

Too Much Summary (BAD)	Text Used Only for Context/to Support a Point (GOOD)
<p>At the end of the play, the court and Reverend Hale want John to confess to witchcraft – the court wants him to do it because John is a respected member in the town and his confession will give some credibility to the chaos that has taken place, and Reverend Hale wants him to confess because he feels partly responsible for not speaking up about his doubts sooner, and he would rather people lie than die for something they didn't do. John talks with Elizabeth, and they forgive each other for their wrongdoings. Elizabeth would love to have John live, but she encourages him to do what needs to do. John at first says that he will confess, but when the court brings an official confession to sign, he signs it but then rips it up, shouting that he cannot. He reasons, "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! . . . I have given you my soul; leave me my name!" (Miller 207). Proctor chooses death because he would rather leave an honorable legacy rather than live a lie. This is the ultimate sacrifice for John, but he dies as a man who has realized his goodness.</p>	<p>John's greatest and most honorable sacrifice, however, comes at the end of the play, when John has to decide whether to confess to something he did not do, and live, or to maintain his innocence, and die. The conflict for John lies in the fact that up to this point, he does not really accept that he is a "good" man – his sin of adultery has haunted him, and he feels guilt that the trials have escalated this far because of his lechery. However, when he realizes that his signed confession is going to hang on the church door for the town to see, he seizes the opportunity to redeem himself by ripping it up and maintaining his innocence. John declares, "I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor" (Miller 208). This revelation is crucial: John accepts that he is a good man and he can die alongside characters like the saintly Rebecca Nurse, but more importantly, he leaves a noble and honorable legacy for his children. When Reverend Hale begs Elizabeth to plead with him more, she refuses, saying that John has "his goodness now" (Miller 208); she realizes – just as the reader does – that although John will die, his sacrifice has allowed him to find the honor and dignity that he thought he had lost as well as to be the type of man and father his children and the townspeople can respect. This ultimate sacrifice reinforces the message that leaving behind an honorable legacy is more important than living a lie.</p>