

# Salem witch trials assignment

[History](#)



There have been many theories and explanations proposed on the reason for the girl's fits during The Salem Witch Trials, yet still to this day scholars are unsure for the true reason behind it all. Although there are several different propositions for the strange hysterical fits the girls would have, there are a few that have been made more prominent. One theory involves the poisoning of the girls caused by a fungus that grows on wheat, rye, and other grains. Another suggests that the reason for the girl's illnesses was that they had ever psychological problems.

Finally, many scholars believe that the reason behind the fits was because of the Puritan lifestyle of the girls. It is still unclear today which of these theories is the best explanation to the mystery behind the strange happenings. Ergot poisoning, which is caused by a fungus that grows on wheat-like plants, may be a reason behind the sickness of the girls. Symptoms from this disease include muscle spasms, nausea, and hallucinations which would compensate for the "mass hysteria" that the girls had during the trials.

Ergot poisoning has been known to cause convulsive fits similar to what happened to the girls, and can be passed down from mother to child during the process of breast feeding (Source B). Another explanation for the hysterical fits would be if there were psychological problems involved. A few historians believe that it was hysteria or delusions that caused the girls to go crazy. Hysteria is defined as an uncontrollable outburst of emotion or fear, characterized by irrationality, laughter, or weeping.

Source C). Those who have studied The Salem Witch trials believe that maybe the girls had mental problems, and the girls enjoyed the attention they were getting until the whole thing got out of hand and innocent people died. A final theory behind the outburst from the girls has to do with the Puritan lifestyle of the town. Puritans were very strict and all girls were expected to help their mothers in the cleaning, cooking and sewing of the household.

It was unacceptable for the girls to show any sort of emotion, and they could be severely punished for doing so. A few historians believe that the girls were malingerers, which is a person who fakes symptoms of being sick to gain personal rewards (Source D). Although no individual person will ever know the truth behind what really happened during the Salem Witch Trials, there are hundreds of theories and explanations behind the cause of the fits. To this day, historians and scholars still theorize about what really could have caused the “ mass hysteria. ”