

## MACBETH: ACT 1 VOCABULARY

Know how to use the following words in sophisticated sentences.

disbursed  
tempest-tossed  
rapt  
enkindle  
liege  
peerless  
unsex  
pall  
woingly  
buttress  
frieze  
procreant  
cherubin  
surcease  
quell

## MACBETH: ACT 1 STUDY QUESTIONS

### Act 1 Scene 1

1. When will the three witches meet again?

### Act 1 Scene 2

2. What news does Duncan hear? Summarize the news.
3. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;  
They smack of honour both (Duncan).*

4. Who is the disloyal traitor?

### Act 1 Scene 3

5. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*Sleep shall neither night nor day  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;  
He shall live a man forbid (First Witch)*

6. What do the three witches reveal to Macbeth?
7. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear  
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,  
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed  
Which outwardly ye show? (Banquo)*

8. What does the First Witch tell Banquo and what does she mean?
9. Has Macbeth thought about becoming King? Find specific lines from the text.
10. Do you think that Macbeth is sincere about his thoughts about becoming King? Explain.
11. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner? (Banquo)*

12. What is a contemporary expression for, “what can the devil speak true?”
13. Why does Macbeth get the title of Thane of Cawdor?
14. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*To win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence. (Banquo)*

15. Explain the meaning and significance of Macbeth's aside.
16. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*New honors come upon him,  
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould  
But with the aid of use. (Banquo)*

#### Act 1 Scene 4

17. Explain the meaning of the following lines:

*There's no art  
To find the mind's construction in the face:  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust. (Duncan)*

18. Who is Duncan going to establish the estate upon?
19. Explain what Macbeth's aside (lines 55-60) reveals about his thought process.

### Act 1 Scene 5

20. Explain what Lady Macbeth's opening monologue/soliloquy reveals about her opinion of Macbeth.
21. Explain the meaning and significance of Lady Macbeth's monologue:

*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 compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The 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 dunnest 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!'*

22. What is Lady Macbeth advising Macbeth to do?
23. What does this scene reveal about the characters of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, as well as the relationship between them?

### Act 1 Scene 6

24. How has Lady Macbeth changed from the previous scene?
25. Considering that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth have just planned King Duncan's murder, which of their speeches to Duncan are ironic? Explain why.

### Act 1 Scene 7

26. Explain the meaning and significance of Macbeth's monologue (lines 1-28) and what this speech reveals about his conscience:

*If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return*

*To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other.*

27. Explain Lady Macbeth's influence on Macbeth. Find specific lines from the text.
28. How is fate handled in this scene?
29. What lines indicate the ruthlessness of Lady Macbeth's mind? Explain why.
30. Explain the meaning and significance of the following lines:

*Away, and mock the time with fairest show:  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know. (Macbeth)*

## **MACBETH: ACT 2 VOCABULARY**

Know how to use the following words in sophisticated sentences.

surfeited  
multitudinous  
incarnadine  
consort  
benison  
suborned

## **MACBETH: ACT 2 STUDY QUESTIONS**

### **Act 2 Scene 1**

1. Does Banquo know or sense the events that are about to happen? Find the lines.

2. Explain the meaning and significance of Macbeth's soliloquy (lines 42-77) and how this soliloquy develops (reveals) the character of Macbeth.
3. Why don't we see the actual murder of King Duncan? Is this an effective staging technique?

#### Act 2 Scene 2

4. What does the owl symbolize?
5. Why is the line "sleep no more" important? Explain.
6. What happens to the daggers?
7. What does Lady Macbeth mean when she shouts, "Infirm of purpose!"?
8. What does Lady Macbeth do to 'frame' the guards for murder?
9. What is happening to Macbeth's mind after the murder? Find specific lines from the text.
10. What does water symbolize in this scene?

#### Act 2 Scene 3

11. What does Lennox sense during the night?
12. What does Macbeth do to cover up the murder?
13. What do Duncan's sons decide to do?
14. What does Banquo suggest he, Donaldbain and Malcolm do?
15. Where do Donaldbain and Malcolm decide to go? Why?

#### Act 2 Scene 4

16. How is the exodus of Donaldbain and Malcolm 'spun'? How does this 'thicken' the plot?

### MACBETH: ACT 3-5 VOCABULARY

Know how to use the following words in sophisticated sentences.

verities  
dissoluble  
parricide  
naught  
jocund  
vizards

sealing  
muse  
saucy  
overbold  
thralls  
dolor  
assay  
thick-coming fancies  
soldier's debt

## MACBETH: ACT 3 STUDY QUESTIONS

### Act 3 Scene 1

1. What are Banquo's suspicions?
2. What does Banquo believe about himself? Find specific lines from the text.
3. Why does Banquo state, "I must become the borrower of the night"?
4. Why does Macbeth fear Banquo? Find specific lines from the text.
5. Why does Macbeth summon the two murderers and what does Macbeth tell them?
6. Why are the two murderers willing and eager to do the deed for Macbeth? Find specific lines in the text.

### Act 3 Scene 2

7. Why is Macbeth still so gloomy? Find the lines in the text.
8. Why is Macbeth envious of Duncan?
9. Why doesn't Macbeth tell Lady Macbeth his plans for Banquo?

### Act 3 Scene 3

10. Briefly explain the events in this scene.

### Act 3 Scene 4

12. Is Macbeth 'imprisoned'? Explain.
13. Explain what the following lines reveal about Macbeth's state of mind:

*That, when the brains were out, the man would die,  
And there an end; but now they rise again,*

*With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,  
And push us from our stools: this is more strange  
Than such a murder is.*

14. What does Macbeth request of the ghost?
15. What has Macbeth lost in this scene? Find specific lines.

#### Act 3 Scene 5

16. Why does Hecate appear in this scene?

#### Act 3 Scene 6

17. What are Lennox and the other Lords discussing? Briefly explain.

### MACBETH: ACT 4 STUDY QUESTIONS

#### Act 4 Scene 1

1. Why do you think that Shakespeare made the apparitions appear as: 1) an armed head, 2) a bloody child, 3) a child crowned with a tree in hand and 4) a show of eight kings, with glasses in hand, and Banquo last? Comment on the symbolism of each apparition and the overall effect of these apparitions on Macbeth.
2. Explain the meaning and significance of the following lines:

Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:  
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook  
Unless the deed go with it; from this moment  
The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:  
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;  
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword  
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls  
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;  
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.  
But no more sights!--Where are these gentlemen?  
Come, bring me where they are. (Macbeth)

#### Act 4 Scene 2

3. What does Lady Macduff think about her husband? Find specific lines.
4. How is our sympathy (pathos) generated for Lady Macduff and her son during their brief, witty dialogue?

5. How does this scene show the further deterioration of Macbeth's character?

### Act 4 Scene 3

6. What is Malcolm comparing Macbeth to? Find specific lines in the text.

7. How does Malcolm describe himself in comparison to Macbeth?

8. Explain the meaning and significance of the following lines:

*Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
To take upon you what is yours: you may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.  
We have willing dames enough: there cannot be  
That vulture in you, to devour so many  
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclined. (Macduff)*

9. What does Malcolm believe will become of him if he becomes king?

10. What does Malcolm reveal about his maturity in his speech (lines 133-156)?

11. What does Ross believe his country has become? Find specific lines.

12. What is Malcolm's advice to Macduff after Macduff discovers/hears that his family has been murdered?

## MACBETH: ACT 5 STUDY QUESTIONS

### Act 5 Scene 1

1. Why does Lady Macbeth's gentle woman call the doctor?

2. What is the doctor's opinion (diagnosis) of Lady Macbeth's condition? What does he base his opinion on? Find specific lines.

### Act 5 Scene 2

3. Briefly explain the events of this scene.

### Act 5 Scene 3

4. How does Macbeth treat the messenger?

5. Describe Macbeth's state of mind?



6. How does Macbeth want the doctor to treat Lady Macbeth?

**Act 5 Scene 4**

7. Why is Malcolm so sure of victory? Find specific lines in the text.

**Act 5 Scene 5**

8. Describe Macbeth's state of mind in this scene. Refer to specific lines.

**Act 5 Scene 6-8**

9. How does Macbeth greet the battle that is right in front of his face?

10. What is the assumed cause of Lady Macbeth's death?

11. How are all the prophecies fulfilled?

12. How are the events resolved (ie. who is king) in the play?

