

SEASON
2020
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NDSU THEATRE ARTS



PLAY GUIDE



MACBETH

by William Shakespeare

Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

This play guide is a resource designed to enhance your theatre experience. Its goal is twofold: to nurture the teaching and learning of theatre arts and to encourage essential questions that lead to an enduring understanding of the play's meaning and relevance. Inside, you will find information about the plot and characters within the play, as well as articles that contextualize the play and its production at Theatre NDSU. Oral discussion, writing prompts, and group activities encourage your students and children to reflect upon their impressions, analyze key ideas, and relate them to their personal experiences and the world around them. These prompts can easily be adapted to fit most writing objectives. We encourage you to adapt and extend the material in any way that best fits the needs of your community of learners. Please feel free to make copies of this guide as you need.



Three witches stand overlooking a battle in Orson Welles' *Macbeth*, 1948.

Plot Summary

*By the pricking of my thumbs,
something wicked this way comes.*
Three witches appear during a storm prophesying to a weary warrior of riches, royalty, and power. So, through witchcraft, his own belief in the prophecy, and encouragement from his wife, Macbeth sets out to murder a king and claim the throne. Temptation, murder, and betrayal all have a role to play in what is to come.

“
The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,
Lamentings heard in the air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events,
New hatched to the woeful time...”

-MACBETH Act 2 Scene 3

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Setting

MACBETH takes place in northern Scotland during the 11th Century. Macbeth's Scotland is a dark and dreary place filled with fog, rain, and thunderstorms. At the beginning of the play, three witches revel in the storm's destruction. Throughout the play, there are allusions made to nature being out of whack.

Shakespeare paints a brutal medieval Scotland, with murdering Thanes (Scottish nobles), long dark nights, and cold castles filled with mystery and danger.

Shadow Puppets plot in the woods.
From Theatre NDSU's *MACBETH*,
designed by Katie Andreachi.



Vocabulary

Object Theatre – An imaginative style of puppetry where the puppets are everyday objects.

Hurly-Burly – Commotion or chaos

Heath – An area of land with coarse grass, small shrubs, heather, and a wet and cool climate

Thane – A Scottish nobleman who often was also the chief of a clan.

Harbinger – Someone that goes before, often as a messenger

Rump-fed – Well fed

Sieve – A wire utensil used for separating solids from liquids. A sieve allows water to pass through it while leaving solids behind.

Weird/Wyrd – An Old English word meaning fate

Corporal – Solid, material

Chastise – To rebuke or shame

Compunction – Having guilt

Gall – Bile

Limbeck – a sieve or device used to purify

Beguile – To trick someone into doing something

Trammel – To restrict someone's freedom

Surcease – Relief

Shoal – Shallow

Knell – A funeral bell

Incarnadine – To make bloody

Equivocator – Someone who responds to a question unclearly

Posterity – Future generations of people

Voluptuousness – Something that is pleasant to the senses

Dolour – Distress

Redress – A remedy

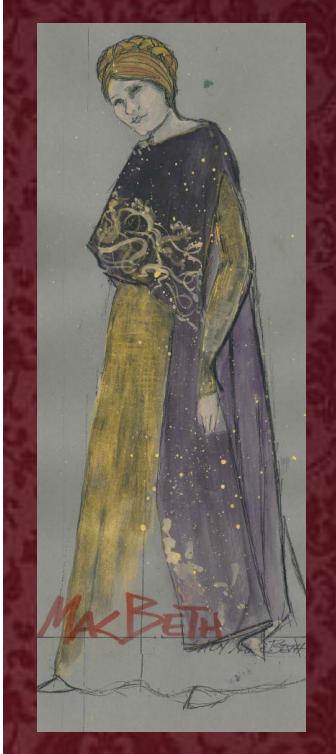
Cistern – A tank for holding water

Avarice – Extreme greed

Psyc – Cure of doctors

Character List

Designer Rooth Varland's costumes for Theatre NDSU's *MACBETH* are modern with a touch of medieval.



MACBETH A noble warrior, thane (Scottish noble), and later king of Scotland, each choice Macbeth makes leads to more betrayal and murder. His journey to the crown twists him into a monster of a man.

LADY MACBETH Macbeth's wife, Lady Macbeth encourages and helps Macbeth with the murder of King Duncan. Later she feels guilt over her role and is tortured by visions of her own bloody hands that she cannot wash.

MACDUFF - A lord loyal to King Duncan. Macduff is the first to find Duncan's murdered corpse and begins to suspect Macbeth of treachery. Macbeth's assassins murder Macduff's family.

LADY MACDUFF Wife of Macduff. Assassins murder Lady Macduff along with her children.

WITCHES - Also known as the weird sisters, the witches tell Macbeth a prophecy proclaiming him the future king of Scotland. *In Theatre NDSU's production, the witches also narrate the story.*



BANQUO - Macbeth's good friend, Banquo hears the witches' prophecy and is later murdered by Macbeth because the witches claimed Banquo's descendants would be kings.



MALCOLM - King Duncan's eldest son, he flees to England after Macbeth murders his father. Macduff convinces Malcolm to fight against Macbeth.

FLEANCE - Banquo's son. Scottish legend states that Fleance is an ancestor of King James I of England and Scotland. James I funded Shakespeare's acting company, The King's Men.

DUNCAN - King of Scotland. He promotes Macbeth to a new, greater lordship. Macbeth murders him.

DONALBAIN - King Duncan's second son.

MACBETH

ACT 1
SCENE 1
1 Three witches stand observing a great battle. They commit foul deeds in anticipation of Macbeth's passing by.



Macbeth and Lady Macbeth plot in 2001's *Scotland, PA*, which modernizes the story of MACBETH and sets the play in a burger restaurant.

ACT 2
SCENE 4
5 Macbeth is crowned king as Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee to England.

ACT 1
SCENE 3
2 Macbeth and his friend Banquo hear a prophecy from the witches. They proclaim Macbeth as the future king and Banquo as the father of kings.

ACT 1
SCENE 6
3 King Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle, Inverness. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth plot to murder the king.

ACT 2
SCENE 2
4 With Lady Macbeth's help, Macbeth murders King Duncan in his sleep.

ACT 3
SCENE 3
6 Because of his paranoia and fear of losing the throne, Macbeth has his friend Banquo murdered. Act 3 Scene 3.

ACT 3
SCENE 4
7 The ghost of Banquo haunts Macbeth's banquet table. Lady Macbeth and the lords at the table begin to suspect Macbeth is losing his mind.

ACT 4
SCENE 1
8 Macbeth returns to the witches to hear more about his future. The witches tell Macbeth how he will be defeated, and Banquo's descendants will still rule as kings.

ACT 4
SCENE 2
9 The Scottish Lord Macduff opposed Macbeth's reign from the start. Macbeth hopes to squash Macduff's rebellion by having his wife and children murdered.



ACT 5
SCENES 1,2,3
11 Macduff's army arrives at the gate of Dunsinane, Macbeth's castle. Lady Macbeth's sanity is beginning to slip, and she feels guilt over the murder of King Duncan. She descends further into madness and ultimately dies. After her death, Macbeth feels he has nothing else to lose.

ACT 4
SCENE 3
10 Enraged, Macduff raises an army to put the rightful King, Malcolm, son of Duncan, on the throne.



Michael Fassbender as Macbeth prepares to fight Macduff. *Macbeth*, 2015.

ACT 5
SCENE 7
12 Macduff challenges Macbeth on the battlefield. Macbeth believes he is invincible because of a new prophecy from the witches, but Macduff reveals the prophecy confirms Macduff as Macbeth's killer. Macduff kills Macbeth, and Malcolm takes his rightful place on the throne of Scotland.

Shakespeare: The Man and the Legacy.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English playwright during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Many people credit Shakespeare as the greatest playwright of western civilization. Some scholars claim he is more popular today than at any other point in history (Gompertz, 2016). Shakespeare wrote at least 39 plays and 154 sonnets. Shakespeare also invented many words and phrases. Here are a few ones we still use today!

Phrases:

“Break the ice” *The Taming of the Shrew*
“Devil incarnate” *Titus Andronicus*
“Wild-goose chase” *Romeo and Juliet*
“Eaten me out of house and home” *Henry IV: Part 2*
“All that glitters isn’t gold.” *Merchant of Venice*
“A laughing stock” *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
“Too much of a good thing” *As You Like It*
“It’s Greek to me” *Julius Caesar*
“Wear one’s heart on one’s sleeve” *Othello*
“Knock Knock, Who’s There?” *Macbeth*
“What’s done is done” *Macbeth*
“Come what come may” (More commonly today as: “come what may”) *Macbeth*
“In a pickle” *The Tempest*
“Fair play” *The Tempest*

Words:

Admirable
Alligator
Bedroom
Dawn
Dwindle
Hostile
Kissing
Long-Legged
Lonely, Puppy Dog
Rant
Skim Milk
Watchdog
Worthless
Upstairs
Zany



Shakespeare's Globe has been rebuilt twice. It was destroyed by fire in 1613, then rebuilt in 1614. It was torn down in 1644 when the puritan movement condemned attending theatre. This is the modern recreation of the Globe Theatre completed in 1997. You can find more information at shakespearesglobe.com.



The witches, shrouded in fog, meet Macbeth. *Macbeth*, 2015



Guy Fawkes, a key conspirator in the gunpowder plot, is captured by soldiers in 2005's *V for Vendetta*.

Macbeth in Context

April 26, 1564 William Shakespeare is born.



In bear-baiting, trained dogs would attack a bear tied to a wooden stake in the middle of an arena. Often this fight would lead to the bloody death of the bear.

1676 The Paris Garden is built on The River Thames's south bank. The Paris Garden was a popular venue for bear-baiting, cockfighting, and other animal blood sports. Outside the city, The Thames's south bank was where all the edgy and mischievous entertainment of Shakespeare's day was located. Other popular activities included public execution and punishment, religious pageantry, political ceremony, music, and dance (Greenblatt, 36).

1599 The Globe Theatre, which served as a home for Shakespeare's acting troupe, is built on the River Thames's south bank. Because the globe was on the Thames's south bank, it competed with bear-baiting, brothels, and other theatres for people's attention. An open-air theatre, The Globe had space for 3,000 people to attend a play at a time. There was gallery seating under a roof for the nobility and standing room on the ground, which cost a penny for admission. Rowdy peasants called groundlings would bring rotten fruit to throw at bad actors.

1599 James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) publishes his *Dæmonologie*, a collection of pamphlets and books on the history and application of witchcraft and black magic. The *Dæmonologie* later serves as Shakespeare's inspiration for the weird sisters in MACBETH.

March 24, 1603 Queen Elizabeth I dies.

July 25, 1603 King James VI of Scotland is crowned King James I of England. He began funding Shakespeare's acting troupe, causing them to change their name from “The Lord Chamberlain's Men” to “The King's Men.” His Scottish heritage inspired Shakespeare to set Macbeth in Scotland. According to legend, the character Banquo is James's direct ancestor.

November 5, 1605 The Gunpowder plot is foiled. English Catholics attempt to assassinate James I and his government by planting gunpowder under the parliament building. The gunpowder plot fueled James I's anxiety and belief that he was the constant target of assassination attempts. Because James I funded Shakespeare's plays, the gunpowder plot provided political inspiration for MACBETH (Greenblatt, 2710).

1606 Shakespeare writes MACBETH. James I's interest in witchcraft, the supernatural, Scottish heritage, and political assassination inspires Shakespeare to write this dark tragedy.

1611 King James I's commission of the Bible is published. *The King James Bible* marks James's continued interest in the supernatural.

April 23, 1616 William Shakespeare dies.

The Language of MACBETH and Rhythmic Guide

Shakespeare was a genius with words. Translations of his plays exist in most major modern languages. Shakespeare is required reading in many schools and universities, and at least thirty-seven professional theatre companies in the United States are named after him. In his introduction to *The Norton Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt writes, "If we should ever be asked as a species to bring forward one artist who has most fully expressed the human condition, we could with confidence elect Shakespeare to speak for us." (1) Shakespeare grasps what makes us human and puts it into words. Scholars have written papers, conducted debates, and published novels, all discussing Shakespeare's language and how it affects our lives.

The key to understanding Shakespeare relies on two key factors. First, Shakespeare uses figurative language to paint vibrant mental pictures and create feelings and emotion within the audience. Second, his verse's rhythm and meter (or lack of rhythm and meter) are notes from Shakespeare about the text's meaning. In a way, Shakespeare directs his plays from beyond the grave. Understanding Shakespeare's figurative language and the rhythm of his verse help us understand his plays better.

Shakespeare uses metaphors, symbols, and other figurative language to give depth to his characters' words. There are deeper meanings to the words on the page which can be unlocked with more investigation. Every Shakespeare scholar, from students and academics to theatre professionals, is an investigator.

To investigate Shakespeare's intent when he writes figuratively, we need to understand the scene's context. Macbeth speaks in Act 1 Scene 3, "So fair and foul a day I have not seen." This line is spoken as Macbeth and Banquo return home after a significant battle. With this knowledge, we can unlock the meaning hidden in the line. The day is "fair" because Macbeth and Banquo won a great battle. "Foul" is mentioned because the day is physically dark and dreary, and the battle's victory came with a great loss of life. Through this one line, Shakespeare is both setting the scene's mood and unlocking Macbeth's character. Shakespeare's use of figurative language might seem complicated. However, if we understand the context of a particular line or scene, the meaning becomes clearer.



It also helps to know Shakespeare preferred simple images based on everyday things he could see and observe. "It is the life of things which appeals to him, stimulates and enchants him, rather than beauty of color or form or even significance."

(Spurgeon, 50) Shakespeare doesn't create his imagery out of thin air; he uses familiar things. For example, the porter's line in Act 2 Scene 3, "Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were a porter of hell-gate, he should have plenty of turning the key." Here we see familiar things, a drunk, a great gate, a knocking at the door, hell. Literally, we see a drunken porter opening the castle's door, but Shakespeare uses figurative language to create images beyond the literal meaning of the words. (Conner) By comparing Macbeth's castle with hell, Shakespeare is tugging on our imaginations. The context of the scene, King Duncan's murder, also drives the image of Macbeth's castle being a hellscape home. As an audience, we now have a more graphic understanding of Macbeth's castle's mood and feel, all because of Shakespeare's tool of figurative language.

The fair and foul day as depicted in Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, a 1957 adaptation of MACBETH.

Understanding how Shakespeare uses figurative language is the first step in understanding him. Next, we will see how Shakespeare used a unique rhythm called iambic pentameter in his verse. Iambic pentameter sounds like a heartbeat, baDUM

— / — / — / — / — /
But screw | your cour|age to | the stick|ing place

The – marks over the words indicate unstressed syllables, and the / marks indicate stressed syllables. The rhythmic song-like quality of iambic pentameter helped actors learn their lines faster. It also gave Shakespeare a way to communicate meaning to the actors. Suppose a line spoken by one character ends where another character's lines begin. In that case, Shakespeare is telling the actors that they should not pause but instead share the line. For example:

LADY M — / — \ / — / — / — /
Did not | you speak? |

MACBETH \ |When?

LADY M /

MACBETH

Now. | / — / —
As I | descended?

The lines "did not you speak, when, now, as I descended" are all one line and should be spoken without a pause.

Notice Shakespeare also throws in a different rhythm in this line. There are two stressed syllables back to back:

MACBETH \ |When?
LADY M / Now. |

Shakespeare lets the actors and audience know tensions are rising by putting two stressed syllables back to back. The Macbeths believe they are about to get caught murdering King Duncan. In performance, actors build intensity and stress of the situation with the words "when" and "now."

The final irregularity of Shakespearian meter seen here is an extra unstressed syllable at the end of the line with "descended." Extra unstressed syllables at the end of lines are Shakespeare's way of showing uncertainty or personal conflict within the character. In this case, Macbeth is beginning to distrust his senses. In the next line, we also see Macbeth worries that he woke the king's son Donalbain.

baDUM baDUM. Each baDum (called an iamb) is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Iambic pentameter is a set of five iambs (baDUMs or group of two syllables) in a line. Here is a line from MACBETH as an example:

Shakespeare only puts irregularity in his verse as an aid for actors to understand character actions. Suppose a Shakespeare actor, director, designer, or audience member can find the irregularities. In that case, they can unlock Shakespeare's intent and find new meaning within the character. Figuring out the rhythm and meter of the lines, as well as understanding Shakespeare's use of figurative language, goes a long way towards helping audiences and readers understand a Shakespeare play.

ACTIVITIES FOR HOME AND THE CLASSROOM



Walk and talk Shakespeare.

Shakespeare can be intimidating and feel old fashioned on the page. Many Shakespearian actors, designers, and directors overcome this intimidation by reading the words aloud and moving around a room. Take a scene or monologue from the end of this guide (or another scene/monologue from the play) and walk around the room while reading it aloud. When you see a comma, do a little hop, skip, or wiggle. Whenever you see a period, take a short pause in your movement and voice. If a new line begins, turn around. Your brain is clever, and once you get the words in your body and start speaking out loud, Shakespeare's meaning will become clear.



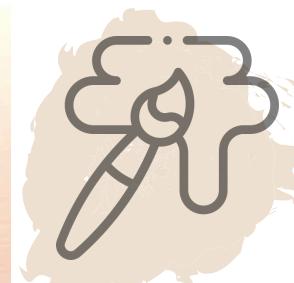
It's crafting time.

Shakespeare is famous for inventing many of the words and phrases we still use today. He also made some creative insults for his characters to say. Some of these insults, "He has not so much brain as ear-wax" or "Thine face is not worth sunburning," are still funny today. Do a little research and find your favorite Shakespearian insult. Then, design a bumper sticker with the insult and a picture clarifying the quote's meaning.



Prepare a banquet.

Food and banquets played a significant role in MACBETH since they were major social events in medieval Scotland. Research the banquet food served at these banquets. How many courses would there be? Create a menu for a MACBETH style banquet in today's day and age. Make sure to highlight some of the dishes for lords and ladies that were served in medieval times. How could these dishes be updated for a fancy modern meal? What everyday dish could be added to your menu to add diverse flavors and culture to your meal? This website is an excellent place to start when doing your research: www.medieval-recipes.com.



You're an artist!

Shakespeare's MACBETH is full of vivid imagery and action. The three witches on the heath casting spells. Macbeth reaches out to grab the imaginary dagger covered in blood. Lady Macbeth attempts to wash away the guilt of her deeds but fails. A porter at the gates of hell. Macduff cries over his slain wife and children. Choose one iconic scene from MACBETH and draw, paint, make a collage, or sculpt a sculpture that depicts what a character is going through in the play. Think about how you can convey mood and personality through your art. Include a line from the play as a caption for your piece.



You're the bard!

Shakespeare wrote at least 39 plays during his lifetime, and he often borrowed stories from other writers as inspiration. For MACBETH, he borrowed from a book called *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. *Holinshed's Chronicles* also inspired many of Shakespeare's history plays like Richard III and Henry V. For ROMEO AND JULIET, Shakespeare was inspired by *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* by Arthur Brooke. The tragedy KING LEAR was based on a British legend written down by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *History of the Kings of Britain*.



Puppetry.

Theatre NDSU's production of MACBETH relies heavily on the use of puppetry and object theatre. This technique allows for the witches to be larger than life and play with characters like they are playing with dolls. Either with paper or with objects you find on your own, design a puppet that would help tell the story of MACBETH. Puppetry and object theatre in the United States primarily entertains small children (think *The Muppet Show*.) How does our usual perception of puppetry influence how we see the horrors of MACBETH? Does thinking of puppetry as art for children make MACBETH puppetry more or less unsettling? Collaborate with others to put on a small puppet show telling the story of MACBETH with your puppets and found objects. Then ask your audience how having the story played out with puppetry made them feel.



Shakespeare in an everyday translation.

MACBETH is Shakespeare's shortest play, but could it be told even faster? Invent a text conversation between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth telling the story of MACBETH. You may use as many text messages as you want, but be sure to keep the texts short. Take time to find images to add to the conversation. Don't forget the Macbeths could also take screenshots of other people's conversations and send the screenshots to one another. Make sure to include all the big story moments (like Duncan's and Banquo's murders) in your texts.



You're a poet!

Shakespeare wrote over 154 sonnets (sonnet means “little poem”), and poetry fills his plays. Remember, his poems fit the rhythm and meter of iambic pentameter. Using the guide above on identifying iambic pentameter, write a poem in iambic pentameter. Shakespeare’s sonnets would also have rhyming pairs of lines, so line one would rhyme with line three and so on. Play around with both the rhythm and rhyming scheme in your poem. Often, Shakespeare used figurative language like simile, analogy, and metaphor to describe the world while conveying deep ideas. He wrote about his own emotions, youth, nature, aging, love, and beauty. See if you can follow similar patterns or themes in your writing. Here is a website that details further how to write a sonnet: www.nosweatshakespeare.com/sonnets/how-to-write-a-sonnet/



You're the graphic designer!

Today, most plays have graphic designers and marketing teams working on getting the word out. Theatres need posters, playbills (the program you

get at the theatre), and sometimes study guides to be made so the play can be successful. Choose some of the themes, images, or famous lines from MACBETH (like murder, betrayal, blood, witchcraft, long dark nights, rainy Scotland, “Double Double, toil and trouble,”) and make a collage poster for MACBETH. You should set aside space for the title, MACBETH, and a quote from the play that makes sense with the rest of your design.



You're the costume designer!

MACBETH has dynamic, memorable, and unique characters, from the murderous Macbeth to the noble Macduff. Choose one of the characters from MACBETH and design a set of costumes for them. You will need to decide the setting and time of MACBETH. Is it set in Medieval Scotland? Are all of the characters secret agents during the Cold War? Is MACBETH an epic space opera spanning galaxies with multiple alien species? Find research images to inspire you as you work. While designing, think about why the character would be wearing those clothes. How does the design reflect both the world of the play and the character? Is there a particular piece of clothing



that defines the character? What do the colors and fabrics of the clothes say about the person wearing them?



You're the scenic designer!

MACBETH is a play filled with imaginative visual imagery and figurative language. Focus on one of the images here: blood, witchcraft, unnatural

weather, or woodland. You may also choose your own from the play. You will build/draw a set that embodies the image you have chosen. Consider the time and place you would like to set your MACBETH in. Is the world of MACBETH a dark fairy tale, or is it a modern world of businessmen and intrigue? Is it a gothic horror piece in the style of *Frankenstein* or the works of Edgar Allan Poe? Or are you setting the play in Elizabethan England during the time of Shakespeare? Find research images to justify your choices. Your set must also have a special place for the witches to enter and exit. It needs a special place for magic to happen (for example, the vision of a dagger Macbeth sees in Act 2). Finally, it needs a place for epic battles to happen. Be sure also to include areas for the actors to enter and exit the stage. [IMAGE: Castle_Macbeth. Caption: Scenic designer Katie Andreachi developed furniture placement, laid out entire rooms for filming, painted walls to communicate location, and designed shadow puppets. “To uphold COVID safety precautions, each actor is performing in different rooms. This obstacle has been most challenging for Macbeth, who appears in multiple different locations.” - Katie Andreachi, Scenic Designer for MACBETH. Here we see Birnam Wood coming to Macbeth’s castle Dunsinane.

of your MACBETH sounds. Does it take place in a dark forest late at night, with the hooting of owls and the sound of growling wolves? Does it explore the sounds of an urban jungle with the honking of horns and pedestrians’ shouting? Does it occur in the early morning where there aren’t many people about, and you can hear the wind whistling through long grass on a prairie? Does your MACBETH have a soundtrack? Once you have decided what your MACBETH production sounds like, find examples of the sounds you are interested in online or do some recording in the real world. Make sure you have at least 3-5 short clips of sound or video to use as examples, then present your ideas to an audience. Be sure to include in your presentation notes why you made specific sound choices.



Akira Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*, 1957 had the character TAKETOKI (Macbeth) shot full of arrows in the final scene. The arrows show how adaptation can alter the source material and enhance its meaning without losing the scene’s heart.



You're the sound designer!

Sound is one of the easiest ways to tap into the audience’s emotion. Specific sounds influence our mood all the time in film and television. Not only do we hear how the soundtrack plays with our feelings, but the sound effects designers choose to include with the film also help us feel things. For this exercise, you need to think of a unique setting for MACBETH, then imagine how the world

You're the actors!

At the end of this study guide are pre-scanned scenes from MACBETH. With a partner, choose one scene. There is a scene between Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, a scene between Macduff and Malcolm, and a scene between Macduff and Macbeth. Translate each line into everyday English. Don’t only translate the old words into words you know. Write words you would actually say, even if they don’t match Shakespeare’s rhythm. For example, if you had the line “Is this a dagger I see before me, the handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch thee...” you may write something like: “Why is there a dagger here? Is it for me? I could grab it.” Perform or recite your scene with your partner for an audience or recording.



You're the lighting designer!

In every play, the lighting designer influences the mood and feel of the world onstage. Lighting designers also tell the audience where they should be looking. In a Shakespeare play, lighting design is essential because it adds meaning to the actors' words. It also allows us to focus on what is important in any given scene. Take the final battle scene from MACBETH. It would be challenging to identify Macbeth and Macduff in a crowd of fighting actors if a director wanted to stage the entire fight without lighting. Pick any scene from MACBETH. You will design the lighting atmosphere for this scene, paying particular attention to what you want the audience to feel while watching it. You will need to decide what the quality of light is. Is your production meant to mimic a realistic atmosphere with natural lighting? Or is it sterile lighting like in an office building or a space ship? Find images on the internet or in books that portray the atmosphere you would like to see in your production of MACBETH. Stills from film and television, photography, and classical painting make for great inspirational material. Combine all of your research into a collage and present it to an audience. Don't forget to explain what you think the world of the play is like and why you chose specific images to portray that world.



You're the Shakespearian investigator!

There are monologues from MACBETH at the end of this study guide. Choose one of them and use the tools discussed earlier in this guide to see if you can breakdown the iambic pentameter in each line. Highlight where the rhythm seems out of the ordinary. Remember this is Shakespeare is telling the actor, designers, and director something significant is happening inside the character. If you would like, you may also translate your monologue into modern English. Perform or recite your Shakespearian monologue, your everyday English monologue, or both for an audience or recording, paying particular attention to each line's rhythm and silence.



Scotland, PA, a 2001 modern adaptation of MACBETH, portrays the witches as a group of hippies.



You're the director!

The witches in MACBETH are some of Shakespeare's most memorable characters. Every production approaches the witches with a slightly different style. Some choose to make the witches beautiful and young, ancient hags, or a mixture of genders, or children. The director has a lot to say about how the witches look and their power over the play's events. Decide how you would cast the witches. Would they look like humans? Would they be alien and otherworldly? Write down in a couple of sentences why you would make those choices. Find 3-5 images on the internet of the style you would like the witches to have. Then, draw out how you would envision them moving across the stage if you were staging the famous Macbeth and Banquo scene with the witches. How would you arrange these characters to show their differing power and influence in the world?

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MACBETH

by William Shakespeare



Discussion/Essay Questions



The witches play a significant role in Theatre NDSU's MACBETH. They act as narrators and drive Macbeth to commit horrible evils. Do you think they are responsible for the actions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? Why or why not?



Because King James I was intrigued by the supernatural, Shakespeare scatters witches, ghosts, prophecy, and visions throughout MACBETH. Do you think these supernatural elements have real power within the play? Are they an excuse Macbeth and Lady Macbeth use to justify their want for power? Explain your reasoning with examples from the play.



What role does the symbol of blood play in the story of MACBETH? Why does Shakespeare bring it up so often? Use examples from the play. (Hint: Both Macbeth's soliloquy in Act 2 Scene 1, "Is this a dagger I see before me," and Lady Macbeth's monologue in Act 5 Scene 1 deal with blood.)



At the beginning of the play, King Duncan gives Macbeth a new title and lands. What does this tell us about Macbeth's character at the beginning of the play? How does our perspective shift after we discover what he has written to his wife? How do characters, who are not Macbeth, describe him as a character as the play progresses? What changes?



Equivocation is discussed numerous times throughout MACBETH, and it is a vocabulary word earlier in this study guide. What role does equivocation play in MACBETH? How do the witches use equivocation as a weapon or tool to drive Macbeth's choices? Do the Macbeths have free will? Use examples from the play.



How do the visions of Macbeth change throughout the play? What is Shakespeare trying to communicate to the audience with these changes?



Almost all of the characters in MACBETH have wants and ambitions. How does ambition help people accomplish their goals? How can ambition be a hindrance to people's lives? What do the characters in MACBETH have to sacrifice to achieve their goals? Compare the ambitions of the Macbeths to that of Macduff, Malcolm, Banquo, and Duncan. How are their sacrifices similar? How is their ambition different?



Compare and contrast Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. How are they different in what they want throughout the play? How are they similar? What do they do differently in their actions to get what they want?

 Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have multiple chances throughout the play to stop killing or change their behavior. Imagine how the play would look different if the Macbeths' guilt drove them to make another choice. Discuss your alternate version of the play. Do you think all the witches' prophecies would have come true? Why?

 MACBETH starts with the witches overlooking a battlefield. How does the way Shakespeare introduces the play prepare us for what is to come? Why do you think he chose witches to set the scene?

 Most of the bloody action in MACBETH traditionally takes place offstage, with the consequences of the gory actions playing out in front of the audience. The people of Shakespeare's time were familiar with graphic violence as entertainment, with bear pits and public executions being common and well attended. So why do you think Shakespeare chose to have these grotesque murders take place off-stage? Give examples from the play or your research to explain your reasoning.

 Research the hospitality etiquette a host was supposed to have toward their guests in medieval Scotland. What expectations did a King have towards the Thanes underneath him? How has Shakespeare perverted this relationship in MACBETH?

 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Theatre NDSU has adjusted its season to be entirely online. MACBETH is a digital production combining live performance and pre-filmed material. How did the pandemic adjustments affect your experience of the show? What do you think was gained from being able to experience live theatre through film? What did you miss about going and watching a play in the theatre?

 MACBETH is a combination of live performance mixed with some pre-filmed scenes. This technique was a solution the creative team came up with in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, even before the coronavirus, some theatres were combining live performance with filmed performance. There were also live performances enhanced with live filming of the play. Take a look at Manual Cinema, a theatre company out of Chicago that films parts of their plays and projects the film on a screen. They combine film and live performance and believe this helps the audience engage with their plays. What do you think of this technique? Does it enhance or distract from the play? Visit: <http://manualcinema.com/>

 In the United States, part of the American Revolution's goal was to take away kings' power to establish a more democratic government. The tyranny of kings and other ruling officials has sparked many revolutions, and we see one such revolution in MACBETH. What are some qualities of a good leader or king? What are some qualities of a tyrannical ruler or king? Power corrupts, as we see in MACBETH. Is there any way for a good leader to avoid being or becoming tyrannical? Explain your reasoning.

 MACBETH has many superstitions tied to it. People are not supposed to say "Macbeth" in a theatre. Productions of MACBETH have had horrible things happen, and many theatre practitioners simply refer to it as "The Scottish Play." Research why these superstitions came about. What are some of the most famous "cursed" productions? How would someone go about breaking the curse?

OTHER RESOURCES

WEBSITES:

- <https://teaching.folger.edu/resources/shakespeare/macbeth/>
- <http://interenetshakespeare.uvic.ca/library/slt/index.html>
- <http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare.html>
- <http://www.Sparknotes.com/Shakespeare/Macbeth>
- <http://www.Thetwingeeks.com/2020/04/06/Macbeth-three-distinctive-adaptations-of-shakespeares-scottish-play>
- <https://blog.teacherspayteachers.com/8-ways-to-get-your-students-hooked-on-shakespeare/>

YOUTUBE:

Shakespeare's Globe Talks MACBETH:

Tomorrow and Tomorrow Speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzklFRSwOPQ>

Tyranny and Power: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isIYDELsikO>

The Witches: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp_4LS8hkMM

Royal Shakespeare Company Learning Zone Macbeth Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoI0YEplfPsloAacNeATvlaQKIk7Q2lyf>

Sir Ian McKellen Breaks Down the "Tomorrow and Tomorrow" Soliloquy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGbZCgHQ9m8&t=248s>

TED-ED Macbeth:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rD5goS69LT4&t=14s>

TEDx Talk on Not Hating Shakespeare:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kh3gMcOUFa0>

New York Times on Shakespeare in Pop Culture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lv4fWhObaTM>

Judi Dench on Speaking Shakespeare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqlbbRWivfM>

David Tenant on Why Shakespeare Still Matters:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIZ_eqOvLfc

Humorous video about MACBETH superstitions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h--HR7PWfp0>

FILMS:

Acting Shakespeare, with Ian McKellen

Macbeth, with Orson Welles, 1948

Macbeth, with Ian McKellen and Judi Dench, 1978

Macbeth, with Anthony Sher, 2001

Macbeth, with Patrick Stewart, 2010

Macbeth, with Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard, 2015

Scotland, PA, with James LeGros, Maura Tierney, and Christopher Walken, 2001

Throne of Blood, with Toshiro Mifune and Isuzu Yamada, 1957

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Take My Milk for Gall Monologue Act 1 Scene 5

CONTEXT: Lady Macbeth has just received a letter detailing the witches' prophecy. Lady Macbeth sees the opportunity to murder King Duncan.

LADY MACBETH

He brings great news. The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan

Under my battlements. Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,

And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full

Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,

Stop up the access and passage to remorse;

That no compunctionous visitings of Nature

Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between

Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,

And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick Night,

And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of Hell,

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,

To cry 'Hold, hold!'

Screw Your Courage to the Sticking Place Monologue Act 1 Scene 7

CONTEXT: Macbeth worries that they may fail in killing King Duncan. Lady Macbeth convinces him that the plan is solid and they will succeed.

LADY MACBETH

We fail?

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep--

Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey

Soundly invite him--his two chamberlains

Will I with wine and wassail so convince

That memory, the warder of the brain,

Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason

A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep

Their drenched natures lie, as in a death,

What cannot you and I perform upon

Th' unguarded Duncan? what not put upon

His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt

Of our great quell?

Is This a Dagger Monologue Act 2 Scene 1

CONTEXT: Macbeth is walking through the darkened halls of his castle. Torches flicker on the walls as he goes to murder King Duncan in his bedchamber.

MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,

Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,

Which was not so before. There's no such thing:

It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld

Macbeth Monologue

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow Monologue Act 5 Scene 5

CONTEXT: Macbeth is preparing for battle against Malcolm and Macduff. Moments before he believed himself invincible because of the witches' prophecy. He has heard reports the woods are moving, Malcolm and Macduff are at his door, and his faith in the prophecy is slipping. Now, he has heard that his true love, his wife Lady Macbeth, has died.

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time,

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

NOTE: The following monologues are in prose.

They are not in iambic pentameter.

Porter Monologue Act 2 Scene 3

CONTEXT: Macbeth has just murdered King Duncan. The porter is a bit of comedic relief after the grisly murder. He drunkenly wakes up to answer a door that is banging in the night like a heartbeat. Through the porter, Shakespeare alludes to Macbeth's castle as hell itself made manifest.

PORTER

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. *Knocking.* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins now about you; here you'll sweat for't. *Knocking.* Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. *Knocking.* Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. *Knocking*

Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. *Knocking.* Anon, anon: I pray you, remember the Porter. *Opens the gate.*

Out Damned Spot Monologue Act 5 Scene 1

CONTEXT: This monologue takes place at the beginning of Act 5. Lady Macbeth hasn't been seen onstage since the banquet in Act 3 where Banquo's ghost appeared in front of Macbeth. We see Lady Macbeth's guilt plaguing her and she no longer has a grip on her sanity. She is sleepwalking, carrying a candle, and working to wash her hands. In her sleepwalking delirium, she sees her hands covered in the blood of King Duncan.

LADY MACBETH

Yet here's a spot.

Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two: why, then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell is murky!--Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?--Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?-- What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh! Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale.--I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed!

MACBETH SCENES

ACT 2 SCENE 2. The court at Macbeth's castle.

CONTEXT: *It is the middle of the night. The castle is dark, and Macbeth has left to kill King Duncan in his sleep. Lady Macbeth is pacing the corridors of the court, waiting for Macbeth's return.*

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — /
That which | hath made | them drunk | hath made | me bold;

— — / — / — / — / — /
What hath | quench'd them | hath giv|en me | fire. Hark!

— / — / — / — / — /
|Peace!| [Empty feet tell us she is listening to a noise.]

— / — / — / — / — /
It was | the owl | that shriek'd, |the fat|al bell|man,

— / — / — / — / — /
Which gives | the stern'st | good-night. | He is | about | it:

— / — / — / — / — /
The doors | are op|en; and the | surfeit|ed grooms

— / — / — / — / — /
Do mock | their charge | with snores: | I have drugg'd | their poss|ets,

[Empty feet tell us Lady M is silent but alert here]

— / — / — / — / — /
That death | and na|ture do | contend | about | them,

— / — / — / — /
Whether | they live | or die.|

MACBETH SCENES

MACBETH

[Shared line]

— / — / Who's there? | what, ho!

LADY MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — / — /
Alack, | I am | afraid| they have | awaked,

— / — / — / — / — / — / — /
And 'tis | not done. | The attempt | and not | the deed

— / — / — / — / — / — / — /
Confounds | us. Hark! | I laid | their dagg|ers read|y;

— / — / — / — / — / — /
He could |not miss | 'em. Had | he not | resem|bled

— / — / — / — / — / — /
My fa|ther as | he slept, | I had | done it.

— / — /
My hus|band!

MACBETH

[Shared Line] I | have done | the deed. | Didst thou | not hear | a noise?

MACBETH SCENES

LADY MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — /
I heard | the owl | scream and | the crick|ets cry.

— / — /
Did not | you speak? |

MACBETH

[Shared Line] |When?

LADY MACBETH

[Shared Line] Now.|

MACBETH

[Shared Line] — / — / — /
|As I | descend|ed?

LADY MACBETH

/ Ay. [Empty Feet. The Macbeths are listening in the silence.]

MACBETH

/ — / — / — / — /
Hark! Who | lies i' the | second | chamber?|

LADY MACBETH

[Shared Line] / — /
Donal|bain.

MACBETH SCENES

MACBETH

— / — / — /
This is | a sor|ry sight.| [Empty Feet. Macbeth looks at his gory hands]

LADY MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — /
A fool|ish thought,| to say| a sor|ry sight.

MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — / — / — /
There's one | did laugh | in's sleep, | and one | cried 'Mur|der!'

— / — / — / — / — / — /
That they | did wake | each oth|er: I | stood and | heard them:

— / — / — / — / — /
But they | did say | their prayers, | and a|ddress'd them |

— / — /
Again | to sleep. |

LADY MACBETH

[Shared Line] — / — / — / — /
There are | two lodged | togeth|er.

MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — /
One cried | 'God bless | us!' and | 'Amen' | the oth|er;

— / — / — / — / — /
As they | had seen | me with | these hang | man's hands. |

— / — / — / — /
List'ning | their fear, | I could | not say | 'Amen,' |

— / — / — / — /
When they | did say | 'God bless | us!'

MACBETH SCENES

LADY MACBETH

[Shared Line]

— / — — \ / —
Con|sider | it not | so deep|ly.

MACBETH

— / — / — / — / — / —
But where|fore could | not I | pronounce | 'Amen'?

— / — / — / — / — / —
I had | most need | of bless|ing, and | 'Amen'

— / — /
Stuck in | my throat. |

LADY MACBETH

[Shared Line]

— / — / — / — / —
These deeds | must not | be thought

— / — / — / — / — / —
After | these ways; | so, it | will make | us mad.|

MACBETH SCENES

ACT 4 SCENE 3. The grounds at the King of England's palace.

CONTEXT: King Macbeth terrorizes the people of Scotland. He sent murderers to kill his friend Banquo. He also sent murderers to kill Macduff's family, though Macduff does know his family is dead. After his father's death, Prince Malcolm fled to England because Macbeth accused him of murdering King Duncan.

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF

MALCOLM

Let us | seek out | some des|olate shade, | and there
Weep our | sad bos|oms emp|ty.

MACDUFF

[Shared Line] Let | us rath|er
Hold fast | the mort| al sword, | and like | good men
Bestride | our down| -fall'n birth|dom: each |new morn
New wi|dows howl, | new orph|ans cry, | new sorrows
Strike hea|ven on | the face, | that it | resounds
As if | it felt | with Scot|land and | yell'd out
Like syll|able of | dolour. |

MACBETH SCENES

MALCOLM

[Shared Line] What I | believe | I'll wail,
What I | know be|lieve, [Beat of Silence] | and what | I can | redress, |
As I | shall find | the time | to friend, | I will.
What you | have spoke, | it may | be so | perchance.
This ty|rant, whose | sole name | blisters | our tongues,
Was once | thought hon|est: you | have loved | him well.
He hath | not touch'd | you yet. | I am | young; but | something |
You may | deserve | of him | through me, | and wis|dom
To off|er up | a weak | poor inn|ocent lamb
To appease | an an|gry god. [Empty Feet]

MACBETH SCENES

MACDUFF

— / — / — /
I am | not treach|erous. |

MALCOLM

[Shared Line] — / — /
But Mac|beth is.

— / — / — / — / — / — /
A good | and virt|uous nat|ure may | recoil
— / — / — / — / — / — /
In an | imper|ial charge. | But I | shall crave | your pard|on;

— / — / — / — / — / — /
That which | you are | my thoughts | cannot | transpose:

/ — / — / — / — / — /
Angels | are bright | still, though | the bright|est fell;

— / — / — / — / — / — /
Though all | things foul | would wear | the brows | of grace,

— / — / — / — /
Yet grace | must still | look so. |

MACDUFF

[Shared Line] — / — /
I've lost | my hopes.

MACBETH SCENES

ACT 5 SCENE 8. A part of the battlefield.

CONTEXT: Macduff and Prince Malcolm lead an attack on Macbeth's castle. The battle is raging, and Macbeth is in the thick of the fight. Macbeth has killed several soldiers and is feeling confident he will be triumphant.

Enter MACBETH

MACBETH

Why should | I play | the Rom|an fool, | and die
On mine | own sword? | whiles I | see lives, | the gash|es
Do bett|er u|pon them.|

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF

[Shared Line] Turn, hell|-hound, turn!

MACBETH

Of all | men else | I have | avoid|ed thee:
But get | thee back; | my soul | is too | much charged
With blood | of thine | already.|

MACBETH SCENES

MACDUFF

[Shared Line] | I have | no words:

My voice | is in | my sword: | thou blood|iervill|ain

Than terms |can give | thee out! [They fight]

MACBETH

[Fight continues on the line] Thou lose|st lab|our:

As eas|y mayst | thou the | intren|chant air

With thy | keen sword | impress | as make | me bleed:

Let fall | thy blade | on vul|nera|ble crests;

I bear | a charm|ed life, | which must | not yield,

To one | of wom|an born.]

MACDUFF

[Shared Line] |Despair | thy charm;|

And let | the ang|el whom | thou still | hast served

Tell thee, | Macduff | was from | his moth|er's womb

Untime|ly ripp'd.| [Empty Feet]

MACBETH SCENES

MACBETH

Accurs|ed be |that tongue | that tells | me so,
For it | hath cow'd | my be|tter part | of man!
And be | these jugg|ling fiends | no more | believed,
That pal|ter with | us in | a dou|ble sense;
That keep | the word | of prom|ise to |our ear,
And break |it to | our hope. | [Pause] I'll | not fight | with thee.

MACDUFF

Then yield | thee, cow|ard, [Empty Foot]
And live | to be | the show | and gaze | o' the time:
We'll have | thee, as | our rar|er mons|ters are,
Painted | upon | a pole, | and un|derwrit,
'Here may you | see the | tyrant.'

MACBETH SCENES

MACBETH

[Shared Line]

| I will | not yield,

To kiss | the ground | before | young Malcolm's feet,

And to | be bait|ed with | the ra|bble's curse.

Though Bir|nam wood | be come | to Dun|sinane,

And thou | opposed, | being of | no wo|mam born,

Yet I | will try | the last. | Before | my bod|y

I throw | my war|like shield. | Lay on, | Macduff,

And damn'd | be him | that first | cries, 'Hold, | enough!'

Exeunt, fighting. Macduff slays Macbeth.