



What fuels a MOB?

KEY IDEA Visualize a mob of people rampaging through the streets, whipped into a frenzy by **hysteria**. The fear, anger, and panic produced by hysteria can make otherwise reasonable people do irrational things. In *The Crucible*, for example, the hysteria created by the Salem witch trials makes neighbor turn against neighbor.

DISCUSS What makes people act as a mob? What are some of the results of mob action? Think about news reports or historical accounts of mobs that you've come across. In a small group, discuss what caused these mobs to form and how they behaved.

LITERARY ANALYSIS: CONVENTIONS OF DRAMA

Drama is literature in play form. It is meant to be performed and seen. However, an understanding of dramatic conventions can help you picture the performance when you read a script. As you read *The Crucible*, be aware of these drama conventions:

- **Stage directions**, which Miller uses not only to describe settings and characters but also to provide historical background in the form of expository mini-essays
- **Dialogue**, the lifeblood of drama, which moves the plot forward and reveals character traits
- **Types of characters**—heroes, villains, and foils—which Miller uses to heighten the tension of his drama
- **Plot**, which is driven by **conflict** that builds throughout each act

READING SKILL: DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS

Characters in drama reveal their personality traits through their words and actions. The descriptions in the stage directions can also provide insight into these characters. As you read *The Crucible*, **draw conclusions** about the play's main characters. Record their important traits and the evidence that reveals these traits in a chart like the one shown. Be sure to add characters to the chart as you encounter them.

	<i>Abigail Williams</i>	<i>John Proctor</i>	<i>Reverend John Hale</i>
<i>Traits</i>	<i>proud</i>	<i>assertive</i>	
<i>Evidence</i>			

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Arthur Miller uses the words shown here to help convey the atmosphere of the Salem witch trials. Place them in the following categories: words that describe character traits, words that describe actions, and words that are concepts.

WORD LIST	adamant	corroborate	immaculate
	ameliorate	deference	imperceptible
	anarchy	deposition	iniquity
	conciliatory	dissembling	subservient
	contentious	effrontery	trepidation

