

The Salem Witch Trials

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19 Salem, USA, between February 1692 and May 1693.

29 They began when two little girls, Betty Parris (aged 9)
38 and Abigail Williams (aged 11), began to have seizures,
46 which would make them twitch and scream – moving
55 their bodies in an unusual way and making strange
64 noises. The village doctor, William Griggs, said that they
74 were 'bewitched' and people began to hunt for the 'witch'
79 that had cursed the girls.

88 Three women were accused: Sarah Good, a local homeless
98 person; Sarah Osborne, an old lady who did not attend
108 church; and Tituba, a servant. Over the course of the
117 trials, over 150 innocent people were put into prison
122 after being accused of witchcraft.



Quick Questions



1. In which country did the Salem witch trials occur?



2. Find two words which the author uses to show that the girls' movements and noises were not normal.



3. Why might the village doctor have said that the girls had been 'bewitched'?



4. How does William Griggs' diagnosis compare to what a doctor might say today?

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Answers



1. In which country did the Salem witch trials occur?

Accept: 'USA' or 'United States of America' only.



2. Find two words which the author uses to show that the girls' movements and noises were not normal.

Accept: unusual and strange.



3. Why might the village doctor have said that the girls had been 'bewitched'?

Accept answers which discuss their unusual behaviour and symptoms and they did not know about those medical conditions at the time.



4. How does William Griggs' diagnosis compare to what a doctor might say today?

Accept any reasonable contrast which outdates and nullifies witchcraft, such as 'a doctor today would find a medical reason and would not say that witchcraft was the reason for an illness.'