

# Macbeth Guiding Questions

*Using Costa's Level of Questioning*

## Act 1

### Level 1: Gathering (Text Explicit)

1. Who are the witches, and what do they discuss in the opening scene?
  2. What title is given to Macbeth after his success in battle?
  3. Who is Duncan, and what does he decide to do for Macbeth in Scene 4?
  4. How does Lady Macbeth react to Macbeth's letter about the witches' prophecy?
  5. What plan does Lady Macbeth devise for Duncan's visit?
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### Level 2: Processing (Text Implicit)

1. Why do the witches greet Macbeth with three different titles? What might each title symbolize?
  2. How does Banquo's reaction to the witches' prophecy differ from Macbeth's?
  3. What do Macbeth's asides reveal about his inner conflict after hearing the prophecy?
  4. Why does Lady Macbeth believe Macbeth lacks the resolve to achieve his ambitions?
  5. How does Duncan's praise for Macbeth in Scene 4 create dramatic irony?
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### Level 3: Applying (Beyond the Text)

1. How do the witches' predictions create a sense of inevitability about Macbeth's actions?
  2. What does Macbeth's hesitation about killing Duncan reveal about human nature and morality?
  3. How might Lady Macbeth's manipulation of Macbeth compare to manipulative dynamics in modern relationships?
  4. What does Duncan's trust in Macbeth suggest about the dangers of misjudging character?
  5. How does the theme of ambition in Act 1 resonate with real-world examples of people who pursue power at great personal or moral cost?
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## Act 2

### Level 1: Gathering (Text Explicit)

1. What does Macbeth see in his vision before killing Duncan?
  2. What role does Lady Macbeth play in the murder of Duncan?
  3. What does Macbeth do immediately after killing Duncan?
  4. How do Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, react to their father's murder?
  5. What strange occurrences are reported by Lennox and the Old Man in Scene 4?
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**Level 2: Processing (Text Implicit)**

1. How does Macbeth's hallucination of the dagger reflect his mental state?
  2. Why does Lady Macbeth criticize Macbeth for bringing the daggers back from the crime scene?
  3. How does Shakespeare use imagery (e.g., blood, darkness) to create a sense of horror and guilt in this act?
  4. Why do Malcolm and Donalbain decide to flee? What does their decision reveal about their understanding of the situation?
  5. How do the natural disturbances (e.g., the storm, Duncan's horses turning wild) symbolize the effects of Duncan's murder?
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**Level 3: Applying (Beyond the Text)**

1. How might Macbeth's guilt after killing Duncan compare to modern examples of people grappling with the consequences of their actions?
  2. How does Lady Macbeth's practical approach to the murder reflect gender roles and expectations in the play?
  3. If Macbeth had confessed to Duncan's murder immediately, how might the play have unfolded differently?
  4. What lessons can we draw from Malcolm and Donalbain's decision to flee? How does it reflect the idea of self-preservation in times of crisis?
  5. How does the imagery of disrupted nature in Act 2 parallel the disruption of political order? Can you think of historical or modern examples where political assassinations led to chaos?
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**Act 3****Level 1: Gathering (Text Explicit)**

1. What does Banquo suspect about Macbeth at the beginning of the act?
  2. Why does Macbeth decide to have Banquo and Fleance killed?
  3. How does Lady Macbeth feel about their situation now that Macbeth is king?
  4. Who escapes during the attack on Banquo and Fleance?
  5. What happens during the banquet that unsettles Macbeth?
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**Level 2: Processing (Text Implicit)**

1. Why does Macbeth view Banquo as a threat, even after becoming king?
2. How does Macbeth manipulate the murderers into agreeing to kill Banquo and Fleance?
3. What does the ghost of Banquo symbolize during the banquet scene?
4. How does Macbeth's growing paranoia affect his relationship with Lady Macbeth?
5. What does Hecate's appearance at the end of the act suggest about the witches' role in Macbeth's downfall?

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**Level 3: Applying (Beyond the Text)**

1. How does Macbeth's growing paranoia reflect the dangers of unchecked ambition in leadership roles?
  2. How might Banquo's ghost be interpreted as a manifestation of Macbeth's guilt? Can you think of real-world examples where guilt affects decision-making?
  3. What parallels can you draw between Macbeth's decision to kill Banquo and the actions of modern leaders who feel threatened by their rivals?
  4. If Fleance had been killed, how might Macbeth's future have changed? What does this reveal about the significance of prophecy in the play?
  5. How does Lady Macbeth's initial strength and confidence contrast with her role in this act? What does this shift suggest about power dynamics in relationships?
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**Act 4****Level 1: Gathering (Text Explicit)**

1. What are the three apparitions that the witches show Macbeth, and what do they tell him?
  2. What does the procession of kings in the witches' vision signify?
  3. What decision does Macbeth make regarding Macduff's family?
  4. What happens to Lady Macduff and her son in Scene 2?
  5. How does Malcolm test Macduff's loyalty in Scene 3?
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**Level 2: Processing (Text Implicit)**

1. Why does Macbeth trust the witches' apparitions, even though their prophecies have previously misled him?
  2. How does the witches' prophecy about Birnam Wood and "no man born of a woman" shape Macbeth's confidence?
  3. How does the murder of Macduff's family reflect Macbeth's moral decline?
  4. Why does Malcolm pretend to be unfit to rule when speaking to Macduff? What does this reveal about his character?
  5. How does Macduff's reaction to his family's death highlight his role as a foil to Macbeth?
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**Level 3: Applying (Beyond the Text)**

1. How might Macbeth's increasing reliance on the witches' prophecies compare to modern examples of people placing faith in unreliable sources?
2. How does the murder of Macduff's family explore the consequences of unchecked power? Can you connect this to historical or contemporary leaders?

3. What lessons can be drawn from Malcolm's caution in testing Macduff's loyalty before trusting him? How might this apply to leadership in the real world?
  4. How does Macduff's grief over his family's murder serve as a contrast to Macbeth's growing emotional detachment? Can you think of situations where personal tragedy leads to personal transformation?
  5. If Macbeth had ignored the witches' second set of prophecies, how might the play have unfolded differently?
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## Act 5

### Level 1: Gathering (Text Explicit)

1. What does the doctor observe about Lady Macbeth in Scene 1?
  2. What happens to Lady Macbeth by the end of the act?
  3. How does Malcolm's army disguise itself as it approaches Macbeth's castle?
  4. Who kills Macbeth, and how does it happen?
  5. What does Malcolm declare at the end of the play?
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### Level 2: Processing (Text Implicit)

1. What does Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking and hand-washing symbolize about her mental state?
  2. How does the fulfillment of the witches' prophecy about Birnam Wood moving and "no man born of a woman" shape the play's resolution?
  3. How does Macbeth's reaction to Lady Macbeth's death reflect his overall psychological transformation?
  4. Why does Macduff emphasize that he was "from his mother's womb untimely ripped"?
  5. How does Malcolm's leadership in this act contrast with Macbeth's rule?
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### Level 3: Applying (Beyond the Text)

1. How does Lady Macbeth's descent into madness illustrate the psychological toll of guilt? Can you think of real-life examples of guilt manifesting in similar ways?
2. How does the witches' prophecy about Macbeth's downfall highlight the dangers of misinterpreting predictions? What parallels can you draw with modern decisions influenced by ambiguous advice?
3. How does Macbeth's insistence on fighting to the death reflect his pride and fear? Can this be compared to other historical or fictional figures who faced inevitable defeat?
4. What lessons can be drawn from Malcolm's focus on restoration and justice as a leader? How does this contrast with Macbeth's reign of tyranny?
5. How does the theme of fate versus free will come to a head in this act? Can you think of situations where people debate whether events are driven by destiny or personal choice?