

What does she mean?

In The Crucible, several characters display their anger through their tone and diction. I'm sure you've never done this, but sometimes teenagers manipulate their parents by altering their tone and diction for the situation. When asked, "Where were you, Johnny?" Johnny might reply: "At Jerry's house hanging out," while neglecting to mention that he was partying at Jerry's house. A lot of times, if you read *carefully*, you can better understand what the person *really* means. How? Well, if your crystal ball is in the shop, you might rely on these tactics to infer what a person is truly saying.

Here's an example:

Abigail says to Parris in Act I:

"They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them!" (834).

Ask Yourself:	Answer:
What is she saying? (Summarize)	The Proctors treated me in a servile manner.
How do you know that? (Diction)	Slaves, Barbados, black face
Why is she saying this? (Motive)	She wants to shock Parris by showing him a contrary situation.

Your turn:

Read the following excerpt and complete the chart below. Use the example from above to do your work.

On page 852 in Act II, Proctor says to Elizabeth:

"Spare me! You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. Learn charity, woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still an everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!"

Ask Yourself:	Answer:
What is he saying?	
How do you know that?	
Why is he saying this?	

Try again:

Read the following excerpt and complete the chart below. Use the example from above to do your work.

On page 873 in Act III, Proctor confesses:

"...She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, I lusted, and there *is* a promise in such sweat. But it is a whore's vengeance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands. I know you must see it now."

Ask Yourself:	Answer:
What is he saying?	
How do you know that?	
Why is he saying this?	

Application:

Now I want to know that you can apply what you've learned through this activity. In order to assess this, I need for you to write a passage of your own.

Re-read the passage above that Proctor says in the play. Consider what you know about Abigail and reflect how SHE would respond to him if given an opportunity. Write her response to John Proctor in the form of a letter. The reply must be five sentences long or more. You will be graded on your diction and tone.
