Your task is to compose a well-developed, thoughtfully organized essay that discusses fully one or two works we have studied in English 20-1 Honors. Your response is to be focused as an answer to the following question:

What idea(s) does the author develop about the intentions, experiences, and effects of discontented individuals?

Evaluation criteria:

Thought and Understanding—10 marks 6.5/10
- How effectively does the writer’s response address the assigned question?
- How sound and insightful are the writer’s comments on the chosen text(s)?

Supporting Evidence—10 marks 7.5/10
- How thoughtful, detailed, ample, and precise are the writer’s references to elements from the text(s)?

Organization—5 marks 5/5
- How effectively expressed and thoughtfully sustained is the essay’s thesis?
- How unified, clear, and coherent is the writing (emphasis on sensible transitions and logical paragraphing)?
- How well is the discussion concluded?

Matters of Choice—5 marks 3.5/5
- How skillfully has the writer managed diction and syntax choices?
- How varied and interesting are the sentence constructions?
- How appropriate are the writer’s style choices in the context of critical-response writing?

Matters of Correctness—5 marks 4/5
- How correctly has the writer used the conventions of written English—in particular, grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation?
Chaotic Times and Discontented Individuals

It has been proven that when chaos arises, discontented people emerge along with it. Some are able to stay positive through it all by following that in what truly means something to them. But others lose their way and are unable to return to the right side of the chaotic world. It is seen that this occurs in the play, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. Three characters who go through the most significant and various experiences dealing with these thoughts of dissatisfaction are Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, and John Proctor. One sees that these characters are discontented with the events that have come about, such as the accusations of witchcraft, the theocratic rule of the Puritan church and Salem, the town in which the story is based, and the court that has been selected to overlook these proceedings. The Salem “witch hunts” were a trying time and the author develops a great deal about the intentions, experiences and effects of these discontented individuals.

First of all, Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of John Proctor, has always been a virtuous yet rather cold individual. One sees that Elizabeth is discontented with certain things, even before the commotion of the witch trials begin, as she throws Abigail Williams, her servant at the time “out on the high road” for suspicion of an affair with her husband. After this it becomes apparent that Abigail will seek revenge on Elizabeth and hope to one day “dance on [her] grave, with [John Proctor]” the man who Abigail continues to lust for. When Abigail receives the chance to accuse Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft, and quench her thirst of this long time grudge, she takes full opportunity. Elizabeth Proctor who was discontent with the witch trials in the beginning becomes even less fond of them once she is accused. In being the courageous woman that she is she leaves her family with little fuss, but is upset all the same, as she knows that “[Abigail Williams] wants [her] dead” and she will not rest until she obtains what she has set out for. The court shows mercy on Elizabeth for she is pregnant but they still keep her in captivity and when her husband, John Proctor is accused of witchcraft see becomes more and more dissatisfied with the nature of these trials. She is pleaded with by Reverend Hale, to save her husband but she cannot for she knows that he has made his decision to “[keep] his goodness and that God forbid [she] takes it from him.” For this will only continue to increase her discontentment with these trials, as she knows that doing this would be unfair to her husband, herself, and above all God.

Secondly, it is shown that Abigail Williams is a wily, vengeful, and deceitful teenage girl who is discontent with the theocratic rule of the Puritan’s and the town of Salem, itself. The play begins with her and a group of girls being caught dancing in the woods, which is a sinful deed in Puritan views. As some may dismiss this as simple teenage rebellion, others say it is an act of witchcraft. This event escalates when Betty Parris, the daughter of Reverend Parris becomes entrenched in a coma-like state. The accusations of witchcraft soon begin thereafter and the search for the Devil begins. Abigail is also discontent with the town of Salem. She sees the witch trials as a perfect opportunity to commence her plan of revenge. Once she confesses a few names to who she saw with the Devil, it becomes easier for her to accuse the name that she has been longing for, for years, Elizabeth Proctor. In the mean time, she sends the town of Salem into bedlam which causes others who are discontent with their neighbours to accuse them of absurd crimes and get the revenge they always dreamed of. Abigail accuses Elizabeth of “always having poppets,” which were regarded as a sign of witchcraft in this chaotic time and leads to the arrest of Elizabeth. One sees that eventually Abigail’s dissatisfaction with theocracy and Salem has reached a point of no return, calling Salem pretense and eventually stealing from her uncle and fleeing the town.

Thirdly, John Proctor, a courageous, heroic farmer becomes overly discontent with the court that condemns the people of Salem, many who are there under false accusation, to their deaths. For many in Salem all is in black and white, there is a right and a wrong, a good and an evil. The court follows the same set of procedures such that one is either “with the court or against it, there is no middle road.” John becomes quite dissatisfied with the court when his wife is taken under arrest, after the accusations put forward by Abigail Williams, who he knows is only doing this to get to him. When he goes to the court to clear his wife’s name and question the accuracy of the accusations put forth by a group of teenage girls, he
himself is accused of witchcraft and is arrested. This again increased his discontentment with the court. His wife is brought to plead with him. He decides to admit to this false crime but says “it’s hard to feed a lie to a pack of dogs.” In confessing he will save himself from his death and reluctantly give the court the satisfaction of having him affirm his link with the Devil. However, when time to sign the documents that publicly announce that he has committed the crime of witchcraft, he breaks down and questions their need for his name in saying, “I have given you my soul, please leave me my name,” causing the confession to not proceed, and making the decision that will ultimately lead to his death. Although his discontent with the court leads to John Proctor’s death, he dies with his dignity, knowing that he has his goodness and not giving the court the satisfaction that they desire.

In conclusion, discontentment is a feeling that is closely wound with chaotic situations. The witch trials in Arthur Miller’s play The Crucible are a situation with filled with definite absurdity and discontent individuals. Those who are subject to the most discontentments through what the author develops about their intentions, experiences and effects are Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, and John Proctor. They have become dissatisfied with the nature of the accusations, theocracy and the town of Salem, and the court that is observing the witch trials, respectively. As some persevere, through these trying times others are lost and cannot take the discontentment any further, either fleeing or dying with their dignity. In this time of uncertainty it is those who can overlook their discontent and move past the absurdity of the trials, which have truly passed the test of the crucible.

**EDITS (introduction and two body paragraphs)**

It has been proven that when chaos arises, discontented people emerge along with it. Some are able to stay positive through it all by following that in what truly means something to them. But others lose their way and are unable to return to the right side of the chaotic world.

1. Proven by whom? Avoid declaring that a fact is objectively substantiated if you cannot cite a source.

2. As well, avoid stating the far too obvious, and remember that some conditions don’t need to be proven. To say that discontentment emerges when chaos arises is the equivalent of saying, for example, that when an elephant enters the room people have less room to move.

3. A style point: Sentences that begin with the word *it* (called expletive constructions) are weak. Starting with *it* often needlessly delays the subject of a sentence or renders the subject somewhat indeterminate. In this case, a more forceful construction would be something like this:

   **When chaos arises, discontented people emerge along with it.**

   Or this:

   **Discontentment emerges when chaos arises.**

4. Your meaning is unclear in the phrase “by following that in what.” The sense of the sentence would actually be complete if you were simply to leave it at “Some are able to stay positive through it all.”

5. Your meaning in the phrase “and are unable to return to the right side of the chaotic world” is not unclear, but the wording is awkward and the observation unnecessary.

6. For the sake of economy and clarity in this passage, I’d suggest the following revision:

   **In times of chaos, discontentment emerges. Some are able to remain positive through it all and may even gain wisdom and strength as a result of their experience. Others simply lose their way.**
It is seen that this occurs in the play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

Three characters who go through the most significant and various experiences in the matter of discontentment dealing with those thoughts of dissatisfaction are Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, and John Proctor. One sees that these characters are discontented—in particular, with the events that have come about, such as the accusations of witchcraft, the theocratic rule of the Puritan church and Salem, the town in which the story is based, and the court that has been selected to overlook these conducting the proceedings.

The Salem “witch hunts” were a trying time and the author develops a great deal about the intentions, experiences and effects of these discontented individuals.

First of all, Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of John Proctor, has always been a virtuous yet (as suggested in dialogue between herself and John) a rather cold individual woman. One sees that Elizabeth is discontented with a certain condition, even before the commotion of the witch trials begins. She throws Abigail Williams, her servant at the time, “out on the high road” in consequence of an affair with her husband.

Here is another sentence weakened by unnecessary wording and an *It* starter. Try for a more direct assertion, connect it more clearly to the preceding passage, and add some context in the way of noting the historical setting of *The Crucible*. Something like this:

*Regarding the chaos of Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, as represented by Arthur Miller in his modern tragedy *The Crucible*, many do indeed lose their way. A few, however, by way of great suffering and bravery, find their truest selves and rise purified out of the madness of the so-called witch trials.*

The experiences of Elizabeth, Abigail, and John are not necessarily the "most" significant. They are simply the three you have chosen to discuss. The experiences of, say, Mary Warren, Reverend Hale, Governor Danforth, or Tituba are no less significant.

In generating a thesis for an essay where you must respond to a question such as "What ideas does the author develop regarding [THE TOPIC]?" (which is always the form applied in the English 30-1 diploma exam), you need to provide a summary answer to the question. To say only that the condition to which the topic refers is apparent in the work is not to answer the question. So it is in this case, where you note that "the author develops a great deal about … discontented individuals." Just *what* idea does the author develop?

In the process of composition, you will sometimes do well to leave the thesis statement blank until you’ve finished the essay, at which point you may determine just what it is you’ve had to say—what your answer to the assigned question is. As for this essay, it seems to me that your overarching idea is that those who most effectively endure a period of discontentment, and indeed derive benefit from it, are those who possess great integrity and an acute sense of self-awareness.

The s-ending verb "begins" is needed here because it refers back to the singular noun "commotion," not to the plural "trials."

Elizabeth has not merely suspected the affair. She *knows* it has occurred, for John has admitted it to her.
After this it becomes apparent we see that Abigail will seek revenge on Elizabeth and hopes to one day “dance on [her] grave” with [John Proctor], Abigail continues to lust for. When Abigail receives the chance to accuse Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft, and quench her thirst of this long time grudge for John, she takes full opportunity. Elizabeth Proctor, who is already discontent with the witch trials in the beginning, becomes, understandably, even less fond more resentful of them once she is accused. In being the Courageous woman that she is, she leaves her family with little fuss stoically, even with apparent calmness, but is upset all the same, as she knows that Abigail Williams “wants [her] dead,” and she will not rest until she obtains what she has set out for.

The court stays the hanging of Elizabeth Proctor on learning that she is pregnant but she still keeps her in captivity, and when her husband, John Proctor, is accused of witchcraft she becomes more and more dissatisfied with the nature of these trials. She is pleaded with by Reverend Hale. Later, Reverend Hale pleads with her to save her husband, but she cannot do so for she knows that he has made his decision to “keep” “his goodness” and that “God forbids [she] take it from him.” For this will only continue to increase her discontentment with these trials, as she knows that doing this so would be unfair to her husband, herself, and above all God.

Secondly, In contrast to the virtue of Elizabeth, it is shown we see that Abigail Williams is a wily, vengeful, and deceitful teenage girl who is discontent with the theocratic rule of the Puritans and the town of Salem itself. The play begins with her and a group of girls being caught dancing in the woods, which is a sinful deed in the Puritan view.
As some may Though many moderns would dismiss this as simple teenage rebellion, others say it is an act of the sober, profoundly paranoid authorities of Salem would see it as tantamount to witchcraft. This event escalates when Betty Parris, the daughter of Reverend Parris, becomes entrenched in a coma-like what appears to be a catatonic state, but which, as we later see, is only her own act of deception, one done to save herself from punishment. The accusations of witchcraft begin soon afterward and the search for the Devil begins. Abigail is also Though Abigail, as she indicates in a later scene with John Proctor, is discontent with the town of Salem, noting the hypocrisy of Salem’s "Christian women and their covenanted men," her naming of "witches" in the climax of Act I cannot be seen as a "cool plot" to take revenge. Rather, she is simply and impulsively shifting blame onto unsuspecting innocents in an effort to save herself from being whipped. With the introduction of the weighty magistrates, however, and the setting up of a formal process for the investigation and prosecution of witchcraft, we may believe that Abigail comes to see an opportunity to do deliberate and calculated damage to others. She sees the witch trials as a perfect opportunity to commence her plan of revenge. Once she confesses a few names to who she of women she "saw with the Devil," it becomes easier for her she comes easily to accuse the name that she has been hanging for, for years, not only accuse Elizabeth Proctor but also to manufacture incriminating evidence in the form of Mary Warren's "poppet." In the meantime, Following the lead of Abigail she sends the town of Salem into makes bedlam of itself, as we see which causes others who are discontent with their neighbours to become willing to accuse them of absurd crimes and thereby enact their own revolutions, they always dreamed of. Abigail accuses Elizabeth of "always having poppets," which were regarded as a sign of witchcraft in this chaotic time and leads to the arrest of Elizabeth. One sees that eventually Abigail’s dissatisfaction with theocracy and Salem has reached a point of no return, calling Salem proctor and eventually stealing from her uncle and fleeing the town. In this way, then, Miller suggests that individual discontentment can expand by way of contagion to consume whole communities.

REVISION

In times of chaos, discontentment emerges. Some are able to remain positive through it all and may even gain wisdom and strength as a result of their experience. Others simply lose their way. Regarding the chaos of Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, as represented by Arthur Miller in his modern tragedy The Crucible, many do indeed lose their way. A few, however, by way of suffering and bravery, find their truest selves and rise purified out of the madness of the so-called witch trials. Three characters who go through significant experiences in the matter of discontentment are Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, and John Proctor—in particular, with the accusations of witchcraft, the theocratic rule of Salem, and the court conducting the proceedings. Through The Crucible, Miller suggests the idea that in a period of discontentment those who most successfully endure, and indeed derive benefit from it, are those who possess great integrity and a sense of self-awareness.

First, Elizabeth Proctor, the wife of John Proctor, a virtuous yet (as suggested in dialogue between herself and John) a rather cold woman, is discontented with a certain condition, even before the commotion of the witch trials begins, she having thrown Abigail Williams, her servant at the time, "out on the high road" in consequence of an affair with her husband. After this we see that Abigail will seek revenge on Elizabeth and hopes to one day "dance on [her] grave with [John Proctor]," whom Abigail continues to lust
for. And indeed, when Abigail receives the chance to accuse Elizabeth of witchcraft, thereby disposing of her and so allowing her, she believes, to quench her thirst for John, she takes full opportunity. Elizabeth, who is already discontent with the witch trials in the beginning, becomes, understandably, even more resentful once she is accused. Nevertheless, she applies great strength and reveals more than once in the coming course of events a quality of heroic integrity. For example, on being arrested and conveyed to the jail, she leaves her family stoically, even with apparent calmness, though plainly she is upset for she knows that Abigail Williams "wants [her] dead" and has the power to achieve it. In due time, the court temporarily stays the hanging of Elizabeth on learning that she is pregnant but still keeps her in captivity. When John seeks to free Elizabeth by a process that sees him admitting to his illicit sexual encounter with Abigail, and so greatly imperils himself, Elizabeth is herself put in the position of trying to save him. To do this, she reasons, she must lie in response to Governor Danforth's question, "To your knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery?" And of course she knows that he has. So, for a woman who "has never lied" and who believes, as the faithful of Salem do, that "God damn all liars"—that to lie in this court of law will indeed consign her to hell—Elizabeth's simple words "No, sir" stand an action of total sacrifice in the name of love. But the effect of this lie backfires (and stands as one of the most upsetting situational ironies of the play), for her answer serves only to confirm Danforth's belief in Abigail's righteousness and John Proctor's deviltry. Later, too, Elizabeth demonstrates her integrity when she allows her husband to choose his own sacrifice in the name of truth. Reverend Hale pleads with her to persuade John to "give his lie," which the court will (God knows how) take for truth. Truly, she could at this moment save him from the rope. And Elizabeth certainly wants John living. She says as much. But she also knows how intensely he has suffered to earn "his goodness" and in love says "God forbid [she] take it from him." In essence, then, her acceptance of her husband's choice is no less an act of martyrdom than is his.

In contrast to the virtue of Elizabeth, we see that Abigail Williams is a wily, vengeful teenage girl who is discontent with the theocratic rule of Salem. The play begins with her and a group of girls being caught dancing in the woods, which is a sinful deed in the Puritan view. Though many moderns would dismiss this as simple teenage rebellion, the sober, profoundly paranoid authorities of Salem would see it as tantamount to witchcraft. This event escalates when Betty Parris, the daughter of Reverend Parris, becomes entrenched in what appears to be a catatonic state, but which, as we later see, is only her own act of deception, one done to save herself from punishment. The accusations of witchcraft begin soon thereafter and the search for the Devil begins. Though Abigail, as she indicates in a later scene with John Proctor, is discontent with the town of Salem, noting the hypocrisy of Salem's "Christian women and their covenanted men," her naming of "witches" in the climax of Act I cannot be seen as a "cool plot" to take revenge. Rather, she is simply and impulsively shifting blame onto unsuspecting innocents in an effort to save herself from being whipped. With the introduction of the weighty magistrates, however, and the setting up of a formal process for the investigation and prosecution of witchcraft, we may believe that Abigail comes to see an opportunity to do deliberate and calculated damage to others. Once she confesses a few names of women she "saw with the Devil," she comes easily to not only accuse Elizabeth Proctor but also to manufacture incriminating evidence in the form of Mary Warren's "poppet." Following the lead of Abigail the town of Salem makes bedlam of itself, as we see others who are discontent with their neighbours become willing to accuse them of absurd crimes and thereby enact their own revenges. In this way, then, Miller suggests that individual discontentment can expand by way of contagion to consume whole communities.