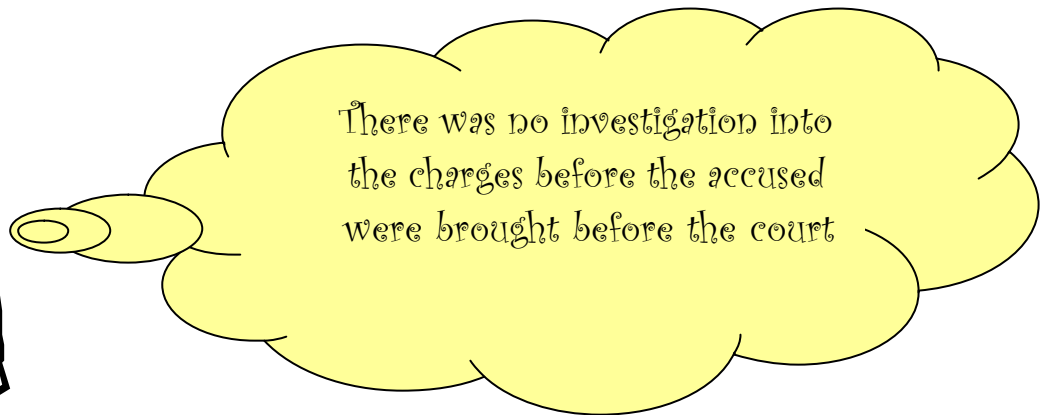
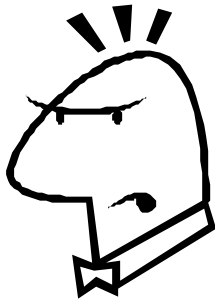


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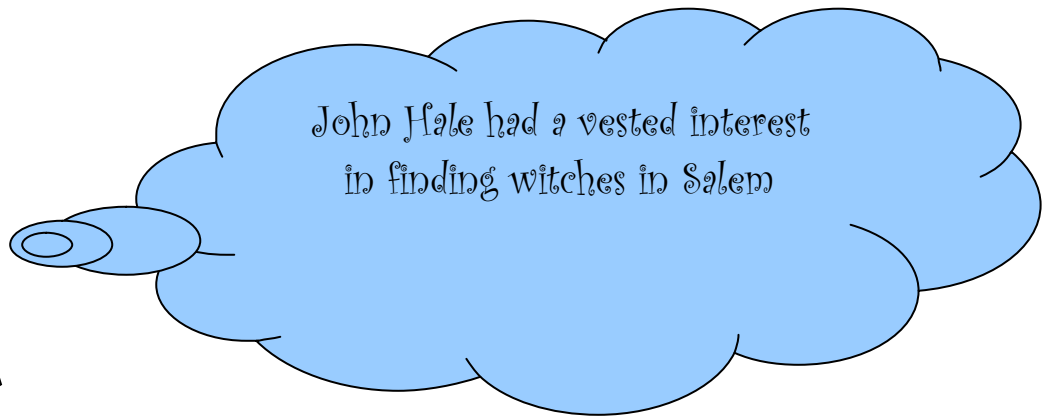




Feature No.....



Feature No.....



Feature No.....

Five features of the British Justice System

1. Witnesses can have their identities changed by the Witness Protection Scheme. Intimidating a witness is a criminal offence.
2. The Crown Prosecution Service decides whether or not a case should be brought to court by weighing up the evidence.
3. People involved in the legal system (e.g. police and judges) must be objective.
4. Everyone has the right to a legal representation.
5. The right not to be tortured is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and evidence gained under torture is inadmissible in British courts at present.

Activities 3, 4 and 5

Summary

This activity comprises three exercises (Activities 3, 4 and 5). The first requires students to try to think about how those in power can justify the suspension of human rights. For the second, students will decide what measures they would put in place to protect the UK from a terrorist attack if they were Prime Minister. The final exercise guides them to an opinion of the current anti-terrorism legislation.

Learning Objective: To consider the way in which societies respond to threats and whether it is sometimes justifiable to compromise the rights of individuals for the good of society at large.

Key Words: Perceived threat, appropriate response, minority, majority, suspension of rights, terrorism, suspect, detain, human rights

Key Questions: How could Danforth and the other prosecutors in the Salem trials justify their actions?
Is it ever right to suspend individual rights to protect the majority?
What measures should be put in place to protect people from the threat of terrorism?
What do you think of current anti-terrorist measures?

National Curriculum Links:

KS4 Citizenship Programme of Study: 1a, 2b, 2c, 3a

Guidance on how to carry out the activities in class:

Starter: Introducing the concept of perceived threat

Ask students what sorts of people or things might harm them and create a 'mind map' on the board. Examples of people might include: each other (bullying), themselves (self-harm, anorexia etc), their families, strangers, gangs, paedophiles, terrorists. Examples of things might include: drugs, guns, cars and knives. Point out that self-harm or family abuse are more common than the other threats mentioned. Ask students if they can define terrorism and or a terrorist. Ask whether they perceive terrorism as a threat to themselves. This exercise should be run as a discussion with students capturing definitions of terrorism from books.

Activity 3: Justifying the Salem trials

In this activity students are able to turn the tables on Judge Danforth by making him justify his actions. The worksheets provided can be used either as prompts for a role-play or as scaffolding for a piece of written work.

It would be advantageous if students could watch the video clip "*The role of Danforth*" before undertaking this task.

There are two worksheets – the first "Danforth; Defence Case Notes" provides notes for a student who wishes to either play Danforth in a role-play or write an essay or speech justifying his actions. The second "Danforth; Prosecution Case Notes" can be used for a student acting as a prosecutor in a case against Danforth or for a piece of written work criticising his actions.

If run as a role-play, teachers should appoint a jury to decide what Danforth is guilty of and what his punishment should be.

Activity 3: Worksheet 1

Danforth Defence Case notes

These notes should be used to argue that Danforth was acting in the best interests of the people of Salem. Use the following points to help make your case and remember, at that time in Salem most people believed in God, the Devil, heaven and hell.

- Witchcraft is a genuine threat to the community
- The Devil is real and can make people do terrible things
- It is better that a few innocent people should die than large numbers be forever burning in the fires of hell
- If they are innocent they will go to heaven to meet their maker - which is a great honour
- The girls are genuinely scared of witchcraft it would be impossible for so many of them to maintain a pretence for such a long period of time
- There is plenty of evidence that witchcraft was being practised - e.g. dancing naked round the fire, one of the girls being unable to wake up
- Many of the accused have confessed to witchcraft

Activity 3: Worksheet 2

Danforth Prosecution Case notes

These notes should be used to argue that Danforth was not acting in the best interests of the people of Salem. Use the following points to help make your case and remember, at that time in Salem most people believed in God, the Devil, heaven and hell.

- Witchcraft is not currently a threat to the community
- Yes, the Devil is real but there is no evidence that he is present in Salem
- There is never an excuse for sending innocent people to their deaths
- Yes, the innocent people will go to heaven but think of the grief caused to children, wives and husbands at the loss of their loved ones
- The girls are scared of Abigail and of getting into trouble for dancing – once they started lying they had to keep going or else they would be in even more trouble for making it up
- There is no evidence that witchcraft was being practiced – the girls were just having some fun in the woods
 - People only confessed to witchcraft because they were tortured and because they would be sentenced to death if they pleaded their innocence

Activity 4: Threats to society

Summary

In this activity students will consider what measures they think are justifiable to protect the UK against the threat of terrorism. On the activity sheet there is a list of measures that they have to decide whether to implement if they were Prime Minister. The instructions for the activity appear on the sheet. This exercise could work well as an individual task or as pair/group work. This activity would also work very well as a sorting exercise.

Students will need an explanation of key terms 'detain', 'electronic tag' 'curfew' before starting the activity.

Activity

In Salem the perceived threat to the community was witchcraft. A court was set up by the authorities to deal with this threat and ultimately 19 people were found guilty and hanged. With the benefit of hindsight it is easy for us to say that the community and the authorities overreacted to the threat. In this activity you are going to consider the reaction of our current government to a threat of terrorism.

Since the devastating events of 11 September 2001 the authorities in the UK have been working to minimise the risk of a terrorist attack. Some experts in the area have said that the UK is a potential target for terrorists.

Instructions

In this activity you are going to decide how you would respond to the threat of terrorism in this country by putting yourself in the position of Prime Minister.

Consider each statement and decide whether you would take this step or not (there is a maybe option, but don't forget that as a Prime Minister you need to be decisive). When making your decision, remember how devastating a terrorist attack would be and that you will be held responsible for any bad judgements you make.

		YES	NO	MAYBE
1.	Compromise the human rights of a suspected terrorist to protect society at large			
2.	Order the secret services (MI5 and MI6) to take part in secret spying activities to uncover terrorist plans (this would include tapping phones and using undercover agents to infiltrate suspected groups)			
3.	Use secret evidence to arrest suspects without telling them or their lawyers what the evidence is			
4.	Pass a new law which deals specifically with terrorist suspects			
5.	Allow the police to detain a suspect indefinitely without trying them in court			
6.	Keep track of a suspect before they have been found guilty of terrorist activities by:			
	✗ putting an electronic tag on them to track their movements			
7.	✗ restricting where they can go and who they can meet			
8.	✗ imposing a curfew on them			
9.	Give the Home Secretary the power to make the decision about whether a person should be subject to restrictions on their freedom rather than a judge			

Activity 5: Anti-terrorism in the UK: Your Opinion

Summary

This activity requires students to compare their answers from Activity 4 to the actual measures in the *Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005*. Students are then asked to reflect upon the similarities and differences between their answers and the terms of the Act. Finally, students are asked to express and justify an opinion on whether or not the current anti-terrorist measures are justified.

Activity

Instructions

In this activity you are going to give your opinion on whether the anti-terrorism legislation is a justifiable reaction to the threat of terrorism. To do this compare your answers above to the measures put in place by the *Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005* using the table below. Now answer the following questions:

1. Which of your measures were the same as those in the Act?

2. Which of your measures were different?

3. In general, did you react more or less strongly to the threat? Why was this?

4. Finish the following sentence:

I think that the treatment of terrorist suspects in this country is justified/unjustified (delete one) because:

		YES	NO	MAYBE
1.	Compromise the human rights of a suspected terrorist to protect society at large. Explanation: Suspects can be subject to a Control Order, which severely restricts who a person can meet, where they can go and all cases so far have involved electronic tagging.	o		
2.	Allow the secret services (MI5 and MI6) to take part in secret spying activities to uncover terrorist plans (this would include tapping phones, using undercover agents to infiltrate suspected groups)	o		
3.	Use secret evidence to arrest suspects without telling them or their lawyers what the evidence is.	o		
4.	Pass a new law which deals specifically with terrorist suspects	o		
5.	Allow the police to detain a suspect indefinitely without trying them in court		o	
6.	Keep track of a suspect before they have been found guilty of committing terrorist activities by: ✍ putting an electronic tag on them to track their movements Explanation: See 1 above	o		
7.	✍ restricting where they can go and who they can meet	o		
8.	✍ imposing a curfew on them	o		
9.	Give the Home Secretary the power to make the decision about whether a person should be subject to restrictions on their freedom Explanation: Judges decide who can be subject to a Control Order		o	