

These pages for the students give background, explain references, define vocabulary words, and help students connect the modern world with the world of Shakespeare. You can reproduce them and allow students to read them before or while they are reading the works in the Literature Connections.



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Macbeth

BACKGROUND

Elizabethan Staging

When Shakespeare was born, in 1564, there were no public theaters in England, though the English had enjoyed plays in one form or another for centuries. Troupes of actors would perform wherever they could find an audience. They could set up their portable stage at any inn or tavern that had an enclosed yard, though they might also be asked to perform in the large houses of the nobility. Actors would set up a platform stage at one end of an innyard. They walked on and off stage in full view of the audience, and plays had to be written so that any character who died on stage would be hauled off. Audiences stood around the stage, eating and drinking, or watched from the windows of the inn. If they disapproved of certain characters or lines, they would let the actors know by yelling, jeering, or throwing food. Large crowds often gathered, which attracted pickpockets, prostitutes, and other ne'er-do-wells, creating trouble for authorities.

The rowdy and quarrelsome behavior of audiences caused many towns and cities to list actors as vagrants, lumping them together with rogues, vagabonds, and other "undesirables." Because the actors themselves were often fined and punished by the authorities whenever any rowdiness occurred, acting troupes sought the protection of wealthy patrons. Due to the scandalous nature of the theatrical profession, women were not allowed to participate, which meant that young boys had to play all female characters, from aging matrons to young lovers. Actors, who were well trained, had to be able to sing and dance, wrestle and fence, clown and weep. They also had to be able to convey subtle messages with a simple gesture or minor voice change.

Playwrights depended on the imagination of their audience. Locations and times were indicated by the words of the play and by simple props. For example, Act Two of *Macbeth* opens with "How goes the night, boy?" Though performances were in the afternoon, the audience would know immediately that it was night. The simplicity of the scenery meant the play could move quickly from scene to scene, with changes in location announced in the dialogue. In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, for example, Rosalind comes on stage at one point and simply announces, "Well, this is the Forest of Arden."



Shakespeare's Words

Shakespeare was a great inventor of new words and of new uses for old terms. Among the words that appear for the first time in the works of Shakespeare are *accommodation*, *dislocate*, *indistinguishable*, *obscene*, *premeditated*, *reliance*, and *submerged*. He used words that had just come into fashion in England, such as *critical*, *demonstrate*, *emphasis*, *meditate*, and *vast*, words that we take for granted. Many of them might not have survived to this day if he had not used them.



Macbeth (continued)

BACKGROUND

The Globe Theater

The first public theater was opened in the suburbs of London in 1576. By 1600 London had more playhouses than any other European capital; its theaters included the Rose, the Swan, the Red Bull, and the Globe. Because the Globe was home to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the acting company that employed Shakespeare, it has become the most famous of the public theaters.

The Globe was a three-story wooden structure, probably with sixteen sides, which, in Shakespeare's words, gave it the appearance of a "wooden O." Plays were performed in the open air on a platform stage, which jutted out into a courtyard where the poorer patrons, the "groundlings," stood to watch the performance. Wealthier patrons sat in the covered galleries, protected from the elements. According to theater receipts, the Globe could hold as many as three thousand people. In an age where plague epidemics were common, the large crowds in such limited space were a constant worry for public officials, who sometimes closed down all theaters as a protection against disease.

Though Elizabethan theaters could not offer the sophisticated

stagings that audiences expect today, spectators demanded a good show. A trapdoor in the stage led to a "Hell" below, from which ghosts or witches could emerge. Above the stage and its small curtained balcony was a painted ceiling with similar trap-



doors for the appearance of angels and spirits from the "Heavens." The Heavens, an enclosed tower, could also be used for sound effects, such as thunder, drums, and cannons. In fact, a spark from a cannon shot started the fire that destroyed the Globe in 1613.

The Play

In 1603, James I became England's first Scottish king, a result of the union between England and Scotland, and Shakespeare's company earned the patronage of the King himself, who renamed it the King's Men. In honor of James I, the King's Men staged Shakespeare's Scottish play, *Macbeth*, in 1606. Shakespeare adapted his plot from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, which includes an account of Macbeth, King of Scotland, from 1040 to 1057. Shakespeare changed the story significantly, even borrowing details from other parts of Holinshed's work to heighten the drama. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is much different from the man who was described by Holinshed as a good king with a legitimate claim to the throne.

In many respects *Macbeth* can be seen as a tribute to James I. The noble Banquo portrayed by Shakespeare was the King's ancestor and the founder of his family line. Even the inclusion of witches complimented the King, who prided himself on his expert knowledge of witch lore. Though some educated people did not believe in witches, most among Shakespeare's audience took them seriously. Various women of the time were tried as witches, and James himself had even interviewed women who claimed to be witches.



Act One

LITERARY CONCEPT
Scenes 1 and 3

Mood

Notice how Shakespeare creates an atmosphere of foreboding with the two witch scenes. In the first, there are thunder and lightning and the witches talk in riddles. In the second scene, they tell a bizarre story of the supernatural. As you read, look for ways the witches and weather affect the mood of the play.



VOCABULARY

Elizabethan words that mean something different today

memorize	cause to be remembered
behind	to come, i.e., ahead
pronounce	announce
penthouse	covered
imperfect	unfinished
dispatch	management

Witchcraft in Elizabethan England

Fear and persecution of women accused of being witches (who were considered agents of the devil) were widespread. King James I, in his influential *Daemonologie* (1597), favored "witch-pricking" as a method of determining guilt. A witch-finder would come to town and encourage people to accuse neighbors, particularly women, of witchcraft. Pins were then stuck in their bodies; if the accused did not bleed, they were considered guilty and hanged. The witch-finder received 20 shillings for each conviction. Although people sometimes tried to intervene, this was very risky, since too much interest on behalf of an accused person could turn the witch-finder's attention toward the accuser's defender.

Scene 2

The Norwegians Are Coming!

In *Macbeth*, the Thane of Cawdor is a traitor because he sides with "Norway." From about 750 to 1050, invaders from Norway (called *Norsemen*) colonized parts of the British Isles, including Scotland, eventually reaching Labrador in North America. Collectively, the Norsemen and the Danes, who had conquered northern France, are known as the Vikings. Their high point came in about 1000 when King Canute of Denmark inherited the English throne and conquered Norway. By the time *Macbeth* takes place, around 1050, the power of the Vikings was declining rapidly.

The Norsemen were not the first to invade Scotland. Long before them came the Picts, the Britons, and a Celtic people from Ireland, the Scotti, who gave Scotland its name.



Act One (continued)

Scene 2

Faux Fights

Because it was so difficult to represent battle scenes on the stage, Elizabethan dramatists mainly alluded to them. Trumpet sounds were a simple way of alerting the audience that a battle was taking place. Interestingly, when Kenneth Branagh made the movie *Henry V* (1989), the budget did not allow for great battle scenes, so he used an exciting sound track to help create the illusion of battle.

Scene 3

Is Our Fate Our Own?

Elizabethans were very concerned with fate, especially about what controlled it, and how they might influence it. In several other plays, such as *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare's characters discuss whether it is true that "the fault . . . is not in our stars." Many people believed in powers of the supernatural that could give them guidance. In this view, natural or personal disasters were caused by evil powers. Because Macbeth pins his hopes on the words of witches, he is entering into a pact with the Devil.

Many people of Shakespeare's day fully believed in witches such as those depicted in this play, making these scenes all the more frightening for them. They believed that some women sold their souls to Satan in exchange for supernatural powers, such as the power to change into the shape of another creature at will (albeit a creature

with some deformity, the reason for the "rat without a tail" in Scene 3). Many superstitions that linger today came to us from the Middle Ages, such as the belief that spells are cast during the full moon and the stereotype of witches stirring their huge cauldrons full of gory ingredients, as shown in Act Four, Scene 1.



The witches in the play are also called the "Weird Sisters," the word *weird* referring not to their appearance but to the original meaning of the word, "having the power to control fate." The witches may not have been able to control Macbeth's fate, but they did their best to influence it.

Scene 6

She Knew How to Party

Queen Elizabeth often honored her noble subjects by visiting them, but her visits took an enormous toll on her subjects' resources. She traveled with much of her household furnishings, as well as with hundreds of attendants who had to be given grand accommodations. She

expected professional entertainment, and all of her retinue was to have free access to her noble host's forests for hunting.

Shakespeare's Patron

Why did Shakespeare write about witches? To please his most important fan. King James I was very interested in witchcraft (he wrote the two-volume *Daemonologie* on it in 1597). The central role that Shakespeare gave the witches and their prophecies in *Macbeth* is, in part, an attempt to please the new monarch and gain his favor and patronage.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Aside

An aside is a remark that is spoken in an undertone by one character to an audience or to another character, and that the characters on stage do not hear. An aside can express a character's candid feelings. Shakespeare uses asides liberally in this play, letting the audience see Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's dark minds and later their troubled consciences at work. As you read, note how an aside gives you insight into a character's mind.

Historical Errors

The presence of cannons in the play is an anachronism, as are the dollars, because no cannons or dollars existed in Scotland in the 11th century.

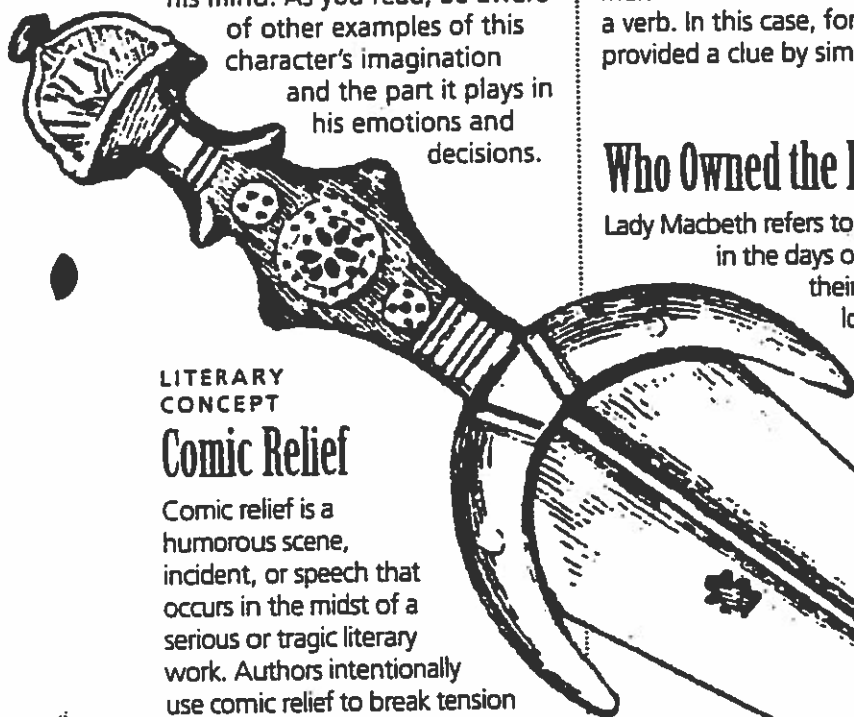


Act Two

LITERARY CONCEPT

Character

One of the character traits that Shakespeare gives Macbeth is a very vivid imagination. For example, he "sees" a dagger before him that does not exist except in his mind. As you read, be aware of other examples of this character's imagination and the part it plays in his emotions and decisions.



LITERARY CONCEPT

Comic Relief

Comic relief is a humorous scene, incident, or speech that occurs in the midst of a serious or tragic literary work. Authors intentionally use comic relief to break tension while preparing for greater tension to follow. Shakespeare's scene with the drunken porter, one of the most famous examples of this technique in all of literature, takes place while Macbeth is washing Duncan's blood off his hands, just before the discovery of the murder. The scene does more than provide relief; it also deals with issues—such as sin, hell, deceit, and ambition—that are central to the play. Look for ways the scene adds to your understanding of these issues as you untangle the porter's woozy speech.

Scene 2

Multitudinous Words Inventidine

Shakespeare created many new words. Sometimes he would take a noun or other part of speech and use it as a verb; other times he would just add an ending that had never been used before. For example, after killing Duncan, Macbeth says, "This my hand will rather/The multitudinous seas incarnadine,/Making the green one red." Shakespeare created the word *multitudinous* out of *multitude* and turned the adjective *incarnadine* into a verb. In this case, for those who might not understand, he helpfully provided a clue by simply stating "it means to turn something red."

Who Owned the Land?

Lady Macbeth refers to Duncan as owning all the land, which would be true in the days of the feudal system. Individual *vassals* would give up their property rights in exchange for the protection of a lord (thane), who might owe homage to one or more overlords in a complicated series of allegiances. Each vassal, lord, and overlord ultimately owed allegiance to the king of that territory, who actually owned all the land but allowed his subjects to remain on it. When a lord died (or was put to death, as was the traitorous Thane of Cawdor), his land and all the power that went along with it were passed to his heir or whomever the king deemed appropriate. *Macbeth*, simply put, is the story of what happens to a thane when he attempts to disrupt this political system to satisfy his ambition.

VOCABULARY

Clothing Words

sleeve	stein
napkins	handkerchief
French hose	tight-fitting breeches to the knee
goose	pressing iron





Act Three

Scene 1

The Divine Right of Kings

When instructing the murderers, Macbeth tells them, "and though I could/With barefaced power sweep him from my sight/And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not." This idea that a king may do as he likes is called "the divine right of kings." It is based on the belief that as God reigns in heaven, so does the king reign on earth. King James I was a believer in divine right. Of course, the fact that Macbeth has to lie to the murderers shows that he knows he has no such right.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Theme

In *Macbeth*, one theme—or message that the author wants to share with the reader—is that a "brave" man suppresses fear and his conscience. Shakespeare demonstrates this theme through several events in the plot. In Act Three, Scene 1, Macbeth goads the murderers by questioning their manhood. In Scene 4, Lady Macbeth shows contempt for her husband's fear of Banquo's ghost. When the ghost vanishes, he says, "I am a man again." Watch how this theme works itself out in the play.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Scene 4

Irony

Irony is the contrast between appearance and actuality. One type is situational irony, the contrast between what a reader/character expects and what happens. Macbeth engineers things so that Banquo will have a hard time attending the feast. Nevertheless, Banquo makes it, if not exactly in a form that Macbeth finds comforting. This reversal of Macbeth's expectations is an example of irony. *Macbeth* is full of irony—and the biggest irony is yet to come! Watch for it as you continue to read.

Family Album

The story of *Macbeth* is based on a kernel of historic fact and was familiar to many members of Shakespeare's audience. King Macbeth seized the throne of Scotland in 1040 after killing Duncan I. Because King James traced his family line back to Banquo, the play can be seen as a sort of tribute to him. The issue of family line is an important one. To an Elizabethan, Macbeth's ambition was less personal than dynastic: The childless Macbeth would have been particularly galled by the witches' prophesy concerning Banquo's future line.





Act Four

Scene 1

Witches' Potions

Shakespeare does not exaggerate popular beliefs when he describes the ingredients that the witches brew in their cauldron. A French sorceress of the time supposedly



revealed the composition of an unguent that could be used to kill the inhabitants of a house by oiling their door latches, thus: "They make it with a flayed cat, a toad, a lizard, and a viper, which they lay upon live coals until they are reduced to ashes." When stinging worms appeared, the poison was ready to use. Just how this admission was extracted from the "sorceress" or why she might have offered it, given the penalties, is not known.

Tampering with the Original

From the time it was written in the early 1600s, *Macbeth* was one of Shakespeare's more popular tragedies. After Shakespeare had been dead for 50 years or so, producers began to change his script any way they chose, not only omitting parts but also adding parts and even rewriting lines. As we could guess from the added parts in the version we have today, the witch scenes were the most tampered with, to make opportunities for spooky effects, dancing, and even operatic singing. Apparently, everyone thought they could be Shakespeare. It was not until the mid-1800s that the original script was used again.

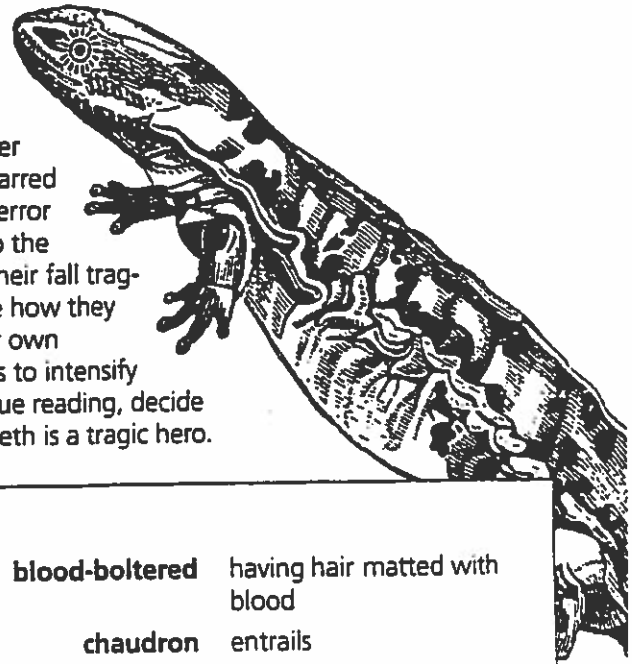
Double Trouble

"Double, double, toil and trouble," like Edgar Allan Poe's "Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore,'" is one of the most quoted and parodied lines in English literature. People seem to find the atmosphere and staginess of the witches' scenes almost irresistible.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Tragic Hero

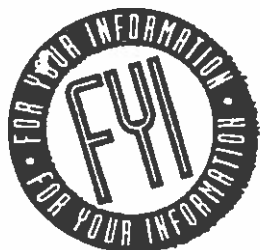
A tragic hero is a character whose basic nobility is marred by a tragic flaw—a fatal error in judgment that leads to the hero's downfall. Before their fall tragic heroes usually perceive how they have contributed to their own destruction, which seems to intensify their pain. As you continue reading, decide whether you think Macbeth is a tragic hero.



VOCABULARY

Gory Words

blood-boltered	having hair matted with blood
chaudron	entrails
gulf	throat
yesty	foamy
fenny	swamp-dwelling



Act Five



Scene 1

Take Two Spiders and Call Me in the Morning

English doctors were taught that illness resulted from an imbalance among the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, or choler, and black bile), a theory that went back to the ancient Greeks. Blood-letting (by means of leeches or cutting a vein) was the usual treatment to restore the balance among these humors. Madness, considered the effect of supernatural forces (both of the Macbeths might have qualified), was often treated this way.

However, many people from all walks of life still sought out local witches, wizards, and sorcerers (whom they called "wise men"), who combined ancient herbal remedies (which worked in some cases) with superstitious rituals and magical potions. Many doctors came to use such remedies, even prescribing spiders to patients who suffered from the fever and chills of ague.

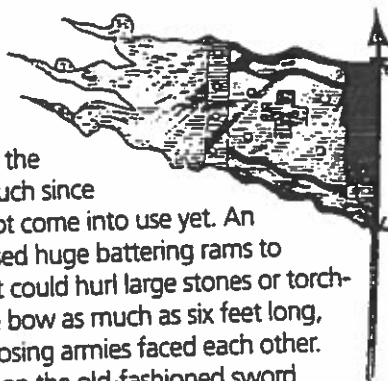
Scenes 7, 8

Medieval Warfare

The science of warfare in the Middle Ages, the setting of *Macbeth*, had not progressed much since ancient Roman times. Gunpowder had not come into use yet.

An army besieging a walled city or castle used huge battering rams to break down the gates, or catapults that could hurl large stones or torches over the walls. The longbow, a huge bow as much as six feet long, was the weapon of choice when opposing armies faced each other. For close range, combatants relied on the old-fashioned sword.

Of course, if a besieging army had allies (or traitors, depending on your point of view) within the castle gates, the matter might be much simpler. For example, the Thane of Cawdor was executed for treason, and Macbeth benefited from his downfall.



VOCABULARY

Clean and Not So Clean Words

taint	be infected
pristine	perfect
stirr	scour
raze	blot
sickly weal	unhealthy state

Scene 8

For None of Woman Born

The term *Caesarian section* gives a clue to the awe in which the procedure was held. The procedure was named after Julius Caesar (100?-44 B.C.), who according to legend was delivered this way. However, it is actually much older, and the procedure was mentioned in Roman law as early as 715 B.C. Then again, childbirth itself engendered awe, and medical and surgical procedures of any sort had an almost magical aura. This, perhaps, explains why Shakespeare makes use of this device to give Macduff the power to defeat Macbeth.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Catastrophe

A catastrophe refers to the resolution of a tragedy. It is the final stage of the plot and often involves the death of the hero. Macbeth himself is the most affected by the catastrophe because he is killed. As you read, decide which other characters are also strongly affected by the catastrophe.



Like a Bad Dream

Background

Heinrich Böll (1917–1985) has frequently been called Germany's conscience. Just before World War II, he was drafted into the army and fought on both the western and eastern fronts, although he hated both the Nazis and military life. After the war, he hoped that Germany would turn away from capitalism and form a society based on Christian humanistic principles. Böll was terribly disappointed with the direction that postwar German society took. Much of his writing is satirical and ironic, emphasizing the hypocrisy and crassness of the developing West German society. Böll, a life-long Catholic, was equally critical of the Catholic Church for not speaking up against what was occurring in Germany, as well as of the communists for what Böll perceived as their turning individuals into masses. Among his best-known novels are *The Clown*, *Group Portrait with Lady*, and *Where Were You, Adam?* Heinrich Böll was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1972.

The Role of the Cold War

After World War II, the United States was particularly interested in "normalizing" West Germany so that it could be an engine of European economic recovery and serve as a bulwark against Soviet expansion. From 1948 to 1952, the Marshall Plan sent hundreds of millions of dollars to help rebuild Germany. The Allies and the German courts absolved German corporations of wrongdoing during the Nazi period, and, because industry needed people with skills, many former Nazis simply resumed positions of corporate responsibility.

Under the Nazis, bribery and petty corruption were an accepted way of doing business, as the movie *Schindler's List* showed. Such practices did not end immediately when the Nazi state collapsed.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Symbolic Irony

Religious symbols are used in a bitterly ironic way in "Like a Bad Dream." At the beginning of the story, Bertha says that Christ's name should never be used in connection with money. Shortly thereafter, however, she does not hesitate to suggest using the 18th-century crucifix to facilitate the business deal. Within the story, the madonnas and crucifixes have been emptied of all their religious significance and come to symbolize something very different. In the Germany that Böll sees, such symbols exist to be owned and boasted about. Whoever has the most impressive collection is the "winner."





How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?

Background

The *Macbeth* curse that Bonnie talks about may have its origins in a number of disasters that have taken place around its performance. Here are several examples:

- During the play's first performance, in 1606, the boy who played Lady Macbeth died backstage.
- In 1849, a rivalry between the American actor Edwin Forrest and the British actor John Macready erupted into a riot in which 31 people were killed.
- A 1934 production of *Macbeth* went through four different Macbeths in one week. Michael Kim came down with laryngitis; Alastair Sim caught a cold; and Marius Goring was fired. The fourth, John Laurie, finished out the production.
- In 1937, the founder of the Old Vic died when she learned the opening was being postponed. Then the director was almost killed in a taxi accident; the star, Laurence Olivier, was almost hit by a falling sandbag; and in the final battle scene he accidentally injured a succession of Macduffs.

Perhaps as a result, actors will not quote the play in the dressing room under any circumstances. And they use all sorts of euphemisms to avoid saying M*****.

VOCABULARY

Theater Terms

cue line	line in a play that helps actor remember next line
agent	actor's representative seeks roles for actor, negotiates fees
before curtain	right before a performance begins

Facts About Actors

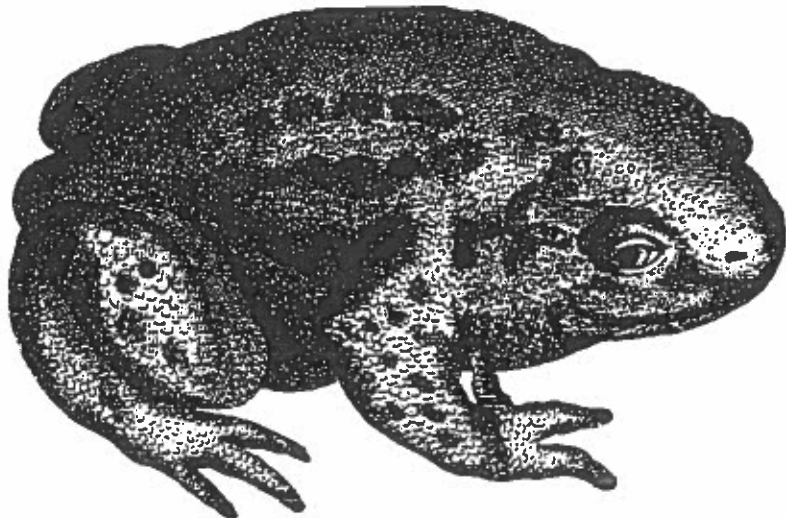
In 1993–1994:

- 28% of members of Actor's Equity, an actors' union, earned less than \$2,500 from acting.
- 0.8% earned \$100,000 or more from acting.
- The median annual earnings from acting were \$5,371.

LITERARY CONCEPT Monologue

I'd Rather Do It Myself

A monologue is as old as theater itself, though stand-up acts and one-person plays have become increasingly popular recently. A monologue is a speech in which a character utters thoughts aloud. The character is not speaking to other characters, and perhaps not even consciously addressing the audience.





Lady Macbeth's Trouble

Background

Many of Shakespeare's characters are so complex they are irresistible to modern writers. Writers have "adopted" Shakespeare's characters by presenting their story in modern language or setting their story in another time period. They may also write background for the characters, trying to explain how they came to be themselves. For example, the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev (1818–1883) presented a Shakespearean character in a Russian setting in his story "Hamlet of Shchigrovsky Province." And the British playwright Tom Stoppard (b. 1937) based his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* on two minor characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Irony

Irony refers to the contrast between appearance and actuality. One type of irony is situational irony, the contrast between what a character expects and what actually exists or happens. For irony to work, there must be two "audiences." The first audience is not supposed to understand the meaning of what is being said or written (Lady Macduff is such an audience). The other audience does understand (in this case, you, the reader of Lady Macbeth's letter). In other words, you know something that Lady Macduff cannot. You can imagine her accepting her "friend's" invitation at face value.

Write Me a Letter

Letters from fictional characters to other fictional characters can be more than parodies. The Roman poet Ovid (43 B.C.–A.D. 17) was probably the first to use this device, in his *Heroides*, a series of 21 love letters from mythical women such as Medea, Dido, Phaedra, and Ariadne to their departed lovers. Ovid felt that the myths had become overworked and had lost their meaning. The letters were meant to breathe new life into the mythic tradition.





Yscolan

Background

When looking back 13 centuries, it is often hard to distinguish fact from fiction. We do know that Myrddyn is the Welsh form of Merlin, the magician. According to tradition, he fought in a battle at Arfderydd, in about 575, on the side of a British king, Gwendolau. Legend has it that when the battle was lost, he fled in madness into the woods and acquired the gift of prophecy.

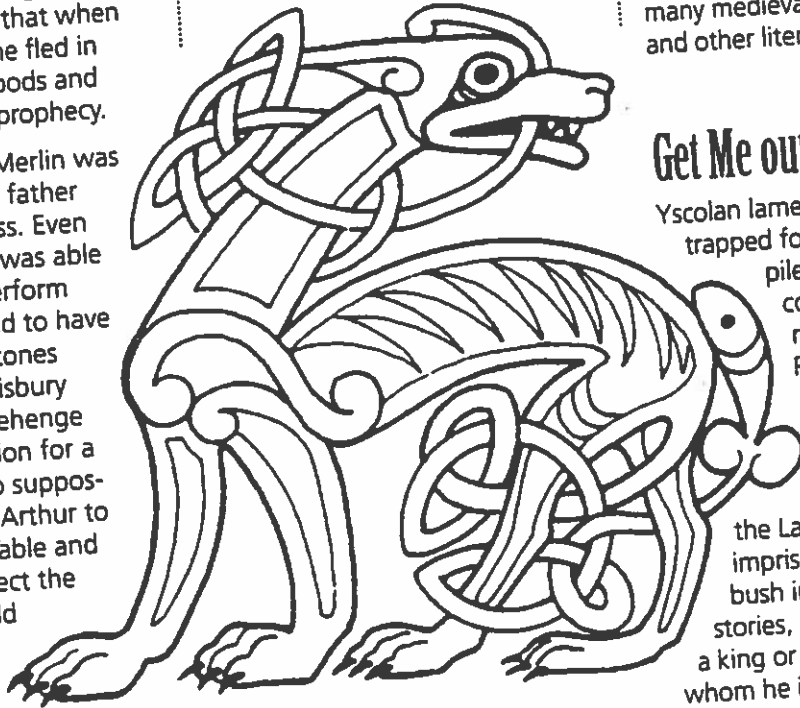
In another legend, Merlin was the son of a demon father and a Welsh princess. Even as a young boy, he was able to prophesy and perform magic. Merlin is said to have magically moved stones from Ireland to Salisbury Plain to form Stonehenge as a commemoration for a lost battle. He also supposedly advised King Arthur to build the Round Table and helped him to select the knights that would sit around it.

However, there is no mention of a connection with King Arthur in early Welsh literature. The poems that are attributed to Myrddyn were probably written after his death.

LITERARY CONCEPT

Dialogue

Dialogue, a writer's conversation between two or more characters, can be used in poetry as well as in a story or play. In a poem, dialogue is not always set off by quotation marks. Think about who is having a dialogue in this ancient Welsh poem.



Geoffrey of Monmouth

The adventures of King Arthur and Merlin the magician were first written by Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. 1155), an English bishop and chronicler of English history. Although his chronicles were known to be fiction even when they were written, they have nevertheless had a great influence on many medieval European histories and other literature.

Get Me out of Here

Yscolan laments at having been trapped for a year under the piles of a dam and complains about tormenting woodworms. Perhaps Myrddyn was writing from personal experience! In one legend, he is beguiled by Vivien, the Lady of the Lake, and imprisoned in a hawthorn bush in eternal sleep. In other stories, Nimue, the daughter of a king or a water fairy, with whom he is in love, casts a spell on him and buries him alive in a rock. In yet another version, he is imprisoned in air. Invisible, he can see and hear, and he occasionally talks to passers-by.



Glossary

M A C B E T H

Act One

brandished (brän'dishd): *adj.*
waved menacingly p. 9

cleave (klêv): *v.* to adhere or
cling to p. 25

commencing* (kə-měn'sing): *v.*
beginning p. 23

commendation (kǒm'an-
dā'shən): *n.* an expression of
approval; in current usage, an
official award or citation p. 31

harbinger* (här'bīn-jər): *n.* in
current usage, a forerunner; some-
thing that foreshadows what is to
come p. 29

interim* (īn'tər-īm): *n.* an inter-
val of time between two events,
processes, or periods p. 25

metaphysical* (mēt'ə-fīz'ī-kəl):
adj. in current usage, based on
speculative or abstract
reasoning p. 33

missive (mīs'iv): *n.* a letter
p. 31

purveyor* (pər-vā'ər): *n.* in cur-
rent usage, a supplier, seller
p. 39

recompense (rĕk'am-pĕns'): *n.*
to pay compensation p. 27

vaulting (vôl'ting): *adj.* reaching
too far p. 41

Act Two

confound (kən-found'): *v.* in cur-
rent usage, to cause to become
confused or perplexed p. 53

countenance (koun'tə-nəns): *v.* to
condone, give approval p. 65

dishearten* (dīs-här'tn): *v.* to
shake or destroy courage or
resolve p. 61

equivocator (ī-kwiv'ə-kāt'ər): *n.*
one who makes ambiguous state-
ments p. 61

predecessor* (prĕd'ī-sĕs'ər): *n.*
one who came before, especially
in holding an office or
position p. 75

predominance* (prī-dŏm'ə-
nəns): *n.* the state or quality of
having the greatest authority or
influence p. 73

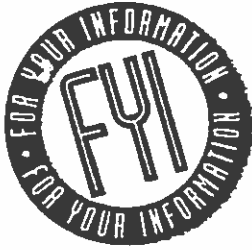
PARTIAL PRONUNCIATION KEY

ā at, gas	īr dear, here	th thing, with
ā ape, day	ng sing, anger	th then, other
ā father, barn	ō odd, not	ū up, nut
āir fair, dare	ō open, read, grow	ūr fur, arm, bird, worm
ā egg, ten	ō awful, bought, horse	zh treasure, garage
ā evil, see, meal	oi coin, boy	e awake, even, pencil,
hw white, everywhere	ōō look, full	pilot, focus
Y inch, fit	ōō root, glue, through	er perform, letter
ī idle, my, tried	ou out, cow	

SOUNDS IN FOREIGN WORDS

kh German ich, auch; Scottish loch	œ French leu, cœur; German schön	ü French utile, rue; German grün
n French entre, bon, fin		

*The words followed by asterisks are useful words that you might add to your vocabulary.



Glossary (continued)

M A C B E T H

Act Three

bestow (bĭ-stō'): *v.* in current usage, to present as a gift or honor *p.* 113

levy (lĕv'ē): *n.* money, property, or troops that have been raised by a governmental authority *p.* 89

malevolence* (mā-lĕv'ə-ləns): *n.* maliciousness *p.* 113

malice* (māl'īs): *n.* ill will; desire to injure or harm *p.* 89

mirth (mūrth): *n.* cheerfulness *p.* 97

posterity* (pō-stĕr'ĭ-tē): *n.* future generations *p.* 77

rancor* (rāng'kər): *n.* bitter ill feeling; animosity *p.* 81

rebuked* (rĭ-byōōkd'): *v.* criticized or reprovved sharply *p.* 81

Act Four

avaricious* (āv'ə-rĭ-shəs): *n.* greedy *p.* 139

blaspheming (blās-fĕm'ing): *adv.* cursing or speaking disrespectfully of God or a sacred entity *p.* 117

desolate* (dĕs'ə-līt): *adj.* barren or lifeless; dreary or dismal *p.* 135

diminutive (dĭ-mĭn'yə-tĭv): *adj.* very small *p.* 129

intemperance (ĭn-tĕm'pər-əns): *n.* overindulgence of an appetite or passion *p.* 139

judicious* (jōō-dĭsh'əs): *adj.* prudent *p.* 129

pernicious* (pər-nĭsh'əs): *adj.* in current usage, destructive; tending to cause damage or harm *p.* 125

perseverance (pūr'sə-vĭr'əns): *n.* steady persistence in adhering to a course of action *p.* 141

recoil (rĭ-kōil'): *v.* in current usage, to spring back, as upon discharging a firearm; to shrink back in fear or repugnance *p.* 137

transpose* (trāns-pōz'): *v.* in current usage, to reverse or transfer the order of things; interchange *p.* 137

vanquished* (vāng'kwĭshd): *adv.* defeated *p.* 123

Act Five

censure* (sĕn'shər): *n.* an expression of strong disapproval or harsh criticism *p.* 169

oblivious* (ə-blĭv'ē-əs): *adj.* lacking conscious awareness *p.* 165

pristine* (prĭs'tĕn'): *adj.* remaining in a pure state *p.* 165

purgative (pūr'gə-tĭv): *n.* tending to cleanse or purge *p.* 165

*The words followed by asterisks are useful words that you might add to your vocabulary.

Name _____

ACT ONE

Identifying Character Traits

In the first act you were introduced to five key characters in the play. In the squares below, jot down a few phrases about each character. Put their names below the squares. Then draw lines between these characters and write a brief description of their relationship to each other.



Strategic Reading

2

Name _____

ACT TWO

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Fill out the comparison chart for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, characters with whom you became better acquainted in this section. If you need more room to write, use the other side of this page, or go to another sheet.

	Macbeth	Lady Macbeth
Who are they?		
What is important to them?		
How do they behave?		
How do they react to the consequences of their actions?		

Name _____

ACT THREE

Making Inferences

Read the scenes of Act Three listed below. After you finish each scene, answer the question about that scene before reading on. If you need more room to write, use the other side of this page, or go to another sheet.

Scene 1

Before the banquet—*Macbeth asks Banquo whether he will be riding far and then tells him to be sure to be at the feast.*

Why does he say these things to Banquo?

Scene 2

Together with Lady Macbeth—*Lady Macbeth tells her husband to “be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.”*

What might she be thinking?

Scene 4

At the banquet—*Banquo’s ghost appears only to Macbeth.*

Why does Macbeth see Banquo’s ghost?

Scene 6

At the palace—*A lord tells Lennox that Macduff has refused to go see Macbeth.*

Why wouldn’t Macduff want to see Macbeth?

Name _____

Making Predictions

Read Act Four, Scene 1. Predict what will happen to Macbeth in Act Five. If you need more room to write, use the other side of this sheet or use your own paper.

What do the witches and apparitions say that leads you to your prediction?

Tracking Events

Read each scene from Act Four listed below, and then answer the question about the scene.

Scene 1

At a cave—Lennox informs Macbeth that Macduff has fled to England.

How does Macbeth react to the news?

Scene 2

At Macduff's castle in Fife—Ross and Lady Macduff discuss Macduff's flight.

What does Ross say about his reasons for fleeing?

Scene 3

At King Edward's palace—Malcolm tests Macduff at great length.

Why do you think he does this?

Strategic Reading

5

Name _____

ACT FIVE

You are a television reporter assigned to cover what turn out to be the final days of Macbeth. As you read Act Five, report on these developments.

Scene 1

Report the actions and words of Lady Macbeth that cause the doctor to be concerned.

Informed sources report that Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep, whispering strange tales of bloody horrors.

Scene 2

Report on the build-up of troops near Birnham Wood.

Scene 3

Report on the reasons behind Macbeth's confidence, relating them to the apparitions, or spirits, in Act Four.

Scene 4

Give an update on the troops at Birnham Wood, including Malcolm's plan for camouflage.

Scene 5

Paraphrase Macbeth's reaction to the death of his wife (lines 19–30).

Scenes 6 and 7

Describe the opening of the battle and predict what will happen at its end.

Scene 8

Report on the final confrontation between Macbeth and Macduff.

Literary Concept

1

Name _____

THEME

The theme of a literary work is an insight or idea about life or human nature that the work reveals. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare deals with issues of ambition, loyalty, power, and fear. List examples to support each statement below before you read the play. Then after you read the play list examples from it to support each. Explain whether the play changed your point of view about the theme. Finally, compare your ideas with those of your classmates.

1. Appearances can be deceptive.

Before reading _____

After reading _____

Comments: _____

2. Lust for power can lead to loss of humanity.

Before reading _____

After reading _____

Comments: _____

3. Guilt is a powerful force.

Before reading _____

After reading _____

Comments: _____

4. Our future is largely beyond our control.

Before reading _____

After reading _____

Comments: _____

5. We must accept responsibility for our actions.

Before reading _____

After reading _____

Comments: _____

Literary Concept

2

CHARACTER

Name _____

Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are characters who feel intense emotions such as guilt. As you read each of the following scenes, determine what emotion the character is feeling. Jot down that emotion and copy the words or phrases that tell you the character is feeling this way. Also, add an adjective describing what you think of him or her.

SCENE	EMOTION(S)	PHRASES THAT EXPRESS EMOTIONS	ADJECTIVES DESCRIBING HIM/HER
Act One, Scene 3 Macbeth			
Act One, Scene 7 Lady Macbeth			
Act Two, Scene 2 Macbeth			
Act Two, Scene 2 Lady Macbeth			
Act Three, Scene 4 Macbeth			
Act Five, Scene 1 Lady Macbeth			

Literary Concept

3

FORESHADOWING

Name _____

Several characters in *Macbeth* say things that predict or foreshadow events to come. Fill in the chart below to help you keep track of where and how foreshadowing is used.

SCENE	CHARACTER(S)	WHAT CHARACTER SAYS	WHAT IT FORETELLS
Act One, Scene 3	Witches	"Fair is foul . . ."	Macbeth and Lady Macbeth look like good hosts but plot to kill the King.
Act Two, Scene 2		"Macbeth has murdered sleep"	
Act Four, Scene 1	Witches		

Literary Concept

4

ASIDES AND MONOLOGUES

Name _____

Shakespeare makes frequent use of monologues and asides—speeches expressing the character's true thoughts for the audience but that other characters don't hear. Complete the chart below, briefly describing the situation and characters present, the meaning and implications of the aside or monologue, and how the speech affects the plot.

SCENE	CHARACTERS	QUOTATION	MEANING	HOW SPEECH AFFECTS PLOT
Act One, Scene 3		"This supernatural soliciting/ Cannot be ill, cannot be good . . ."		
Act Three, Scene 1		"To be thus is nothing,/ But to be safely thus . . ."		
Act Four, Scene 1		"Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits . . ."		
Act Five, Scene 5		"I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,/ And wish th' estate o' the world were now undone."		