

Macbeth Study Guides

To be filled out throughout reading and during class discussions of the text.

Each student is responsible for paying attention to/listening for the answers to each question.

The Tragedy of Macbeth
Study Guide: Shakespeare's Theater and Act I

Shakespeare's Theater

1. Describe the Globe Theater.
2. Where did scholars get their descriptions of the Globe?
3. Describe "groundlings."
4. What is blank verse?
5. Why were female roles played by men during Shakespeare's time?
6. How did a director announce the beginnings of a play?

Macbeth Act I

1. What was Shakespeare's inspiration for *Macbeth*?
2. How do witches affect the beginning of the play?
3. Explain the lines "Fair is foul, and foul is fair/Hover through the fog and filthy air."
4. What is Macbeth's reputation in the beginning of the play? How do you know?
5. How does Macbeth first react to the witches?
6. Explain the lines "Sleep shall neither night nor day/Hang upon his penthouse lid/...Though his bark cannot be lost,/yet it shall be tempest-tost."
7. What predictions do the witches make for Macbeth in Act I.iii?
8. What predictions do they make for Banquo?
9. How is the character of Macbeth revealed in the asides in Act I.iii?
10. Explain the lines "Stars, hide your fires;/Let not light see my black and deep desires."
11. How does Lady Macbeth react to the news in her husband's letter?
12. Explain the lines "Come to my woman's breasts and take my milk for gall."
13. Describe Lady Macbeth's character.
14. Why do the characters in *Macbeth* describe the darkness of night?

Act I Vocabulary

1. Direful
2. Prophetic
3. Repentance
4. Plenteous
5. Peerless

The Tragedy of Macbeth
Study Guide: Act II

Macbeth Act II

1. Why does Macbeth tell Banquo he is not thinking about the witches' prophecy?
2. Why does Macbeth see a bloody dagger? What does this reveal?
3. Why does Lady Macbeth claim she cannot kill Duncan? What does this reveal about Lady Macbeth?
4. Explain the line "Macbeth doth murder sleep!" How is this motif seen in Act II?
5. Why does Lady Macbeth shame Macbeth into feeling guilty after the murder?
6. How does Shakespeare use the motif of bloody hands to create characterization?
7. Explain the line "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/Clean from my hand?"
8. Describe the Porter and explain his purpose.
9. *Equivocation* is the use of ambiguous language to conceal the truth. How is this idea portrayed in Act II?
10. What is Macbeth's motivation in killing the guards?
11. Explain the line "Against the undivulged pretense I fight/Of treasonous malice." How does this characterize Banquo?
12. Why do Malcolm and Donalbain flee? Where do they go?
13. Why does Shakespeare describe the unnatural events that have been taking place in the countryside?
14. What does Macduff's refusal to attend Macbeth's coronation suggest?

Act II Vocabulary

1. Stealthy
1. Surfeited
2. Provoke
3. Scruple
4. Predominance

The Tragedy of Macbeth

Study Guide: Act III

Macbeth Act III

1. Define *foil*.
2. Why does Banquo claim his descendents will become king?
3. Why does Macbeth fear Banquo? What does he do because of this fear?
4. How does Macbeth convince the murderers to carry out his plans?
5. Explain the line "We have scorched the snake, not killed it."
6. Prior to the banquet, how is Macbeth feeling? Why?
7. How is the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth changed since the beginning of the play?
8. Why does Macbeth call for a third murderer in scene iii?
9. In what ways is Banquo a foil to Macbeth?
10. Why does the ghost of Banquo choose to sit in Macbeth's seat?
11. How does Lady Macbeth try to persuade her husband to control his actions? Why is she unsuccessful?
12. What excuse is made for Macbeth's strange behavior?
13. What is ironic about the lines "I drink to th' general joy o' th' whole table,/And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss"?
14. Why does Macbeth become suspicious of Macduff?
15. What does Macbeth feel he needs to do to find comfort and relief?
16. Why is Hecate so angry in scene v?
17. Why does Lennox choose to use verbal irony in the beginning of scene vi?
18. How does King Edward I act as a foil to Macbeth?

Act II Vocabulary

1. Indissoluble
2. Incensed
3. Jovial
4. Appall
5. Amends

The Tragedy of Macbeth
Study Guide: Act IV

Macbeth Act IV

1. Why does Shakespeare open Act IV with witches at work?
2. How does Shakespeare use *dramatic irony* in IV.i?
3. What is the first apparition, and what does it mean?
4. What is the second apparition, and what does it mean?
5. What is the third apparition, and what does it mean?
6. After the apparitions, what does Macbeth ask the witches? What does this reveal?
7. How does Macbeth disrespect the witches?
8. Explain the pantomime the witches show Macbeth. What does this signify?
9. Upon learning Macduff has fled to England, what does Macbeth do?
10. How does Lady Macduff view her husband's departure? How does Ross try to comfort her?
11. Why is Malcolm suspicious of Macduff?
12. What reason does Malcolm give that he is unfit to rule Scotland? Why does he portray himself this way?
13. What "power" does King Edward have in IV.iii?
14. How is Scotland described?
15. What news does Ross bring to Macduff? Why does he wait to reveal it?
16. What is Macduff's reaction to the news? Why does he blame himself?

Act IV Vocabulary

1. Pernicious
2. Exploit
3. Redress
4. Avarice
5. Pertain

The Tragedy of Macbeth

Study Guide: Act III

Macbeth Act V

1. Describe the encounter with Lady Macbeth. How does this reinforce the motif that Macbeth has “murdered sleep”?
2. How does Shakespeare reveal a change in Lady Macbeth’s character in Act V?
3. What is the doctor’s analysis of Lady Macbeth’s behavior?
4. In scene ii, what do Angus’ words reveal about Macbeth?
5. How do the lines “I’ll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hacked./Give me armour” reinforce Macbeth’s stature as a hero?
6. How does Macbeth react to the doctor’s news of his wife’s sickness?
7. Explain the lines “I will not be afraid of death and bane/Till Birnam Forest com to Dunsinane.”
8. How does Macbeth react to the news that Lady Macbeth has died?
9. How is the prophecy of the third apparition fulfilled?
10. When fighting Macbeth, how do Macduff’s motives differ from the other soldiers?
11. Explain the lines “Of all men else I have avoided thee./But get thee back! My soul is too much charged/With blood of thine already.”
12. How is the second prophecy fulfilled?
13. How does Malcolm describe Macbeth?
14. Would this description suggest Macbeth is a *tragic hero*? Why/Why not?

Act V Vocabulary

1. Purge
2. Antidote
3. Siege
4. Prowess
5. Usurper