

## Mini-Lesson

Vocabulary Routine: *hysteria* (L 4, 5)

Hysteria is a Greek word with two parts or combining forms (similar to compound words). The first part of the word ‘hyster’ (hysterical) means *emotion*. (This Greek combining form literally means womb and was used originally this way because the Greeks believed that strong emotion was connected to the woman.) The second part ‘ia’ means *a condition*. Therefore, the word ‘hysteria’ means *a condition of strong emotion*.

## Video: “The Story of the Witch Hunt”

[http://www.stmars.com/SalemWitch\\_New/story.html](http://www.stmars.com/SalemWitch_New/story.html) (Bit.ly/Day16WestingGame1)

**In this video...**you will learn about the events of the Salem witch trials. This video builds background knowledge prior to reading the article, “Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials”.

## Instructional Read-Aloud

**Topic:** “Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials” by Sarah Collinge

**In this article...**you will learn about the Salem Witch Trials and how they have become an American symbol of what can go wrong when people become suspicious of and fearful of their neighbors.

**In this lesson...**you will be modeling how readers focus on gathering important information while reading. You will teach students that sometimes readers use outside sources to help them build background knowledge about a topic. You will be modeling how to use an outside text to help you think about the inspiration for a story.

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will want to download the video, “The Story of the Witch Hunt”. You will also want to photocopy the article “Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials” for all of your students.

## **Learning Targets:**

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RI 1)

- Predict

Show understanding of important story elements (RI 3)

- Plot

Interpret figurative meanings and analyze how specific word choice shapes meaning (RI 4)

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

## **Connect:**

*We have been learning...*

...that good readers pay attention to the main character and the plot when reading mystery.

In our last session, we paid attention to the chain of events in *The Westing Game* and began to make predictions.

## Teach:

*Now I am going to teach you...*

...that good readers pay attention to the author's craft and consider the author's purpose.

On page 21 of *The Westing Game*, Otis Amber gives each heir a letter. As they receive the letter, each heir must sign their name on a receipt and give their position. Otis explains that a position is "like a job."

When Turtle signs the receipt, she lists her position as 'witch'. The author selects this position for Turtle very purposefully, with the intent of using this term to draw our attention to an American symbol.

Today, we will be reading about the symbolic meaning of the Salem Witch Trials that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Before we begin reading, I would like to play a short video that summarizes the events of the Salem witch trials.

### Play the video: "The Story of the Witch Hunt"

Now that you have some background knowledge about the Salem witch trials, we are going to read the article, "Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials."

As we read, watch me as I model how I think about what is important in this article.

Notice how I think about how the information in the article relates to the story *The Westing Game*, and make predictions.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk:

When the article said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.



**Begin reading "Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials".**

## Model:



**Stop after:** “Soon other girls began to act in a similar manner.” (paragraph 1)

**When the article said** that the story of the Salem Witch Trials began when a few girls began acting very strangely, **I was thinking this was important because** it reminds me of the story Sandy and Otis told about the boys who went into the Westing house on Halloween. One of the poor fellas “just sits in the state asylum saying ‘purple waves, purple waves’ over and over again.”

**This makes me think** that the events in *The Westing Game* will be similar to the events of the Salem witch trials.

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree with my thinking?

**When the article said** soon, other girls, began to act similarly, **I was thinking this was important because** it helps me understand that the girls in Salem were influenced by their peers. **This makes me think** that the characters in *The Westing Game* are going to be influenced by each other.

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree with my thinking?

## Guided Practice:



**Stop after:** “Over 150 men, women, and children were accused, many of whom were considered troublesome and disorderly outsiders.” (paragraph 3).

What did you think was important here and what are you predicting will happen in *The Westing Game*?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

## Guided Practice:



**Stop after:** “Spectral evidence (testimony about dreams and visions) was recognized by the court and used as evidence.” (paragraph 4).

What did you think was important here and what are you predicting will happen in *The Westing Game*?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

## Guided Practice:



**Stop after:** “The story of the Salem Witch Trials now stands as a symbol of what can go wrong when people become suspicious of and fearful of their neighbors.” (paragraph 7)

What did you think was important here and what are you predicting will happen in *The Westing Game*?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem:

When the article said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

## Stretch It:

Our understanding of the events of the Salem Witch Trials and the hysteria these events caused will help us make predictions in *The Westing Game*. In the video, “The Story of the Witch Hunt” we learned that Anne Putnam publically acknowledged her role in the hysteria of the Salem witch trials. She said, “It was a great delusion of Satan that deceived me at that sad time...” A delusion is a belief that is not true. What we learn from her confession is that the accusations of witchcraft were not true.

In *The Westing Game* one of the heirs has been accused of murdering Sam Westing.

Discuss: Do you think one of the heirs murdered Sam Westing? Why or why not?

## Link:

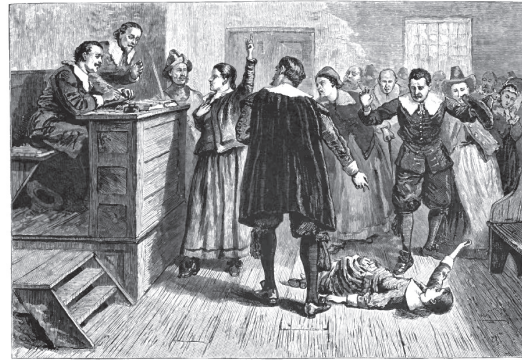
*Today and every day when you read...*

...I want you to consider how information in outside sources might help you understand the topic of a story better.

## Seeds of Paranoia: The Salem Witch Trials

By Sarah Collinge

The infamous Salem Witch Trials began in 1692 when a few girls, who had become friendly with a slave woman named Tituba, began acting very strangely. They fell into hysterical screaming, body convulsions, and barking like dogs. Soon, other girls began to act in a similar manner.



WITCHCRAFT AT SALEM VILLAGE

A local doctor diagnosed the girls as being bewitched and the town accused Tituba, and two other women, of witchcraft. This started a chain-reaction of confessions, denunciations, and arrests.

With the seed of paranoia and hysteria planted, a stream of accusations followed for the next few months. Over 150 men, women, and children were accused, many of whom were considered troublesome or disorderly outsiders.

Eventually, the trials began to overwhelm the local justice system and so a special court convened in Salem to hear the cases. Spectral evidence (testimony about dreams and visions) was recognized by the court and used as evidence.

In total, nineteen people were executed during the Salem witch trials, both male and female. The court later deemed the trials unlawful.

Historians now believe that the accused were victims of mob mentality, which describes how people can be influenced by their peers to adopt certain behaviors on a largely emotional, rather than rational basis. Mob mentality leads to mass hysteria, and scapegoating.

Today, the town of Salem continues to tell the story of the hysteria of 1692. The Peabody Essex Museum houses the original court documents, and the Salem Witch Museum houses 13 life-size stage sets retelling the emotional events of the trials. The story of the Salem Witch Trials now stands as a symbol of what can go wrong when people become suspicious of and fearful of their neighbors.

### References:

Blumberg, J. (2007). *A brief history of the Salem Witch Trials: One town's strange journey from paranoia to pardon*. Retrieved May 11, 2018 from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-brief-history-of-the-salem-witch-trials-175162489/>

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