CHAPTER 1: TEXT RESPONSE RESOURCES

EXTENDED ESSAY PLANS

Essay Prompt 3:

How do The Crucible and The Dressmaker explore issues of victimisation and blame?

The blame game often occurs during times of social and religious disruption. It reveals the social and religious fault lines in modern Dungatar (Australia) and medieval Salem (America)

Add quotes, narrative techniques, symbols, stage directions, and the context

- The social and geographic outcasts; those who are different (unorthodox or eccentric); those who do not conform to conservative social and religious norms and strict gender divisions and stereotypes.
- God-fearing citizens in Salem who refuse to admit to witchcraft also become a target. (Goody Nurse, Giles Corey; John Proctor) (They are blamed by the theocratic leaders)
- The problem of self-blame: Tilly blames herself; the symbolic “black thing” that is growing inside her. It is the curse of her upbringing and the death. Hale blames himself; his pride; for the spread of the baseless accusations
- Dealing with blame: Sergeant Farrat offers a compassionate way of solving the blame-game and the curse (“sermon of sorts”); the good people in Salem stick to their principles and eventually the court is dismantled. The leaders lose credibility.

Key ideas

The cries of “witch” in Salem signal an era of “social discontent”. Likewise, citizens who fail to conform to rigid social customs are made to feel that they do not belong in Dungatar. Those who are socially disadvantaged are stigmatised by those in a position of power and authority. (The cause – secrets, prejudice, lies, mistakes and cover-ups)

Socially-marginalised citizens are the first to be blamed.

During times of social change, Ham and Miller suggest that there is a tendency to victimise those who may be disenfranchised or unorthodox. In Dungatar as in Salem, citizens who are
socially marginalised or who do not conform to circumscribed and traditional roles are accused of witchcraft. Miller suggests that this occurs as the forces of freedom threaten authoritarian and rigid power structures. The girls in Salem fear retribution after playing “sport” with the devil in the forest. They are suspected of witchcraft. Fearful of their lives, they accuse other citizens in the town in an attempt to deflect blame.

- Owing to the community’s austere (“sombre”) medieval religious views, Miller suggests that the tendency to blame innocent people is a symptom of a punitive medieval religious environment.
- If one diverges from the “strict and sombre” religious lifestyle, one risks censure.
- The exposure of the girls’ devilish activities and ”obscene practices” in the forest leads to panic, which in turn leads to baseless accusations. Given that “sex, sin and the devil” are linked, Abigail and Tituba are quick to blame others. They also know that “witchery is a hangin’ error” and in a state of panic, hysterically spread the cries of witchcraft. They accuse Salemites of being possessed by the devil (Goody Osborne).

In Dressmaker, a strong fear of difference leads to the accusation of “witch” levelled at the Dunnages. Beula notes, “she’s up to no good again that one, worse than her mother.” Irma protests to Lois, the cleaner, that she’s not “gossipin’ or anythink” but admits that “Myrtle who calls herself Tilly” has “got a nerve” when she “turned up wearing a very bold frock”.

- To deflect attention from the mistaken nature of Tilly’s birth, the rumour-mill victimises the pair on The Hill, encouraged by the Pettymans.
- Ham depicts town, like Salem, riven by hypocrisy and by “secrets, flaws and mistakes”. The crucible of conflicting emotions and grievances in Dungatar parallels the tension in Salem.
- The rumour mill also victimises the McSwiney family; they are living in a “ramshackle home”, with the kids often “squawking like flapping fowls” (47). She complains about the “fornication” that occurred in this town on Saturday night (96) which was “vile and repulsive”. Sergeant Farrat tells her, “I know you’re good at secrets”. (96) She is “full of hate and accusations”.
- Tilly is blamed for the death of Stewart Pettyman. She also reveals another curse – the death of her son, Pablo, from cot death (232). Her husband, Ormond didn’t understand. “He blamed me and couldn’t forgive me”. “I realised I still had something here. I thought I could live back here. I thought that here I could do no more harm and so I would do good. It isn’t fair.” (232)
- Molly is angry at the torture she has suffered. She charges Pettyman: ‘You followed me here, tormented me and kept me as your mistress – you ruined our life”. She notes that without his pursuit, “we would have had a chance” (194)

The leaders and people in a position of influence search for scapegoats
There is a tendency among the religious and political leaders to look for scapegoats in a bid to protect their authority and their reputations. Parris wishes to protect his power base and hopes that his house does not “topple” with the exposure of the girls’ “obscene practices”. Hale searches for a victim in order to prove his expertise in witchcraft and encourages the girls to expose the “witches”. Miller characterises Hale as “weighted” down with books to reflect his knowledge. Throughout his conversations with Tituba and Abigail, Hale uses the language of heaven and hell to encourage Tituba to “confess” to the presence of witches.

- The “keepers of justice” also seek to blame others in order to fortify their power base. The autocratic authorities such as Deputy Governor Danforth dismantle legal procedures on the absurd premise that witchcraft is “ipso facto” – an “invisible crime”. Miller establishes a parallel with the 1960s McCarthy style witch-hunts in America and the Catholic inquisition.
- Abigail’s play-acting skills make a mockery of the legal proceedings as she accuses Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft; she also seems to impugn Mary Warren’s motives as she tries to tell the truth. Gaining power she distracts the court with the “yellow bird” and Danforth becomes increasingly anxious and irate.
- Evan Pettyman discards Molly and fuels the rumour mill in his Parris-like endeavour to protect his reputation. He uses his influence and wealth, as does Elsbeth Beaumont, to entrench his positions of power. Evan uses a culture of sexual favours to intimidate women. Elsbeth uses her evanescent wealth to browbeat her children into unloved marriages that protect her power and the socially conservative status quo.

A tendency towards self-blame.

- There is also an equally problematic tendency to internalise the blame as good citizens in both towns deal with their demons – and undergo their “crucible”. Tilly tells Teddy, “they don’t want us to show them up”. “It’s guilt and the evil inside me – I carry it around with me, in me, all the time. It’s like a black thing, a weight”. This “evil” thing is a consequence of the sin of others; the blame grows in distorted ways and connects her to Molly. (184)
- John Proctor’s mea culpa moment is presented as a courageous insight to a man who has sinned according to his own “vision of decent conduct” and who finds ways to atone for his sin. (Cf Teddy McSwiney)
- Reverend Hale knows (and blames himself) because of his misplaced pride; he has the courage to admit his error. Hale “weeps in prayer” knowing that religious certainty is a casualty in the hunt for witches and for scapegoats.

A refusal to blame

Many citizens seek to examine their conscience and follow Rebecca Nurse’s pleas: “Let us blame ourselves”. Many have the decency to embrace, rather than blame, others. Edward McSwiney who has lost his “hero, Teddy” does not blame Tilly as the townsfolk did.
Although an outcast, and a victim of a terrible family tragedy, he reassures Tilly about the terrible tragedy, when she stood against the wall of the library. He had seen Stewart charging at her. He knew that “they used to follow her and tease her” and call her a “bastard child”. Nurse’s prophetic voice foreshadows the gloom that descends upon the Salemites as they begin to blame each other. She tells Proctor, “Clasp his hand; make your peace.” (35)

- Sergeant Farrat tries to end the persecution of Tilly through love – not hatred. Depicted as a spiritual saviour, Farrat wants to “save his flock” and make them see something to “salvage in it all”. He delivers the “sermon of sorts” at Teddy’s funeral, which focuses on the power of love. He asks the “flock” to imagine the healing power of love. He notes that “love was as strong as hate… love an outcast.. – he’d loved another outcast”. He loved Tilly Durnage as strongly as you hate her. “Please imagine that” (197) He imagines a “true union” – a symbol of those who embrace, rather than expunge, differences. (197)
- Likewise, Giles Corey, aware of Putnam’s opportunistic streak, takes a humanist approach to their respective crises. His calls for “more weight” symbolise his moral as well as his physical strength.
- Unlike Abigail who perpetuates the blame game through her subversive theatrical skills, Tilly’s dressmaking skills provide a creative way of dealing with the “black thing”. She empowers other women, as well as herself, through her exotic skills, bringing the outside world to Dungatar.
- The fires become a symbolic way of expunging the blame.

ESSAY PLAN 3: Macbeth’s greatest enemy is himself.

1. From one perspective Shakespeare suggests that Macbeth’s biggest failure is to ignore his moral resolutions/concerns/misgivings (soliloquy). Shakespeare suggests that the failure to adhere to his conscience is one of his biggest mistakes leading directly to the King’s brutal death. After his key soliloquy wherein he discusses the consequences of regicide, Macbeth announces to Lady Macbeth, that “we will proceed no further with this business”. He recognises that evil deeds will return to haunt “the perpetrator”; however, his overleaping ambition is too intense/strong.
2. Macbeth must shoulder the blame as he appears unable to temper his “overleaping” ambition. Unlike Banquo, who is suspicious of the supernatural forces of nature, Macbeth places too much trust and faith in the witches. Shakespeare uses Banquo as a moral foil who warns Macbeth about the danger of trusting the “instruments of darkness”. (The “instruments of darkness tell us truths; Win us with honest trifles, to betray’s /In deepest consequence”. Shakespeare highlights his premature thoughts of murder and his “horrible imaginings” that terrify this valiant soldier. The fact that he is aware of his ambition, and that it leads to “deep and dark desires” suggests a degree of culpability. (Ironically, Banquo becomes the source of Macbeth’s greatest fears (daggers) before and during the murder of Banquo.
3. From one perspective, Macbeth is also vulnerable to the devilish taunts of Lady Macbeth as she seeks to browbeat him into submission. However, Shakespeare also
suggests that Macbeth writes the letter to Lady Macbeth in such a way as to stimulate her ambition, desire, lust for power and glory.

ESSAY PLAN 4: DECEPTION is a key to understanding the characters in Macbeth. To what extent is this true? All characters deceive themselves to some degree.

Paragraph 1: The witches’ prophecies are deceitful and fuel Macbeth’s lust for power and evil desires that begin his downward trajectory. They are the instruments of ambiguity; they win Macbeth with promises, but as Banquo knows, they encourage us to betray our finer selves. They create “hurly burly” and allude to their desire to play moral havoc: “fair is foul and foul is fair”.

- They present the prophecies in such a way that Macbeth interprets them as a “promise”; they appear more credible than they should be. They deliberately spin confusion so Macbeth thinks that he is invincible: “she shall spun fate, scorn death, and bear His hopes ‘bove wisdom, grace and fear”
- As Banquo states, “the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betray’s in deepest consequence”
- The witches also deceive Macbeth by giving him a false sense of security. The second round of prophecies expose his arrogance.

Paragraph 2: Macbeth’s downfall occurs because he thinks that he can deceive others by cultivating an appearance of loyalty and fidelity. He also deceives himself by thinking that murder would escape suspicion and detection. (desire to dissemble)

- The keen knowledge of his deception derives from his moral awareness. He knows that he is committing a sin by assassinating Duncan.
- He wants to give the impression of a worthy, loyal, innocent, valiant, brave and true servant and conceal his murderous intent and subsequent actions: “let not light see my black and deep desires the eye wink at the hand.; “false face must hide what the false heart doth know”
- He hopes that murder will escape detection and that it will not tarnish (harm) his reputation.

Paragraph 3: Macbeth’s demise occurs because he thinks that he can overcome guilt by ridding himself of inconvenient obstacles.

- He thinks that he can quell his conscience and dismiss suspicion by eradicating the source of his evil.
• He thinks that by killing those who suspect him or oppose him he can secure his power. He kills Banquo because he is so ashamed of his friend’s nobility, plus of course his friend’s sons are destined to become king…
• His next victim is Banquo and his sons, because he fears Banquo’s knowledge of the witch’s prophecies. “Under him my genius is rebuk’d”
• He tries to desensitize himself to the pain by killing his opponents and tries to become hardened to bloodshed.
• He attributes his hallucinations and “strange self abuse” to immaturity and lack of practice in evil deeds. He believes he can kill not “scorch the snake” by “hard use”.
• “is the initiate fear that wants hard use; we are yet but young in deed.”

Paragraph 4: However, at the same time, Macbeth is also keenly aware of the problems that arise if one does not follow one’s conscience. During his key soliloquys before he kills the King he uses euphemisms to downplay the brutality he is about to commit. He recognizes that evil deeds will return to haunt him, but struggles to contain his “overleaping” ambition.

Sample Plan/Essay

**Topic:** “This is one of the reasons we are strong.” Through his play, *Twelve Angry Men*, Reginald Rose suggest that the judicial system has more strengths than it does flaws.

In an era when America was attempting to find her identity and heal divisions wrought by Cold War hostilities, Reginald Rose, in his didactic play *Twelve Angry Men*, affirms the dire importance of a diverse jury’s ability to deliver justice to its people. Whilst Rose suggests that the judicial system has its imperfections, he also endorses the benefits he claims are invaluable to society. Initially, as the jurors respond to the task of judging the guilt or innocence of the 16 year old boy, charged with first degree murder of his father, shortcomings are flagrantly obvious. However, owing to the integrity and perspicacity of the 8th juror and his insistence the principles of justice and reasonable doubt, he orchestrates a careful examination of the circumstantial evidence. As Rose clearly shows, honouring these safeguards not only empowers individuals to engage in the judicial process, but acts as the basis for a just verdict which reflects a decent, caring democratic society; diversity may hinder, but in this case it can facilitate also justice. Thus, the fundamental mechanisms of the process are what makes the system “strong”.

**The flaws in the judicial system owing to the 12 “angry men”**

Rose depicts a judicial system that is essentially flawed because of its dependence upon twelve “angry” Caucasian men who possess different views, personalities and personal agendas. Specifically, and through the use of a real-time deliberation process, the playwright emphasizes how
the integrity of the judicial system is undermined when the jurors arrive at the table clothed in their own personal experiences and prejudices. (quote from the 10th)

Rose deliberately constructs a parallel story for the 3rd Juror, whose broken relationship with his son, influences his decision. In the stage directions he notes how he is reeling from the pain of being “stabbed in the chest” which foreshadows his revenge agenda and his rigid, patriarchal view of parenting. Throughout the play, there are repetitive references to the “knife”, which will be critical to the evidence, but in this case the stab wounds symbolically refer to the 3rd juror’s raw and personal emotions. Knife...

Climate of prejudice; a fault that Rose implies was a pressing issue in trials conducted during the post-war era of McCarthy-style hysteria.

Another shortcoming is the legal competence of the jurors, many of whom lack the aptitude to carry out their duties because they have a distorted or deficient understanding of their legal duties. The meek 2nd Juror’s fragmented speech conveyed through Rose’s use of ellipses and indicated in the stage directions as “nervous”, suggests he fears voicing his opinion because of his relative inexperience as a juror. As a result, he “just thinks the boy is guilty” and cannot express his reasoning, intimidated by the louder voices that dominate the early stages of the play. From the beginning, the 12th Juror, who believes that “the whole thing is unimportant”, is fixated on the “view”, the “impression” and the “drive” of the lawyers, a manifestation of his embodiment as post war materialism. The game of the tic-tac toe also becomes a figurative manifestation of their indifference as is the “doodling”. Likewise, the mindless whistling of the 7th juror and the change of his vote to “not guilty” because he has “had enough” highlights his obvious apathy. Rose suggests this attitude, which is compounded by the heat, is counterproductive to the notion of active citizenship.

The strengths of the system because of the emphasis on the safeguards of justice

In order to overcome these innate limitations, Rose suggests that the emphasis on and adherence to the safeguards are essential assets to the deliberation process. The power of the process lies within its ability to expose their “personal prejudice” in a “locked room”, where the men cannot escape scrutiny. The locked room also becomes a metaphorical representation of the men’s closed minds that are gradually enlightened as the trial proceeds. Furthermore, Rose uses the “harsh white light” as a device to reveal the men’s limitations, confirming that the process contributes to greater self-awareness.

8th juror: embodiment and “architect” of justice

In this regard, the role of the 8th juror, who believes the boy deserves the courtesy of “talking” about the evidence before arriving at hasty assumptions, is critical to the exposure of injustices and prejudices. He is the juror who most faithfully follows the disembodied voice of the judge and his reminder that the jurors must deliberate “honestly and thoughtfully” and sift “fact” from “fancy”. By focusing on the concept of reasonable doubt, he exposes the inconsistencies in the testimonies of the eye-witnesses and urges the jurors to question the “circumstantial evidence”. His probing casts doubt and his question to the jurors, “What if the facts are wrong”, also serves to whet the audience’s curiosity.
The 9th Juror, whose experience derived from his age and experience is vital, asserts that no one has a "monopoly on the truth" as "coincidences are possible." As such, the jurors are forced to question the reliability of the evidence such as the psychiatrist’s report which indicates that the defendant had "strong homicidal tendencies," only to conclude that these tendencies don’t always manifest as action; likewise the threat “I’m going to kill you” which becomes a humiliating experience for the third juror. The fact that the old man could not have physically walked to the door to verify the identity of escaping person and the absence of the woman’s glasses all conspire to plant doubt.

8th juror: empowers diversity rather than conformity

In the right context and circumstances, Rose also suggests that diversity, a hallmark of democracy, can hinder, but can also facilitate justice. The gradual self-awareness and enlightenment of many of the jurors helps the collective team more effectively scrutinise the evidence. In many ways, such diversity of provides a plethora of contexts for identification which in turn helps the jurors gain an insight into the flaws of the evidence. The 5th Juror’s “slum background” and upbringing empower him to challenge the angle of the knife wound and the 9th Juror’s age creates doubt in the reliability of the old man’s testimony. He empathetically observes that the man's need to be "quoted just once" provides motivation to lie. The painter’s experience of apartments near an el-train also reveal the difficulty a witness would have hearing the boy. The 4th juror recognises the woman’s impossibility of seeing clearly without glasses – another metaphoric representation of how the “facts” become increasingly blurred and murky.

Furthermore, minority groups are enfranchised as evident through the middle-European 11th Juror, who reminds audiences that people “entitled to their unpopular opinions.” The notion that “there are no secrets in a jury room” holds its ground to both ensure that all voices are heard but also that extreme views are unveiled. Consequently, the 10th Juror is silenced and “defeated” as them men “turn their backs” on him acting as a powerful reminder that in seeking consensus in society, we must reject the “darkening” threat posed by venomous views.

8th juror: symbolism of democratic, social harmony

As the juror’s are freed from the “locked room” and the cathartic rain ceases to fall, the boy and thus the men are liberated by the civilising power of democracy. Indeed, in an act of social harmony, the 8th Juror’s gesture of helping the 3rd Juror with his coat demonstrates the potential for fractured sides to find consensus in a society attempting to find her identity post war From the liberating ability of the process, Rose celebrates democracy as a powerful and enlightening asset and is accordingly the ultimate strength of the jury system.

Through the 8th juror’s gaze through the window to the New York Skyline, Rose suggests that the delivery of justice and vigilance is important to ensure the protection of democratic values and to secure justice for those most in need of it protection. Therefore, a focus on the safeguards yields benefits beyond the achievement of justice. The process can empower the disempowered and act as a resounding model for a democratic society. It is the reason we “are strong”.

Therefore, a focus on the safeguards yields benefits beyond the achievement of justice. The process can empower the disempowered and act as a resounding model for a democratic society. Through the Foreman’s “Slattery” metaphor, Rose suggests that the democratic foundation of the system is
not reliant on individuals, but rather endorses the collaboration of diverse voices and experiences they bring to the “scarred table”. Indeed, self aware individuals prove useful in directing the discussion away from extreme and potentially divisive views.

In an era which was plagued by “Cold war” mentalities of relentless suspicion, Rose acknowledges that the jury system is inherently flawed. However, the play serves as a source of inspiration to the strength of the judicial process should the principles of justice be appropriately upheld. Ultimately the concept of reasonable doubt affords the best protection against the miscarriage of justice. Only when the safeguards of democracy are consciously followed, can any reward be in sight. Rose serves us with a timely reminder that we must accept our civic duties and remain self-aware and “watchful” for those who attempt to hinder the system in order witness what “makes us strong”.