**Irony**

As readers we encounter three forms of irony in *The Crucible*—dramatic Irony, situational irony, and verbal irony.

Situational irony: Occurs when an event contradicts the expectations of the characters or the reader.

Verbal irony: Occurs when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite.

Dramatic irony: Occurs when the reader or audience knows more about the circumstances or future events in a play than the characters within it.

Situational Irony

* The girls are motivated by malice, yet the court considers them the “voice of heaven.”
* The false confessions are made to save the accused from hanging - a form of situational irony.
* The Puritans intended theocracy to unify the community, but in Act IV we see much evidence that the witch hunts are tearing Salem apart (cows wander the roads, orphans have no one to care for them, farms in disarray).

Dramatic irony

* How are Elizabeth’s lie in Act III and Mary Warren’s false confession at the end of the act examples of dramatic irony?
* The characters who receive the most protection from the court are the dishonest (Abigail and the girls), the underhanded (Thomas Putnam), and those who withhold evidence (Parris).

Verbal irony

* Proctor’s inability to name the tenth commandment – adultery.
* Judge Danforth’s assertion that no innocent man need fear his court.
* The stage directions in Act III, when Abigail, “out of her infinite charity…draws the sobbing Mary to her.”
* The irony of Giles Corey’s “more weight” (he’s a very talkative man throughout the rest of the play).