

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Act I, Scene 1

As a storm and battle rage simultaneously on the heath, three witches converge to discuss a future meeting with Macbeth, a Scottish nobleman.

Act I, Scene 2

On the field, King Duncan's captain reports that brave men have quelled a revolt led by the Thane of Cawdor. The king condemns Cawdor at the same time that he exalts Macbeth with a soon-to-be-announced battlefield promotion.

Act I, Scene 3

Unaware of this impending honor, Macbeth crosses the heath with Banquo, a stalwart friend and warrior, and encounters the witches, who indicate that Macbeth is now Thane of Cawdor and will rule Scotland. To Banquo they report that he will never rule, but that his line will produce kings for Scotland. Macbeth then learns from Ross and Angus that the prophecy is true and ponders how miraculously his ambitions have borne fruit.

Act I, Scene 4

After rejoining Duncan, Macbeth invites him to his home at Inverness and hurries ahead of the royal train to prepare a fitting welcome. All the while, Macbeth muses on Malcolm, the heir apparent to Duncan's crown.

Act I, Scene 5

Macbeth's message to his wife reveals the implications of this eventful day. With letter in hand, she analyzes her husband's character and deduces that he lacks the drive to fulfill the prophecy. As the royal guest approaches, she leaps from her role as

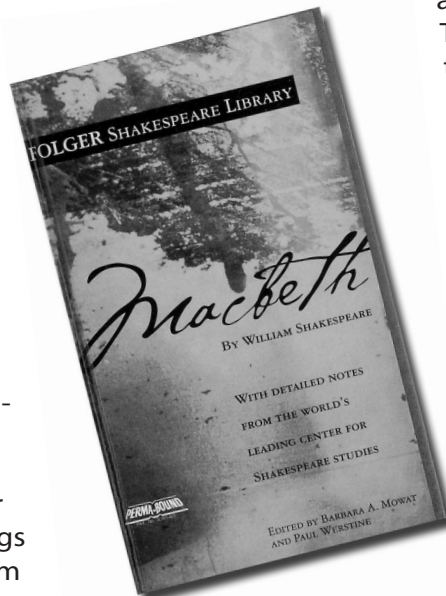
hostess to plans for murder. Macbeth, who shies from so bold a move, leaves the plot to his wife.

Act I, Scene 6

When the royal entourage reaches her home, Lady Macbeth acts the part of gracious lady and worthy subject.

Act 2, Scene 7

In private, she and her husband debate the outcome of regicide. Lady Macbeth assures him that she supports him. Thus encouraged, Macbeth decides to carry out the plot.



Act 2, Scene 1

Banquo and Macbeth display differing reactions to the witches' prophecy. Alone, Macbeth visualizes a floating weapon dripping blood.

Act 2, Scene 2

After his wife slips a sedative into the king's bodyguards' cups, Macbeth stabs the king, then overhears prayers from Duncan's sons. Their piety reminds him that his ambition has cost him God's grace. Tremulous,

Macbeth returns to his chamber, where his sharp-tongued wife chastises him for forgetting to implicate the drugged guards by leaving the weapons at their sides. She quickly completes the errand, then directs Macbeth to retire to his bed.

Act 2, Scene 3

The doorkeeper, whose drunken stupor is interrupted by knocking, opens the portal for Lenox and Macduff. Macbeth joins them. Macduff goes to the king's chamber and returns in an uproar as the news spreads that Duncan has been murdered. Macbeth takes charge, summons his wife and the princes, Malcolm and Donalbain, and slays the guards. Lady Macbeth fakes a swoon. Left alone,

the princes analyze their position and decide that they must flee lest they be accused of their father's death or die by the same hand that killed Duncan.

Act 2, Scene 4

Ross and an old man discuss the turmoil. Macduff reports that the king's sons are accused of killing their father and announces that Macbeth has been named king. Ross departs to prepare for the crowning at Scone; Macduff stays at his home at Fife.

Act 3, Scene 1

Banquo immediately suspects Macbeth of regicide. He tells Macbeth that he and his son Fleance are venturing out on horseback, but will return for dinner. Macbeth, fearful that Banquo's family will achieve what the witches foretold, dispatches a pair of assassins to kill the two men.

Act 3, Scene 2

Macbeth and his wife reassess their political position.

Act 3, Scene 3

The killers, joined by a third attacker, succeed in waylaying and killing Banquo; Fleance escapes.

Act 3, Scene 4

The lead assassin returns during a state dinner to report that Banquo is dead. Macbeth spies Banquo's ghost seated in the host's chair. To the consternation that arises over Macbeth's fearful gibbering, Lady Macbeth coolly reports that her husband has long suffered hallucinations. A second outburst from Macbeth ends the evening's festivities; the guests depart. Macbeth expresses a need to know more about the future and plans to confer once more with the witches.

Act 3, Scene 5

Hecate directs the other witches in concocting a potion for Macbeth.

Act 3, Scene 6

Meanwhile, Lenox and another staff member contemplate the startling turn of events that has sent Duncan and Banquo to their graves and Malcolm to England. Because Macduff has joined the defector, Lenox deduces that England may march on Macbeth to restore Scotland to the rightful heirs.

Act 4, Scene 1

Hecate and the witches continue mixing ingredients. When Macbeth appears to learn more about his future, the trio call forth a parade of fearsome visions. In the lead is an armed head warning Macbeth to beware Macduff. A second vision displays a bloody babe, who promises that no man born of woman can harm Macbeth. A final apparition, a crowned child, guarantees that Macbeth shall never be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. The effect of these messages is elation: Macbeth concludes that the signs bode well for an unchallenged reign.

In a final check on the future, Macbeth questions the witches about Fleance. A fourth vision parades eight monarchs behind the spirit of Banquo. At the conclusion of this display, the witches vanish. Macbeth learns that Macduff has departed. In response to the first apparition, Macbeth plots to murder Macduff's family.

Act 4, Scene 2

Murderers mercilessly slaughter Lady Macduff and her children.

Act 4, Scene 3

Meanwhile in England, Malcolm sounds out Macduff's political leanings. Macduff's loyalty to Scotland is obvious. Malcolm discloses that Macbeth has slain Macduff's wife and children. The news elicits an outburst of anger and a call for vengeance. Malcolm and Macduff determine to end Macbeth's rule by directing their forces against him.

Act 5, Scene 1

At Macbeth's castle, a doctor and female servant remark Lady Macbeth's mental deterioration, evidenced by sleepwalking, frenzied speeches, and obsession with removing imaginary blood from her hands. From her ravings, the onlookers deduce that she is aware of her husband's spree of murders.

Act 5, Scene 2

Outside the castle, Malcolm, Macduff, and Siward, an aged warrior, direct their forces to Birnam Wood.

Act 5, Scene 3

Macbeth feels no threat from their challenge

because he believes that the witches have prophesied an easy road to ambition. Lady Macbeth's physician reports that he is stumped by her symptoms.

Act 5, Scene 4

Malcolm orders soldiers to cut down branches to conceal their numbers from Macbeth.

Act 5, Scene 5

Seyton announces the queen's death. Macbeth is not surprised by her loss.

Act 5, Scene 6

Malcolm orders the soldiers to drop their branches and attack.

Act 5, Scene 7

Macbeth learns that Birnam Wood is marching against Dunsinane. His bravado wilts at this confirmation of the witches' prophecy. He outfights young Siward, who dies in the struggle, and moves on to a face-off against Macduff.

Act 5, Scene 8

Macbeth voices his false hope that no man born of woman can harm him. Macduff, supercharged with hate, shatters his confidence by describing how he was delivered surgically and was, therefore, never born in the ordinary sense of human birth. Their final clash ends Macbeth's life. Macduff beheads his enemy and exposes the gory trophy on the battlefield, where he proclaims Malcolm the next ruler of Scotland.

Timeline

43 Romans invade and colonize Britannia.
80 Romans invade Caledonia, the Latin name for the northern part of Britannia.
120 Roman Emperor Hadrian orders a wall built to control raids by Picts.
406 Romans troops withdraw from Britain.
500 Scots begin to settle on Caledonia's west coast.
563 St. Columba begins Christianizing the Scots.
846 Kenneth MacAlpin is first king of both Scots and Picts.
1005 Malcolm II kills Kenneth III.
1018 Duncan, grandson of Malcolm II, becomes king of the Britons of

Strathclyde and Cumbria.
ca. 1033 Duncan's son Malcolm is born.
1034 Malcolm II, grandfather of Duncan and Macbeth, dies, leaving his throne to Duncan I.
1039 Duncan I leads a disastrous invasion of England and comes home to face a revolt led by his cousin Macbeth.
1040 Duncan I dies in battle near Burghead. Macbeth becomes king. Malcolm is taken to England.
1042 Edward the Confessor comes to the English throne.
1050 Macbeth makes a pilgrimage to Rome.
1054 Malcolm and an English army led by Siward invade Scotland; they defeat the Scots in battle but are forced to return to England.
1057 Malcolm returns to Scotland with more English troops. After Macbeth dies in battle, his stepson Lulach is elected king.
1058 Malcolm III becomes king after Lulach is killed.
1066 Normans invade and conquer England; William I (the Conqueror) becomes king. English Princess Margaret flees to Scotland, where she marries Malcolm III.
1093 Malcolm III is killed during his fifth invasion of England.
1097 Scottish court is moved to Edinburgh.
1154 Henry II, the great-grandson of Malcolm and Margaret, is crowned king of England.
1249-86 Under Alexander III, Scotland flourishes in trade and internal advancement.
1272 Edward I becomes king of England.
1296 English invade and annex Scotland.
1297 Scots, led by William Wallace, defeat English at Stirling Bridge.
1298 Edward I defeats Wallace at Falkirk.
1305 English capture and kill Wallace.
1306 Robert Bruce becomes King of Scots.
1307 Edward II becomes king of England.
1314 Robert I defeats Edward II at Bannockburn.
1320 England recognizes Scottish independence.
1371 Robert I's grandson Robert Stewart becomes Robert II, King of Scots, the first Stuart king.
1488 James IV becomes King of Scots. He marries Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England.

- 1513 English defeat Scots at Flodden; thousands of Scots, including King James IV, are killed. James V becomes king with his mother Margaret Tudor as regent.
- 1542 James V dies; his daughter Mary becomes Queen of Scots.
- 1567 Mary, Queen of Scots, abdicates; James VI becomes king.
- 1603 James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England.
- ca. 1604 *Macbeth* is written.

Author Sketch

William Shakespeare (ca. April 23, 1564–April 23, 1616) attended a Latin grammar school in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. At eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway of Shottery, eight years his senior, and fathered a daughter, Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet. He moved to London at the age of 23 or 24, joined the Lord Chamberlain’s company, later known as the King’s Men, and remained active in theater until 1611. Much about his early adulthood is a mystery, but it is clear that he obtained a thorough knowledge of his chosen field—acting—and was well-known by 1592.



Shakespeare gained the approval of Elizabeth I and her Scottish successor, James I, both regular theater-goers. His success as an actor-playwright enabled him to invest in real estate, to build the popular Globe Theatre, and to purchase a coat of arms for his father, John Shakespeare, a glover and bailiff in Stratford. Having written and produced thirty-seven plays, a sonnet sequence, and two long poems, Shakespeare retired to a large house in Stratford. As a country gentleman, he lived out his life in harmony with his family and was buried in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church.

Critic’s Corner

Influenced by the accession of James I, the first Stuart king of England, Shakespeare honored England’s ties with Scotland by composing *Macbeth*, a dramatic biography of an 11th-century Scottish thane. The tragedy was first staged around 1606, although some authorities deduce that Shakespeare wrote the play in 1599 and later

appended flattery to James’s court. Shakespeare demonstrates the influence of Thomas Middleton’s *The Witch* with the inclusion of Hecate, a romanticized, crowd-pleasing parallel to the cold malice of Lady Macbeth. An unusually short, but powerful psychological study, *Macbeth*, which was published in the *First Folio* in 1623, centers on the themes of murder, usurpation, power, the occult, and recompense.

Historical evidence suggests that Shakespeare wrote his play for the King’s Men and evolved the rich character of Macbeth for Richard Burbage. At the end of the Commonwealth, new productions of *Macbeth* adapted songs, witches’ capers, and dance, yet the core plot remained firm and was a draw of actors of the caliber of Thomas Betterton, James Quin, David Garrick, and William Davenant. Victorian era productions showcased Edwin Forrest, William Macready, and Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth, whose portrait in costume was painted by John Singer Sargent and hangs in London’s National Portrait Gallery. Modern film versions and adaptations, numbering around 20, encompass both silent pictures and early talkies. Orson Welles’s 1948 reprise contrasts with that of Maurice Evans and Judith Anderson, who riveted audiences by her virulent raking of imaginary blood from her hands and her plaintive, conscience-ridden mad scene.

Shakespeare’s Other Works

- All’s Well That Ends Well* (ca. 1604)
- Antony and Cleopatra* (ca. 1605)
- As You Like It* (ca. 1599)
- The Comedy of Errors* (ca. 1580s-1594)
- Coriolanus* (ca. 1605-1609)
- Cymbeline* (ca. 1608-1610)
- Hamlet* (ca. 1599-1600)
- Henry IV, Part I* (ca. 1596)
- Henry IV, Part II* (ca. 1597-1598)
- Henry V* (1599)
- Henry VI, Part 1* (ca. 1589)
- Henry VI, Part 2* (ca. 1590-1591)
- Henry VI, Part 3* (ca. 1590-1591)
- Henry VIII* (ca. 1612-1613)
- Julius Caesar* (ca. early 1599)
- King John* (1590)
- King Lear* (ca. 1603-1606)
- Love’s Labours Lost* (ca. 1593-1595)
- Measure for Measure* (1604)

The Merchant of Venice (1596-1598)
Merry Wives of Windsor (ca. 1597)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (ca. 1593-1595)
Much Ado About Nothing (ca. 1598)
Othello (ca. 1603-1604)
Pericles (ca. 1606-1608)
Rape of Lucrece (1594)
Richard II (ca. 1595-1596)
Richard III (ca. 1589)
Romeo and Juliet (ca. 1593-1595)
Sonnets (ca. 1592-1598)
The Taming of the Shrew (ca. 1589)
The Tempest (ca. 1610-1611)
Timon of Athens (ca. 1606-1608)
Titus Andronicus (ca. 1588-1594)
Troilus and Cressida (ca. 1602)
Twelfth Night (ca. 1599 to 1601)
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (ca. 1613)
The Two Noble Kinsmen (possibly written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher in 1613)
Venus and Adonis (1593)
The Winter's Tale (ca. 1610-1611)

Related Reading

Orson Scott Card, *Songbird*
 Gordon R. Dickson, "Call Him Lord"
 Frances Mary Hendry, *Quest for a Maid*
 Frank Herbert, *Dune*
 Mollie Hunter, *The King's Swift Raider: A Novel on Robert the Bruce*
 Henrik Ibsen, *The Master Builder*
 Rudyard Kipling, "The Man Who Would Be King"
 Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*
 Eugene O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*
 Sir Walter Scott, *Rob Roy*
 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"
 August Wilson, *Fences*

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 "Macbeth Links," www.glen-net.ca/english/macbeth.html
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General Objectives

1. To experience a Shakespearean tragedy
2. To identify and explain dramatic conventions, particularly pantomime, asides, apparitions, and soliloquys
3. To place *Macbeth* in the Shakespearean canon of tragedies
4. To envision the staging of an aggressive, complicated play
5. To experience the beauty of Elizabethan poetry
6. To isolate and explain examples of Elizabethan language in context

7. To set the play in its social and geographical context
8. To comprehend the power of greed and vengeance as motivators
9. To evaluate the Elizabethan concept of the divine right of kings
10. To discuss self-delusion and a faulty understanding of the future as unifying factors

Specific Objectives

1. To determine why Macbeth allows his wife to stir the baser parts of his nature
2. To analyze the importance of Hecate and the witches to the plot
3. To evaluate Macduff, Banquo, Fleance, or Malcolm as a threat to Macbeth's reign
4. To account for Malcolm's elaborate test of Macduff's loyalty to Scotland
5. To discuss Shakespeare's concept of a woman's place in society
6. To analyze the martial milieu in which the story takes place
7. To enumerate poetic devices that play a major role in the dialogue, such as parallelism, assonance, allusion, simile, metaphor, poetic justice, caesura, and alliteration
8. To contrast the morals of Lady Macbeth with those of Lennox, the doctor and gentlewoman, Old Siward, Duncan, Donalbain, and Macbeth
9. To describe the effect of the falling action
10. To account for the popularity of the play

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of William Shakespeare's style, present the following terms and applications to the play:

Chiaroscuro: a deliberate contrast of light and dark to highlight movement or intensify a particular figure or setting, for instance, alternating scenes of light and dark that reflect the light and dark within human morality. Shakespeare illuminates the murky circumstances of Macbeth's reign with glimpses of Hecate and the witches stirring a cauldron and reciting charms and Lady Macbeth summoning night to hide her evil deed. In the brighter scenes, Lady Macbeth welcomes Duncan to the castle and guests sit at the king's table to partake of hospitality without fear of harm. These light

moments offset the return of dark doings that cause Banquo's death and Fleance's escape from highwaymen in the king's employ.

Round Character: a realistic being who possesses a complex or multifaceted array of traits. The description fits Macbeth, who displays no vices in the quelling of Cawdor's revolt. After viewing his future and falling into the clutches of a treacherous wife, he betrays his honorable side by letting his evil nature have free reign. The shift is not without suffering, as he displays in the mental torment he describes as a mind full of scorpions. In the end, he faces his adversary nobly and courageously by refusing to commit suicide Roman fashion. In daylight in full view of assembled Scots, Macduff brandishes the tyrant's head.

Soliloquy: a dramatic convention that presents a character's direct address to an audience, often in the form of extensive musings, verbal discussion with oneself about misgivings and dilemmas, or spoken thoughts and fears. Both Lady and Lord Macbeth vent their internal turmoil in solitary discourse. In Act I, Lady Macbeth speaks her ominous intent to make Macbeth seize opportunity. Her willfulness is so extreme that she refers to the milk of her womanly breasts as gall and invokes darkness that will conceal the knife that kills Duncan. Macbeth's depression surfaces in Act V in a soliloquy that matches her guile. No longer anticipating the future, he sees tomorrows passing by and the waste of his life summarized in an idiot's tale, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The Importance of Setting

The milieu of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* suits the making and unmaking of an ambitious Scottish thane. He rises to power at the end of combat, a motif drawn from medieval history, when usurpers often seized rule rather than inherit it. The battlefield promotion produces quid pro quo, with Macbeth taking the title of the treacherous Thane of Cawdor. Ironically, the traitor earns the respect of his peers by going honorably to his execution. The setting and event foreshadow Macbeth's death in combat as a traitor and murderer.

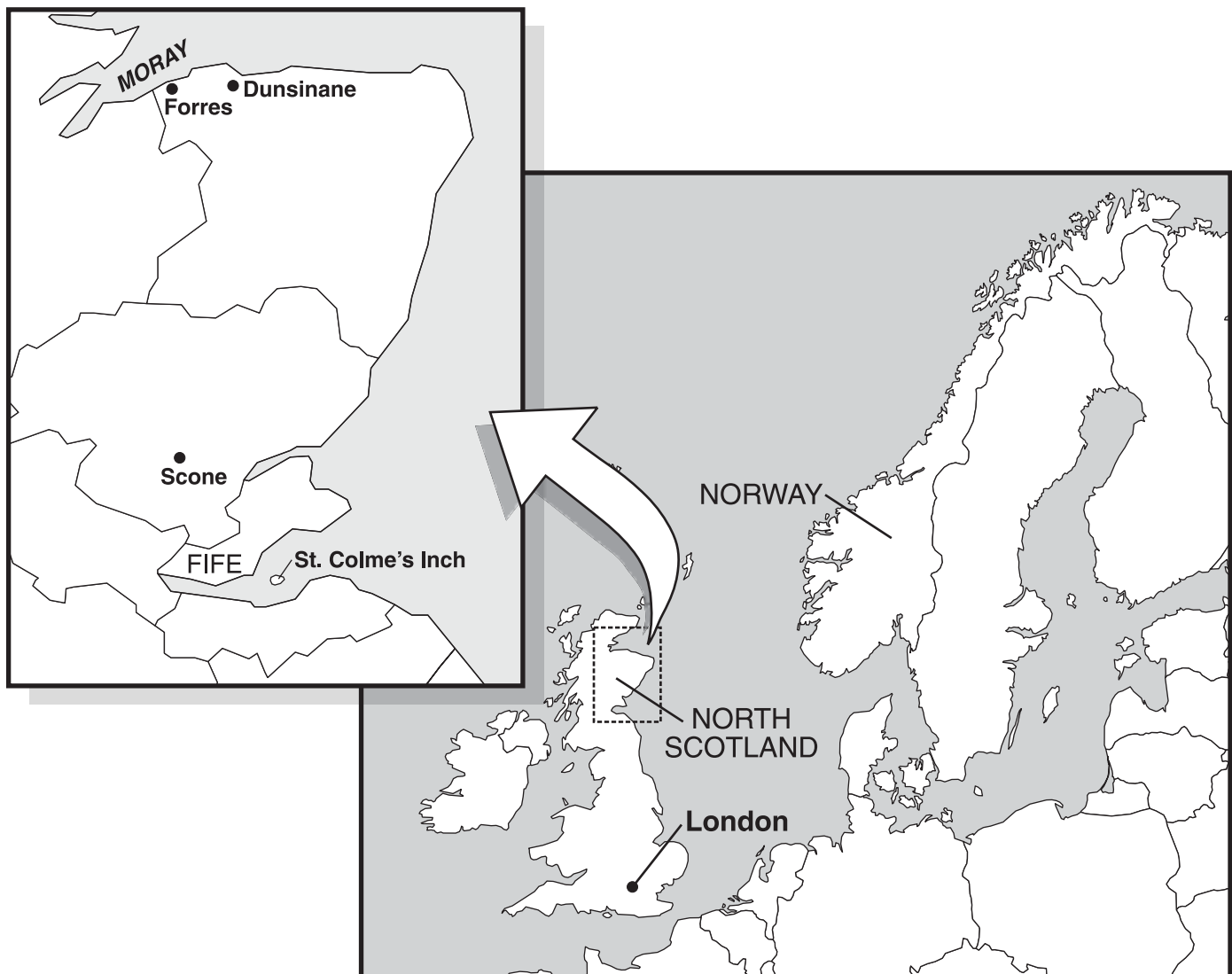
When Duncan and his entourage arrive at Macbeth's castle, the scene shifts to domestic entertainment. Lady Macbeth appears at the

entrance in the guise of a polite, respectful subject. The comforts of her home suit the needs of men returning from victory over the rebel Cawdor. Duncan is so pleased with the site that he comments, "This castle hath a pleasant seat. The air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses." Banquo adds that a martlet has built a nest at Macbeth's home. These hopeful comments enhance the impending tragedy, which will cost both speakers their lives.

Shakespeare emphasizes the overturning of domestic good will to serve the ambitions of Lady and Lord Macbeth. From the chaos unleashed by regicide to the reprehensible slaying of Lady Macduff and her children at their home in Fife, Macbeth earns a foul reputation and acquires the

suspicion and distrust of his subjects. The evil doings so charge Lady Macbeth that she can find no rest in sleep, but must walk at night, scrubbing at invisible blood on her hands. When she dies, Macbeth reveals that he expected her to perish from her torments.

The final clash restores the balance that Macbeth's reign has violated in Scotland. The use of leafy screens from Birnam Wood to hide troop movements disproves Macbeth's belief that he is in no danger. After the men drop their limbs and advance on the king's stronghold, Macduff ends the revolt by killing his nemesis. Once more attuned to domestic needs, Malcolm, Duncan's rightful successor, recalls his exiled friends to their home and prepares to be crowned at Scone.



Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about *Macbeth*, Scotland, Shakespeare, and other issues and topics arising from the play, consult these sources:

Irene Carrier, *James VI and I: King of Britain*

Tim Newark, *Celtic Warriors*

Dwayne E. Pickels, *Scottish Clans and Tartans*

Wolfgang Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus, and the Humanist Tradition*

Stewart Roth, *Shakespeare and Macbeth: The Story Behind the Play*

Clarice Swisher, ed., *Readings on Macbeth*

Garry Will, *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's Macbeth*

Also, consult these websites for additional background data on Shakespeare, Scottish history, the text of the play, and the Globe Theatre:

Enjoying 'Macbeth'

www.pathguy.com/macbeth.htm

Glamis Castle

www.greathouses-scotland.cs.uk/glamis

The Globe Theatre

naples.net/ent_th/globe.htm

The Globe Theatre

www.twingroves.district96.k12.il.us/renaissance/Globe/GlobeTheatre.html

James VI of Scotland

www.cypass.com/greenwich2000/james1.htm

Medieval/Renaissance Internet Resources

www.library.yale.edu/Internet/medieval.html

Scottish History: Time Line

www.scotsmart.com.info/history/line1.html

The Scottish Monarchy

www.highlanderweb.co.uk/monarch1.htm

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* should include these aspects:

Themes

- greed
- prophecy
- combat
- murder
- false blame
- tyranny
- madness
- recompense
- downfall

Motifs

- the intervention of a ghost in human affairs
- the burden of knowing the future
- a misguided plot to kill adversaries
- false sense of security

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the tragedy. Explain the meaning of each. Act, scene, line, and page numbers are provided so that you can re-read the passage from which the item is taken.

1. Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
Hover through the fog and filthy air.
(I, i, 12-13, p. 7)
(The introductory scene, one of Shakespeare's devices to gain a rowdy audience's attention, supplants the lift of a curtain and the dimming of lights with a thunder storm and a witches' conference, which Elizabethans would have taken seriously as symbols of evil portent. The combination of devilish collusion and the forces of nature create a topsy-turvy world for Macbeth, hero of the hour who is about to be corrupted with foreknowledge before he even learns of Cawdor's death or a battlefield promotion to the title of Thane of Cawdor.)
2. That now Sweno,
The Norway's king, craves composition.
(I, ii, 68-69, p. 13)
(According to Holinshed's Chronicles, one of Shakespeare's prime sources of historical data, the Norwegian king accepts tough terms—the payment of a \$10,000 bribe to cover the cost of burying Norwegian dead at Inchcolm, a spit of land in the Firth of Forth.)
3. How far is 't called to Forres? (I, iii, 40, p. 17)
(Ironically, Macbeth marvels at the blend of bad weather and good military outcome at the same time that Banquo asks a

predictably mundane question: How far it is to Scotland's capital, which is near Inverness? The query foreshadows how far Macbeth must go to achieve his supremacy over Scotland and to attain its highest seat of honor. Alongside Macbeth, Banquo appears to be an uncomplicated man who contrasts the seething ambitions that swirl in his companion's mind.)

4. We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught,
return
To plague th' inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends th' ingredience of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips. (I, vii, 8-12, p. 39)
(Macbeth knows from the outset that people who commit murder are likely to face a similar end. His reference to a chalice suggests a perverted form of communion by which the partaker is cursed and poisoned rather than blessed and forgiven. The allusion mimics the thinking of witches, who twist the Christian sacrament of communion by replacing wine with poison. On another level, the poisoned cup prefigures the drugging of Duncan's chamberlains, who are rendered ineffective on the night that they are most needed.

A third layer of meaning lies in the notion that Macbeth brings about his own murder. After taking the first step toward self-aggrandizement and murder, he puts his lips to the poisoned cup of ambition, which is his downfall. From that decisive step to his death, he enjoys no peace of mind or rest from the guilt inflicted by his slide into multiple crimes.)
5. Now o'er the one-half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep. (II, i, 61-63, p. 53)
(Macbeth's description of sleep as a departure from evil foreshadows the in-between stage of dreams, a vulnerable time in human behavior when the dreamer lies at the mercy of phantasms. This line presages later references to sleep and rest and to Macbeth's certainty that he will suffer insomnia because he has "murdered sleep." In similar fashion, Lady Macbeth prowls the castle with a single pitiful light in search of respite from her own role in treachery and regicide.)
6. Ourselves will mingle with society
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome. (III, iv, 4-7, p. 99)
(Already a deceiver and back stabber, Macbeth departs from protocol by giving up the privileged seat at the head of the table

and sits among his guests. His emotional and physical separation from his wife suggests the divergence that later separates them in attitude and response to guilt.)

7. How it did grieve Macbeth! Did he not straight
In pious rage the two delinquents tear
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely, too,
For 'twould have angered any heart alive
To hear the men deny 't. (III, vi, 12-15, p. 113)
(Cynical court gossip indicates that Macbeth has failed to contain suspicion and that his murder of the grooms was a deliberate attempt to rid himself of potential witnesses. This crafty move to eliminate two innocent people has not fooled so wise a court watcher as Lennox.)
8. 'Tis called the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven
Himself best knows, but strangely visited people
All swoll'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers; and, 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. (IV, iii, 168-178, p. 149)
(Shakespeare sets up Macbeth's foil by revealing the humility and beneficence of Edward the Confessor, England's saintly, white-haired king who touched sufferers of scrofula to relieve them of the disease. The use of royal touch on invalids continued into the time of Queen Anne and into modern times through state visits to nursing homes, veterans' wards, orphanages, and sites of natural disasters. Shakespeare makes this commentary as a nod to James I, who was at first repulsed by a tradition he considered superstition. His acceptance to the healing touch brought him closer to his subjects, who feared the establishment of a Jacobite dynasty.)
9. I would not have such a heart in my bosom
for the dignity of the whole body. (V, i, 58-59, p. 163)
(Spoken in prose to indicate the vernacular musings of the doctor's helper, the gentlewoman recognizes the source of Lady Macbeth's distraction—her tumultuous heart, which is filled with guilt and regret. Like an antiphonal chorus, the doctor and the gentlewoman comment on the obvious cause of Lady Macbeth's malady, which is beyond the doctor's ability to cure.

He calls on God to keep Lady Macbeth from killing herself. He warns the gentlewoman that Lady Macbeth's ramblings are highly privileged information. To himself, he warns that he must keep counsel against too full a knowledge of the new king's crimes.)

10. Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen
(Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent
hands,
Took off her life)—this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of grace,
We will perform in measure, time, and place.
(V, viii, 82–86, p. 191)

(An antidote to the disturbance of nature and the overturning of a rightful line of kings, Malcolm exults in the deaths of so wicked a pair of usurpers. As rightful heir, he pledges himself to the reestablishment of order and to the restoration of exiled Scots. He concludes that tradition will reign after he sits on the throne of his ancestors at Scone to be crowned.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the play.

Questions 1-4 (Literal Level)

1. How do Banquo and Macbeth learn their destiny?

(The play Macbeth begins in uproar. In Act I, Scene iii, on return from a valiant fight against Norwegian invaders, the two warriors, Banquo and Macbeth, encounter three witches who greet Macbeth with three titles instead of the one by which he is known. Banquo recognizes the electric effect on Macbeth and declares the prophecies "fair." The witches broaden their predictions to include Banquo, whose future is less clear and clouded by a prediction of unhappiness.)

Macbeth marvels that the title he inherited from Sinel, his father, will be augmented by an additional thaneship. He is astounded that he will be king as well, a possibility that dawns new and dangerous on his horizon. Almost immediately, the first half of Macbeth's future comes true: Ross confers the title of Thane of Cawdor, recently apprehended for rebellion. Banquo, a saner, less greedy man, comments that "the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us with honest trifles, to betray 's in deepest consequence." Not so easily corrupted as Macbeth, Banquo realizes what a lasting effect nobility and power have on his impressionable companion at arms.)

2. What events presage Duncan's murder?
(Scotland's king exults in good fortune. Moved by the courage of Macbeth and Banquo, he greets the newly proclaimed Thane of Cawdor and expresses sincere gratitude for loyal soldiering. As a wise governor of men, he notes that he has "planted" Macbeth and intends to see him grow strong. Likewise, Duncan embraces Banquo, who pledges his "harvest" to the king. Such agricultural imagery reflects an admirable trait in the king, who intends to govern by rules as natural and benign as those that govern husbandry.)

As a further strengthening to Scotland, Duncan uses this momentous occasion to bestow rights to the throne on his elder son Malcolm, who becomes the Prince of Cumberland or heir apparent. Already tainted by insidious thoughts of greater titles to be won, Macbeth begins plotting a method of deleting Malcolm from the picture in order to fulfill the witches' prophecy. So unaccustomed and privately shocked is Macbeth at his temerity and mercenary schemes that he calls on the stars to shadow his "black and deep desires.")

3. Why does Lady Macbeth insist on a dire plot to assure Macbeth's accession to the throne of Scotland?

(From first view, Lady Macbeth displays an unapologetic approach to ambition, which she intends to fulfill by whatever expedience the situation calls for. While reading the letter from her husband, she declares "[thou] shalt be what thou art promised." She sizes up his character and finds him lacking in performance because he is "too full o' th' milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way." In appreciation of questionable traits that enhance the ego, she hopes that he hurries home so she can browbeat him into doing whatever is necessary to fulfill the prophecy.)

On Macbeth's arrival, Lady Macbeth reveals her skill at duplicity by playing the smiling, gracious lady of the house in public and the conniving murderess in private. She pressures Macbeth to hide his weighty thoughts by putting on a merry face. At the first sign of a quaver, she whips his manhood into shape by comparing him to a "poor cat." Cold and malicious, she impels him to "screw your courage to the sticking place" and remarks that she could snatch a suckling babe from her breast and beat its head against a wall if the act would improve her chances for power.)

4. How does the murder of Duncan affect the court?

(At Macduff's arrival the morning after Macbeth's heroic acts on the battlefield, Macduff goes to Duncan's chamber to accompany him on his way to Inverness. Macduff immediately shrieks "O horror, horror, horror!" At first speechless, he puts his trauma

into metaphor by proclaiming that “Confusion now hath made his masterpiece. Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope the Lord’s anointed temple and stole thence the life o’ th’ building.”

While Macbeth and Lennox investigate Duncan’s chamber, Macduff calms himself, then awakens the castle with cries of “Murder and treason!” The news spreads to Lady Macbeth and Banquo. Personalizing the loss, Lady Macbeth mourns so vicious a deed in her house; Banquo reminds her that Duncan’s death is “too cruel anywhere.”

With the arrival of Malcolm and Donalbain, a panic state sweeps the most important characters in the play. Macbeth, returning from a preliminary investigation, pretends to regret that he killed the grooms, who awoke with a start, found themselves smeared with royal blood, and fell to Macbeth’s sword. Lady Macbeth calls on minor theatrics and pretends to faint. In the confusion, Duncan’s sons decide that the situation is too threatening for them to remain in a place where “there’s no mercy left.”

Questions 5-7 (Interpretive Level)

5. Discuss the theme of order as it applies to Macbeth.

(From beginning to end, Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* demonstrates the ramifications of chaos, which begins in Act I, Scene i with the witches’ violation of human limitations. Once Macbeth learns what lies ahead for him and for Banquo, he deludes himself into believing he can shape history and destiny. As Duncan restores order after the battle, he confers on Macbeth the title that only moments before belonged to Cawdor, a traitor. Macbeth, newly named the Thane of Cawdor, grows monstrous in his rush toward regicide, a more serious and far-reaching form of treachery than his predecessor demonstrated.

The first act of disloyalty and violence sets in motion a cascade of evil by which Macbeth dooms his kingship and his life. Goaded by his wife, he murders a man who is not only his king, but an elderly, genteel house guest who deserves no harm. After Duncan’s death, Macbeth must kill again to rid himself of witnesses and once more to rid his line of Banquo and Fleance, whom the witches predict will beget Scottish kings. Growing bolder in his tyranny, Macbeth reaches the height of savagery in the assault on Fife, where Macduff’s wife and son anticipate no threat to their innocence.

To restore order in Scotland, Malcolm, the rightful heir, resides in London. There he sounds out Macduff, the wronged husband and father, and determines that this is the man to lead forces to end the bloody rule of a regicide. Together with a worthy band of loyalists, the English-backed forces march on Dunsinane. The act of camouflaging themselves with branches establishes a different kind of order—a fulfillment of the witches’ prophecies.

The most irrevocable form of restored order lies in the play’s resolution. It is fitting that Macbeth lose his crazed wife, who impelled him to murder, and that he face Macduff, the only survivor of the Fife family. Ironically, order reigns at the end only after Macbeth’s head is separated from his body, an Elizabethan touch worthy of a tragedy of blood. The hailing of Malcolm as king results in the return of exiles, the end of tyranny, and the traditional crowning of the Prince of Cumberland at Scone.)

6. How does Shakespeare play on the superstitious nature of his audience?

(Shakespeare, the Stratford playwright who chose a career as London actor and producer, demonstrates his appreciation of lively action, including witchcraft and skullduggery. Beginning with three witches and pursuing the theme of the occult throughout the play, Shakespeare exploits viewers’ fears by presenting bubbling cauldrons, spells, incantations, and Hecate, the evil moon goddess, to preside over newt eyes, frog toes, and the finger of a strangled infant. Through lyrical, witchy songs, these scenes connect Macbeth’s future with dismal images that presage his slide into multiple crimes.

Before Macduff’s arrival the morning after the porter hints at hellish evil, Lennox reports that the night was windy and “lamentings heard i’ th’ air, strange screams of death, and prophesying, with accents terrible.” He remarks on chimneys blown down and “the obscure bird,” an allusion to the fact that the owl is connected with witches and often serves as messenger or minion in the performance of witchcraft. More fearful was the state of the earth, which, like a suffering patient, “was feverous and did shake.”

These portentous doings reflect the Elizabethan understanding of order in the universe, which Macbeth’s dirty dealings have confuted. A subsequent display of witchery depicts him in rapt contemplation of a dumb show, a procession of future events. The blood on the infant phantom and the silence of the eight kings stirs the viewers’ fear of the shadowy nether world as well as their political qualms about the emergence of the Stuart line, which replaced a familiar and ostensibly more predictable Tudor monarchy.)

7. How does Edward serve Shakespeare’s theme of good versus evil?

(The goodly English king, known as Edward the Confessor, briefly influences the London scene in which Malcolm questions Macduff. A break in their colloquy raises the question of Edward’s deeds. The English doctor notes that a crowd of sick people clamor for Edward’s healing touch, which the doctor claims is evidence of saintliness bestowed by heaven, a reflection of the Elizabethan belief in divine right of kings.

Unlike Macbeth, Edward governs by good deeds and concern for the welfare of the English. Malcolm attests to the power of the healing touch, which Edward draws from prayer. With compassion and humility, he blesses sufferers “all swoll’n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, the mere despair of surgery.” In token of the miracle of cure, he decks them with a golden medallion to hang about the neck, which he bestows “with holy prayers.”

To stress that Edward is the literary foil of Macbeth, Shakespeare packs this series of lines with a host of positive terms. Edward employs “healing benediction” and demonstrates “strange virtue.” He displays “a heavenly gift of prophecy.” His reign is marked by “sundry blessings.” Unlike the murderous, greedy Macbeth, Edward’s benign acts “speak him full of grace.”

Questions 8 and 9 (Critical Level)

8. How does Shakespeare obey the laws of tragedy?

(A key issue in Aristotle’s definition of tragedy is tragic flaw, the human “missing of the mark” that impels Macbeth toward self-destructive behaviors. A hero in the opening trumpet calls, he stumbles on fate and prophecy during a storm on the heath. The temptation to act on the witches’ predictions glitters and lures Macbeth into sin, even though the words are fated to come true and, by definition, require no human act.

More troubling to Macbeth’s lapse of morality is his devotion to his cold-blooded mate. Buoyed by an emotional high at an upturn in his career, he writes her a letter detailing his battlefield promotion to Thane of Cawdor and divulges the witches’ promise that he will be king. Before he can ride the distance to Dunsinane, Lady Macbeth has outlined the steps necessary to corrupt his nature and to force him into criminal acts. At one point, he fondly names her “chuck,” an endearment unsuited to her hellish drives and merciless passions.

In the end, Macbeth clings to prophecy after Lady Macbeth goes mad and pays the price of guilt in nightly walks monitored by a doctor and gentlewoman. Without his Medusan muse, he plays out the scenario of criminal bayed about by hounds, lashes out at a servant who bears bad news, and faces death with manly courage. Not wholly redeemed by his steadfast grasp of the sword, he suffers the final insult to an oppressor— Macduff lops his head from his body and displays it like a trophy.)

9. How does Macbeth compare with other Shakespearean tragic heroes?

(In many respects, Macbeth reflects Shakespeare’s belief that criminality is an indigenous pattern in human behavior. Corrupted by ambition, Macbeth kills a guest, slays noncombatants, hires assassins, and plots against his friend, Banquo, whose family is fated to rule Scotland. Similarly, Othello, a noble

military hero in similar vein to Macbeth, also succumbs to corruption and smothers Desdemona, a loyal wife. The turn of events displays Iago’s manipulation against Othello’s wife and friends. Macbeth’s situation reverses the circumstances as his wife twists his nature and impels to him to destroy an authority figure.

Julius Caesar, who dies under a similar pall of heavenly portents, contrasts with Macbeth by paying little heed to Calpurnia, the pathetic wife who mourns her childlessness and reveals an ominous dream of a fountain spouting blood. To Caesar, the most significant voices in his life come from the public sector, where fawners, sycophants, and suppliants kneel in his path and massage his ego in order to gain favors and influence state decisions. Far from the family’s influence, Caesar prefers to maneuver in his favorite arena—the halls of justice, which witness the savage injustice of turncoat stalkers and friends with daggers hidden in their togas.

For all of Shakespeare’s villains and heroes, one statement must be made: they stand apart in their unique, idiosyncratic response to ego, power, malice, and vengeance. Whether Lear, Coriolanus, Brutus, Romeo, or Cleopatra, each achieves a believable character that suits the action of the play. Facing death, Shakespeare’s title characters reveal a truism about human life, the fact that the sum of human behaviors, beliefs, prejudices, and sins leads to an appropriate end.)

Questions 10-12 (Creative Level)

10. Describe violence. Explain why Macbeth turns to unlawful acts, which cloud his reason, override his humanity and ethics, and result in suffering for the innocent. Suggest ways that clear thinking might have saved Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Duncan, Cawdor, Lady Macduff, Macduff’s children, two chamberlains, and young Siward.
11. Compare the courage of Malcolm and Macduff. What kind of king might Macduff have made? Why is Macduff the appropriate voice to call for Malcolm’s accession to the throne?
12. Discuss the emotional collapse of Lady Macbeth. Why does Shakespeare encourage sympathy for her sleepwalking and her wrestlings with guilt?

Across the Curriculum

Art and Music

1. Use desktop publishing or other artistic forms to create a handbill that will catch the eye of prospective audiences. Choose an illustration that intrigues the illiterate reader to see the play and learn how it ends. Emphasize action and contrast in your drawing, for example by depicting Lady Macbeth's beauty, womanliness, and savagery.
2. Select music to delineate the contrast between war scenes, Cawdor's execution, Banquo's ghostly visitations, dueling between Macbeth and Young Siward, the stabbing of Banquo, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking and madness, the slaughter of Macduff's household, Macbeth's beheading, and other somber or fearful subjects.

Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the novel that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly Hecate's meeting with the witches, the drugging of the bodyguards' drinks, Macduff's display of Macbeth's head, the death of Young Siward, the Thane of Cawdor's execution, the movement of armed men from Birnam Wood to Dunsinane, Macbeth's behavior at the state dinner, and the sleepwalking scene.
2. Name movie and television versions of Shakespeare's plays that capture the sense of time, place, and historical events along with his poetry and character studies, notably *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Henry V*.
3. View *Shakespeare in Love*. Discuss the use of men to play female roles. Suggest actors to play the parts of Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff.

History and Social Studies

1. Compose a list of Shakespeare's plays and long poems and their settings, as with *The Tempest* in Bermuda, *Othello* in Venice, *As You Like It* in Arden Forest, *Macbeth* in Scotland, and *Hamlet* in Denmark. Note whether these places are

real or imaginary: Fife Castle, Birnam Wood, and Dunsinane. Locate real settings on a map along with the names of the plays. Place a star on Shakespeare's birthplace.

2. Research the political, economic, and religious implications of the beginning of the Stuart line, which came into being because Elizabeth I had no children. How did English government change during Shakespeare's career? Why did he have reason to miss Elizabeth I and to fear the northern pretender to the throne, Mary, Queen of Scots?
3. Explain the divine right of kings. What does Macduff mean when he exclaims that someone "broke ope the Lord's anointed temple"? How is the murder of Duncan different from the killing of Banquo, Young Siward, and Lady Macduff?
4. Prepare a report on Scottish views of kingship and royal succession in the 11th century. Note the significance of the fact that the Scottish monarch was known as "king of the Scots," not "king of Scotland." Why was Duncan's accession to the throne so controversial? How were Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's claims to the throne equal to or even better than Duncan's? Why do some historians consider Macbeth to be Scotland's last Celtic king?
5. Create an historical timeline for the reign of Macbeth. Include not only Scottish and English history, but important events in other parts of the world as well. Note any important economic, social, and technological developments.
5. Compare Shakespeare's play to the actual history of this period. Why did Shakespeare make such drastic changes in history and with the characters?
6. Compute the distance from Dunsinane, Scotland, to London and Stratford, England. How far did Malcolm travel to escape Macbeth?
7. Research the role played by the English in the rise of Malcolm III to the throne. How did this mark the beginning of English interference in Scottish internal politics?

Language Arts

1. Choose a series of lines from the play to illustrate the playwright's skill with poetry, such as with "Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care" and "Why should I play the Roman fool and die." Post the phrases on the bulletin board and lead a discussion of their significance. If you have questions about how the words have changed since the English Renaissance, such as sennet, alarum, fee-grief, and anon, refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
2. List and explain mythological, literary, biblical, historical, and geographical allusions in the play. For example, refer to comments about Fife, Dunsinane, Birnam Wood, Graymalkin, Paddock, Norweyan lord, Golgotha, Bellona, Saint Colme's Inch, Forres, cherubin, the poor cat i' th' adage, Tarquin, Beelzebub, Gorgon, Colmekill, Caesar, Hyrcan, augurs, Acheron, Edward, and drum and colors.

Math and Economics

2. Use historical data to determine the height, width, and depth of the Globe Theater. Include figures on how many people could stand or sit to view a play. Contrast these figures to copies of the Globe, particularly the Elizabethan stage in the Folger Library, Washington, D. C., and the reconstructed Globe Theatre in London.

Psychology

1. Discuss the psychological effect of foreknowledge on Banquo and Macbeth. Why does a glimpse of the future distort human reason and sully the character of men who had, up to that point, been decent and respectable? How might a similar revelation corrupt an American president or senator?
2. Using Lady Macbeth as a model, create an extended definition of guilt-sickness. Explain what her babbling, regrets, gestures, and rabid night walks reveal about conscience. Why is Macbeth not surprised when she dies?
3. Give an oral report on guilt as a precursor to madness and despair. Discuss modern methods of treating Lady Macbeth's emotional ailment, as with mood elevating drugs, group counseling, hypnosis, or shock therapy.

Religion

1. Discuss the porter's comparison of the castle to hell. What is "the primrose way to th' everlasting bonfire"? Does this statement prove that Shakespeare was Christian and believed in Hell? Justify your answer with citations from the play or from critical commentary.

Science and Health

1. Describe the heath. Differentiate between it and a moor, desert, lawn, wetland, meadow, tundra, fen, steppe, savannah, and virgin forest. Why would Shakespeare consider this setting alluring and memorable to his audience?
2. List, define, and illustrate references to nature, as with the newt, insane root, primrose, mousing owl, maggot pies, choughs, hedge-pig, adder, martlet, and kite.
3. Discuss the significance of the king's laying on of hands to cure suppliant subjects of disease. What is scrofula? When did this practice begin? How did royal healers bring about a cure? Why is such physic called "faith healing"?

Student Involvement Activities

1. Sketch the layout of the last battle scenes. Emphasize the placement of significant corpses, for instance, Young Siward and Macbeth's beheaded remains. Complete a list of historically accurate props, weapons, and costumes for the cast.
2. Write a report on Shakespeare's method of presenting tragedy. Include the use of different stage levels and trapdoors, dancers, musical instruments, and special effects, such as cannon fire and thunder. Comment on his selection of spectacular details, for example, beheadings, bloody hands, witches, and ghosts. Explain the purpose of the flag on top of the theater. Discuss how the producer would compensate for lack of curtains.
3. Write a diary entry describing a presentation of *Macbeth* as seen from the point of view of an orange-seller, groundling, anti-Jacobite, or actor or by James I, Queen Elizabeth's succes-

sor. Stress the parts of the play that would impress a poorly educated but thoroughly experienced playgoer, especially witches boiling a potion and the ravings of a drunk porter.

4. Compose a scene in which Fleance relates to Macduff or Malcolm the nature of Banquo's brutal death. Explain why the two men decide on a ride before dinner. Suggest reasons that Banquo might want to speak in private with his son. Why might he choose to reveal to Fleance the witches' prophecy about his own genealogy?
5. Write a paragraph in which you summarize Shakespeare's idea of the nature and purpose of tragedy. Contrast his methods with those described in Aristotle's *Poetics*.
6. Compose a short congratulatory telegram to Shakespeare from Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, James I, Richard Burbage, Thomas Middleton, or Christopher Marlowe upon the success of this tragedy.
7. Write a note to James I in which you invite him to the opening night of *Macbeth*. Narrate the highlights of the plot and its connection to Scottish history.
8. Compose an extended definition of drama in which you explain the following aspects: character, setting, plot, theme, tone, mood, aside, soliloquy, monologue, climax, literary foils, comic relief, motivation, and denouement.
9. Apply the term "coming to knowledge" to the final scene. Explain what Macbeth learns about over-confidence. List ways in which the witches mislead him by suggesting a promising future. How does Macbeth's bold confrontation of Macduff enhance his character?
10. Locate historical evidence that audiences from Shakespeare's time until the present have enjoyed *Macbeth*, whether as stage play or movie. Name actors who have ennobled the roles of Macduff, Lady Macbeth, Malcolm, Lady Macduff, Banquo, and Macbeth.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events in the play, particularly diplomatic relations with Norway, James I's accession to the English throne, Macbeth's murder of Duncan, Malcolm's flight to Edward in England, Macduff's proclamation that Malcolm is the rightful heir to the Scottish throne, execution of the Thane of Cawdor, Duncan's naming of an heir, the appearance of eight silent kings, and the prediction that Banquo's offspring will become kings.
2. List scenes from the play that express strong attitudes toward revolt, treachery, kingship, self-doubt, loss, grief, madness, valiance, love, vengeance, responsibility, deception, family loyalty, witchcraft, patriotism, determination, and guilt. Indicate what you think is Shakespeare's personal philosophy on each subject.
3. Compose a brief definition of tragedy as it applies to *Macbeth*.
4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly Macbeth's duels with young Siward and Macduff, Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, the appearance of the ghost at the state dinner, Cawdor's execution, Lennox's court gossip about Macbeth's evil reign, Malcolm's test of Macduff, Lady Macbeth's talks with Macbeth about the witches' prophecy, Macbeth's inability to say Amen, and Macbeth's debate with conscience and wife on the matter of regicide.

Vocabulary

Match each boldfaced synonym with the original words from the list below. Write the correct answer in the blank provided.

admired	chamber	faculties	plague	supp'd
anon	cherubim	fie	plead	surcease
assassination	chops	gild	prick	taking-off
bade	commends	hautboys	shoal	trammel
bear	couriers	hie	sprites	trumpet-tongued
beldams	damnation	horrid	striding	twain
bloody	dudgeon	kinsman	subject	vaulting
chalice	epicures	pernicious	suborned	virtues

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly: if the (1) **killing** _____

Could (2) **stop** _____ up the consequence, and catch

With his (3) **end** _____ success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

But here, upon this bank and (4) **rock** _____ of time,

We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases

We still have judgment here; that we but teach

(5) **Guilty** _____ instructions, which, being taught, return

To (6) **hurt** _____ the inventor: this even-handed justice

(7) **Urges** _____ the ingredients of our poison'd (8) **cup** _____

To our own lips. He's here in double trust;

First, as I am his (9) **relative** _____ and his (10) **follower** _____,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,

Who should against his murderer shut the door,

Not (11) **carry** _____ the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his (12) **power** _____ so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his (13) **skills** _____

Will (14) **argue** _____ like angels, (15) **loudly** _____, against

The deep (16) **evil** _____ of his (17) **death** _____;

And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

(18) **Walking** _____ the blast, or heaven's (19) **spirits** _____, horsed

Upon the sightless (20) **messengers** _____ of the air,

Shall blow the (21) **terrible** _____ deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

To (22) **encourage** _____ the sides of my intent, but only

(23) **Powerful** _____ ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on the other.

[Enter LADY MACBETH]

How now! what news?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost (24) **eaten** _____ : why have you left the (25) **room** _____ ?

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

Name the speaker of each line below.

- _____ 1. Keep it not from me. Quickly let me have it.
- _____ 2. We will proceed no further in this business.
- _____ 3. If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks,
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.
- _____ 4. So that I say
He has borne all things well. And I do think
That had he Duncan's sons under his key
(As, an't please heaven, he shall not) they should find
What 'twere to kill a father. So should Fleance.
- _____ 5. What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger hole, may rush and seize us?
Let's away.
- _____ 6. The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements.
- _____ 7. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest tonight.
- _____ 8. But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further.
- _____ 9. Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple and stole thence
The life o' th' building.
- _____ 10. More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all.
- _____ 11. Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death;
And so his knell is knolled.
- _____ 12. Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honor named.
- _____ 13. When shall we three meet again?
- _____ 14. New honors come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
But with the aid of use.
- _____ 15. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

Complete each of the following lines with a name or term.

1. Macduff calls _____ a hell-kite.
2. _____ is aware that Macbeth's murder of the drunk chamberlains was a plot to cover up his role in regicide.
3. _____, King of England, contrasts Macbeth's crimes by healing the sick.
4. Malcolm announces that the crowning will take place at _____.
5. _____ distinguishes himself by dying nobly after Duncan condemns him as a rebel.

6. Malcolm asks the Thane of _____ why left his wife and child in Scotland.
7. Macbeth sends a servant to bid Lady Macbeth to strike the _____ when his drink is ready.
8. _____ commends the witches for their work on the potion.
9. As Birnam Wood moves to _____, Macbeth's confidence begins to fail.
10. Macbeth faces Macduff, drops his _____, and fights until his death.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Macbeth is unaware that Duncan has publicly named Malcolm as heir to the Scottish throne.
- _____ 2. The second visit with the witches convinces Macbeth that Duncan must die.
- _____ 3. Lady Macbeth orders her husband to go to bed and pretend to sleep.
- _____ 4. Macduff's early morning arrival leads to the discovery of the murdered king.
- _____ 5. Siward is proud that his son died a brave death, even if he did fall to Macbeth's sword.
- _____ 6. After the letter arrives, Lady Macbeth begins plotting to force Macbeth to murder the king.
- _____ 7. Donalbain flees to Ireland; his brother goes to England.
- _____ 8. Lady Macbeth indicates that her husband has wandered away from the head of the table during his hallucination.
- _____ 9. At Macbeth's suggestion, Banquo and Fleance ride out for exercise before the state dinner.
- _____ 10. The crowned child depicts the role of Edward in the English monarchy.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two of the following passages and discuss their meaning.

1. We have scotched the snake, not killed it.
2. Look like th' innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't.
3. Out, damned spot, out, I say!
4. Lay on, Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries "Hold! Enough!"

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Identifying Locations (20 points)

Name the locations where these events take place.

- _____ 1. Three witches wait for Macbeth's arrival.
- _____ 2. Malcolm questions Macduff's loyalty to Scotland.
- _____ 3. Macbeth cowers from Banquo's ghost.
- _____ 4. Soldiers cut branches to hold in front of them.
- _____ 5. Macduff's son realizes that the murderers will kill him.
- _____ 6. Lady Macbeth carries a single candle on her evening walk.
- _____ 7. Duncan greets his hostess.
- _____ 8. Macbeth kills two chamberlains.
- _____ 9. Sweno's men will be buried.
- _____ 10. Scottish kings are crowned.

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to each of the following questions. Then explain its importance to the plot.

- _____ 1. Who strikes upon the bell?
- _____ 2. What word is Macbeth unable to utter?
- _____ 3. Where is Sweno king?
- _____ 4. How does Lady Macbeth learn about the prophecy?
- _____ 5. What does Duncan see above Dunsinane's portal?
- _____ 6. Who was not "born of woman"?
- _____ 7. Where does Lady Macbeth see "damned spots"?
- _____ 8. Whom does the porter admit to Macbeth's castle?
- _____ 9. Who claims to be willing to dash a child's brains out against a wall?
- _____ 10. What gift does Duncan give Lady Macbeth?
- _____ 11. What bloody object appears to Macbeth?
- _____ 12. Whose horse goes wild and breaks out of its stall?
- _____ 13. Who claims to lust after wives, daughters, matrons, and maids?
- _____ 14. Who claims to have "hangman's hands"?
- _____ 15. What is Macbeth's title at the beginning of the play?

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase to complete each of the following quotations.

1. So foul and _____ a day I have not seen.
2. Will all great _____'s ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?
3. All the perfumes of _____ will not sweeten this little hand.
4. We hear our bloody cousins are bestowed
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel _____, filling their hearers
With strange invention.
5. I see thee still,
And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of _____.
6. Thou hast it now—King, Cawdor, Glamis, all
As the _____ Women promised, and I fear
Thou played'st most foully for 't.
7. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
_____ again should hardly draw me here.
8. Let every _____ hew him down a bough
And bear 't before him.
9. _____, show thy face!
10. Blow wind, come wrack,
At least we'll die with _____ on our back.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain the role of Lennox, Lady Macduff, Siward, and the porter.
2. Discuss evidence that Macbeth's behavior as king is excessive and violent.
3. Discuss the information that Lady Macbeth reveals to the doctor and gentlewoman in her nightly ravings.
4. Justify Malcolm and Macduff's hatred of Macbeth.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. assassination | 14. plead |
| 2. trammel | 15. trumpet-tongued |
| 3. surcease | 16. damnation |
| 4. shoal | 17. taking-off |
| 5. bloody | 18. striding |
| 6. plague | 19. cherubim |
| 7. commends | 20. couriers |
| 8. chalice | 21. horrid |
| 9. kinsman | 22. prick |
| 10. subject | 23. vaulting |
| 11. bear | 24. supp'd |
| 12. faculties | 25. chamber |
| 13. virtues | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Macduff | 9. Macduff |
| 2. Macbeth | 10. doctor |
| 3. Captain | 11. Siward |
| 4. Lennox | 12. Malcolm |
| 5. Donalbain | 13. first witch |
| 6. Lady Macbeth | 14. Banquo |
| 7. Duncan | 15. Lady Macduff |
| 8. porter | |

Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Macbeth | 6. Fife |
| 2. Lennox | 7. bell |
| 3. Edward | 8. Hecate |
| 4. Scone | 9. Dunsinane |
| 5. Cawdor | 10. shield |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. F |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Identifying Locations (20 points)

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. heath | 6. Dunsinane |
| 2. English court | 7. Dunsinane Castle's gates |
| 3. banquet hall | 8. outside Duncan's chamber |
| 4. Birnam Wood | 9. St. Colme's Inch |
| 5. Fife | 10. Scone |

Part II: Short Answer (30 points)

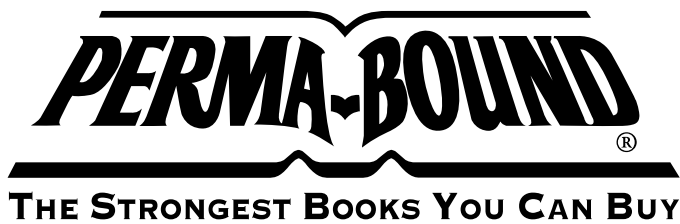
- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lady Macbeth | 9. Lady Macbeth |
| 2. amen | 10. diamond |
| 3. Norway | 11. dagger |
| 4. letter | 12. Duncan's |
| 5. birds' nests | 13. Malcolm |
| 6. Macduff | 14. Macbeth |
| 7. on her hand | 15. Thane of Glamis |
| 8. Macduff | |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. fair | 6. Weird |
| 2. Neptune | 7. profit |
| 3. Arabia | 8. soldier |
| 4. parricide | 9. tyrant |
| 5. blood | 10. harness |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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