

*Kentucky Shakespeare Presents*

# ***Macbeth***

## **Spring Tour**

Study Guide

Grades 6th - 12th



***Hear it. See it. Do it!***



Dear Educator,

Thank you for choosing Kentucky Shakespeare to enrich your students' lives with Art Education! We know that the arts are essential to a child's educational experience and development. It is our object to keep the arts alive and thriving in our schools and communities.

This comprehensive Study Guide includes essential background information on Shakespeare and his era, his written works, pre/post performance activities, and a list of applicable Academic Standards that are met with this Spring Tour performance. While giving additional arts related experiences, these teacher-led activities are intended to broaden students' understanding of the play as well as how Shakespeare can relate to our own lives.

Please contact us with any questions or need for further assistance. Thank you for supporting the Commonwealth's largest in-school arts provider and the United States' oldest, free Shakespeare festival!

All Our Best to You,

Kyle Ware  
Director of Education

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Director of Creative Engagement

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## Academic Standards

TH:Re7.1.6-8, TH:Re7.1.HSI, TH:Re7.1.HSII, TH:Re7.1.HSIII, TH:Re8.1.6.b, TH:Re8.1.6.c, TH:Re8.1.8.c, TH:Re8.1.HSI.c, TH:Re9.1.6-8 TH:Re9.1.HSI, TH:Re9.1.HSII, TH:Re9.1.HSIII.b, TH:Re9.1.HSIII.c

TH:Cn10.1.6, TH:Cn11.2.8.a, TH:Cn11.2.HSII.b, TH:Cn11.2.HSIII.b, TH:Cn11.1.6.a, TH:Cn11.1.8.a, TH:Cn11.1.HSI.a



## What to Expect with Our Spring Tour:

In this 90-minute production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, our professional actors create an experience that keeps Shakespeare relevant and accessible. It is a wonderful opportunity for Shakespeare-lovers and those not as well acquainted with his work to experience the language and see a live performance of his words. This tour emphasizes conflict resolution, healthy relationships, and the limits of ambition.

### How can we both make this be the most efficient and successful performance?

- We ask that you create an environment conducive to a positive interaction with your students including an **open space** for our Artist Educators to perform where students can easily see the performance.
- We have provided these activities for both **pre- and post-performance discussion**. They are a fun and an engaging way to enhance learning and allow students to make the most of their arts experience with us.
- It is of utmost importance not only to your students but to our Artist Educators as well that there are **adult school staff members present in the room** throughout the performance. Students tend to have less distractions and are more encouraged to engage in the performance with familiar adult presences in the room.
- If there are any **accessibility needs** or requests that we can prepare for in advance, then please let us know! You can email [education@kyshakespeare.com](mailto:education@kyshakespeare.com) with those needs.



# William Shakespeare

(April 23, 1564 – April 23, 1616)

## His Life

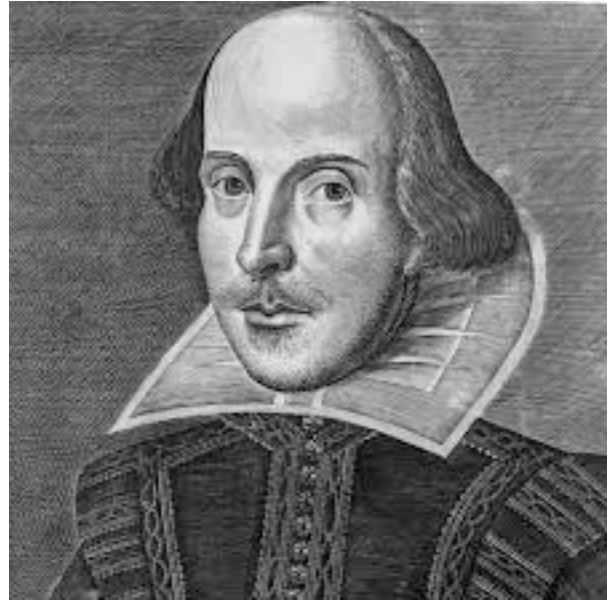
- Born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Married Anne Hathaway at age 18 and had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith
- Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part owner of the playing company the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men
- Appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, where he died three years later

## His Works

- An English poet and playwright
- Often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "The Bard")
- His surviving works consist 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several poems
- His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more than those of any other playwright
- Produced most of his known work between 1590 and 1613
- His plays are often categorized into 3 genres: comedy, tragedy, and history
- In 1623, a few of his former theatrical colleagues published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognized as Shakespeare's
- Reputation did not rise to its present heights until the nineteenth century

## Examples of Words from Shakespeare's World

- Alack — expression of dismay
- Anon — soon
- Ere — before
- Hath — has
- Hence — away
- Naught — nothing
- Thence — away, over there
- Whence — where
- Wherefore — why



# Shakespeare's Three Styles of Plays

## Tragedy

Shakespearean tragedies followed a few tenets:

- A hero(ine) who seeks to avenge a crime committed against a family member or a personal injustice
- A tragic character whose own flaw leads to their downfall
- An end that contains a revelation of self-knowledge by the tragic hero(ine) about how their own frailty brought on their and others' downfall

*Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo & Juliet, Timon of Athens, Titus Andronicus*



## History

Shakespeare's history plays are based on the lives of English kings and brought massive audiences to the theatre. These plays are based only loosely on historical figures rather than actual events in history. They cover English history from the 12th-14th century (1399-1485). The histories usually include elements of comedy and tragedy.

*King John, Richard II, Henry IV Parts I and II, Henry V, Henry VI Parts I, II and III, Richard III, Henry VIII*



## Comedy

A Shakespearean comedy is one that has a happy ending, usually involving marriage, and a lighthearted tone and style. Shakespearean comedies tend to have:

- A struggle of young lovers to overcome a difficulty often presented by elders
- Separation and unification
- Mistaken identities
- A clever servant
- Heightened tensions, often within a family
- Multiple, intertwining plots
- Frequent use of puns

*All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, Love's Labours Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night, Two Gentleman of Verona, Two Noble Kinsmen, Winter's Tale*



## BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY

**Actor-** Individual who pretends to be a character in a play; who represents a character in a play.

**Blocking-** The pattern of movement the actors follow while on stage.

**Characters-** The personalities or parts actors become in a play; roles played by actors in a play.

**Climax-** The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action of a play.

**Conflict-** The opposition of persons, forces, or ideas that gives rise to the dramatic action.

**Costumes-** The clothing worn by the actors to play the characters.

**Dialogue-** The words spoken by the actors during a play.

**Empathy-** The capacity to relate to the feelings of another.

**Exposition-** The part of a play that introduces the theme, main characters and circumstances.

**Falling Action-** The action after the climax of the plot.

**Monologue-** A speech made by a single character; often when a character is “thinking out loud.”

**Playwright-** The individual who writes a play.

**Plot-** What happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.

**Resolution-** The solution to the problem after the climax in a play.

**Rising Action-** The portion of the play from the beginning to the climax, where the action increases in intensity and excitement.

**Role-** Part/ character/ person written by a playwright.

**Setting-** Where a play takes place in time, space, or location

**Script-** The play in written form.

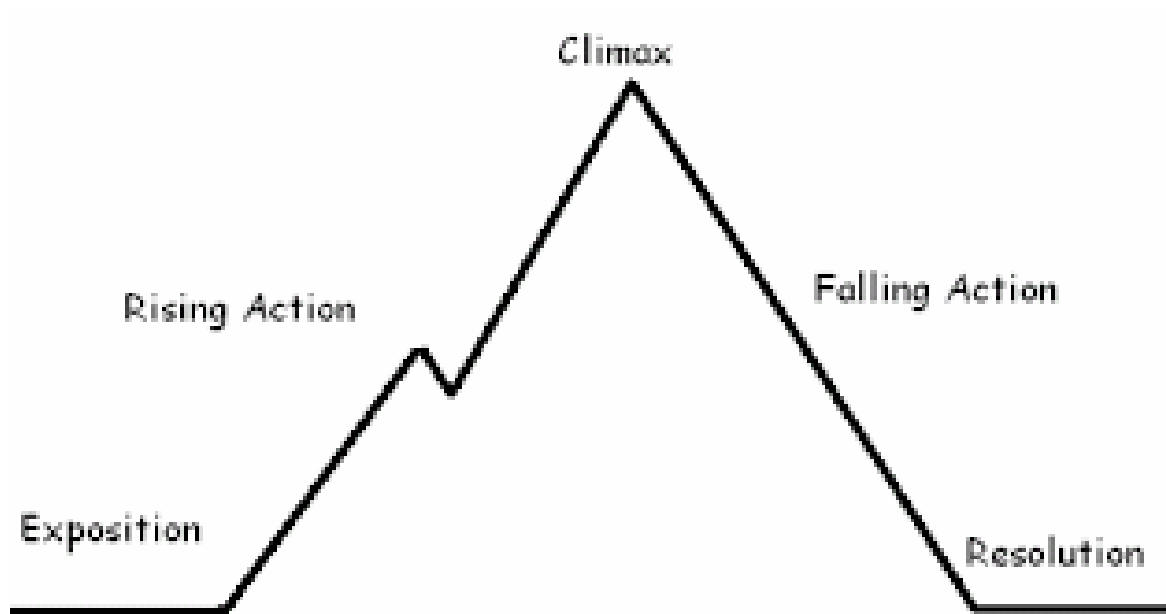
**Stage-** The area where the actors perform the play.

**Theme-** What the play means as opposed to what happens; the main idea or message.

**Turning Point-** The moment in a play when events can go either way; the moment of decision; the crisis.



# Dramatic Structure of a Play's Plot

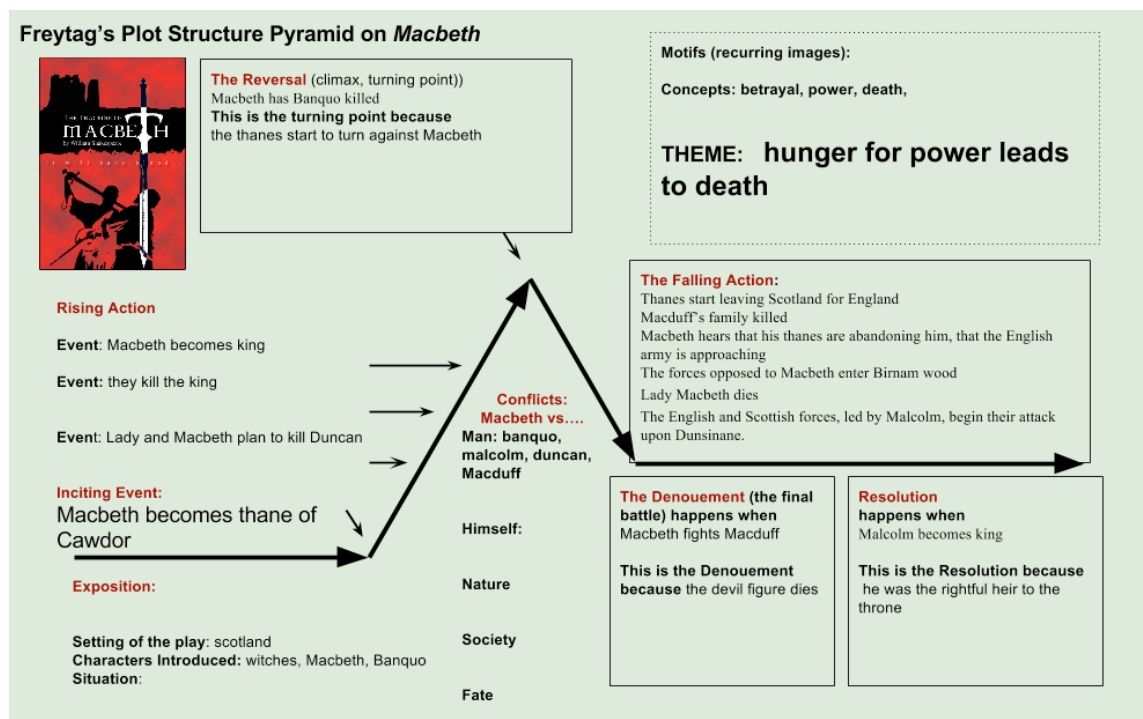


## Freytag's Pyramid

Freytag's Pyramid illustrates the five parts of the classic dramatic plot: Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution. This pattern was suggested by Gustav Freytag in 1863 as means to explain the plot of many works such as Shakespeare's collection of plays.

Please use the theatre vocabulary from the previous page for your students to fill out their own Plot Diagram for *Macbeth*.

Here is the example from *Macbeth*:



# Artist's Questions

Shakespeare used very few stage directions, which are clues in the script for the actors and director to follow during productions. An example would be, "*Actor crosses downstage right to table.*" The way that Shakespeare handled stage directions is that he left clues about the characters, relationships, and scenery in the lines of the play.

Use the provided scene from *Macbeth* or choose your own, read it aloud, and use the Artist's Questions below to explore the possibilities of the text. Based on your discoveries from the questions, make decisions about what the set, scenery, and costumes might look like as well as what you notice about the characters.

## ARTIST'S QUESTIONS

### 1. WHO AM I?

How old am I? Am I rich or poor?  
What is my job? Am I in school?  
What is my family like? Where am I from (country, state, etc.)?  
Am I nice? Funny? Smart? Mean? What is my personality?

### 2. WHERE AM I?

County - State - City - Neighborhood - Building - Room  
What does the place look like? Do I like it or not?

### 3. WHAT TIME IS IT?

Century - Year - Month - Week - Day - Time

### 4. WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCENE?

People in the scene?  
People mentioned in the scene?  
The place where they are?  
The objects around them?

### 5. WHAT IS WRONG IN THIS SCENE? IS THERE A PROBLEM? (Conflict)

### 6. WHAT DO I WANT IN THIS SCENE? (Goal) WHY CAN'T I HAVE IT? (Obstacles)

### 7. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GET WHAT I WANT? (Tactics)



## *Macbeth*

### ACT I SCENE VII. Macbeth's castle.

MACBETH

How now! what news?

LADY MACBETH

He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH

Hath he ask'd for me?

LADY MACBETH

Know you not he has?

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:  
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely? From this time  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

What beast was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:  
They have made themselves, and that their  
fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,  
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

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  
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two  
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,  
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar  
Upon his death?

MACBETH

I am settled, and bend up  
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.  
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

*Exeunt*

# Macbeth Synopsis

*Macbeth* is one of Shakespeare's greatest plays and is the shortest tragedy. It is believed to have been written between 1603-1606 in the reign of King James - known today for the King James Version of The Bible. *Macbeth* has been adapted for opera, film, books, and for the stage. Drawn loosely from the historical account of the real King Macbeth of Scotland, many superstitions surround this play and have left it labeled as "cursed." Many actors will not mention the name aloud especially in a theatre and will only call it, "The Scottish Play."

The tale of *Macbeth* begins in Scotland where three witches encounter the warrior Macbeth, who has just won a great battle for his king, Duncan. The witches meet Macbeth and his friend, Banquo, and predict that Macbeth will become the Thane of Cawdor and "king hereafter" as well as that Banquo will be the father of kings. Excited by this prophecy, Macbeth writes a letter to his wife with the news and upon his return home, he does indeed become the Thane of Cawdor. Together, the Macbeths plan to murder King Duncan when he next visits their castle in order to fulfill the next part of the prophesy.

After Macbeth kills Duncan, the King's son, Malcolm, flees the country, and Macbeth becomes king. Despite the success of fulfilling the prophecies, he is plagued with nightmares and fears that Banquo will somehow take his throne which was the next part of the prophesy. Spurred on by the three witches, Macbeth has Banquo killed and further sends murderers to kill the family of another popular Thane, Macduff.

The guilt affects Lady Macbeth as well until the point that she ends her own life. Meanwhile, in England, the King's son, Malcolm, has raised an army to reclaim Scotland. Macduff proves the only one able to defeat Macbeth and he kills him in combat. Malcolm is crowned king and the nation sets to right itself after such horrific events and poor leadership.



# Who's Who in *Macbeth*

## The Major Players

### The Macbeths

Macbeth - He is a nobleman of Scotland, the Thane of Glamis. After defeating the previous Thane of Cawdor in battle, he is bestowed with that title and honor. Macbeth is a brave and loyal man, but he succumbs to his desires and ambitions by murdering King Duncan in order to gain the throne. This evil deed begets other murders and eventually, his own death.

Lady Macbeth - The ambitious wife of Macbeth. She conspires with Macbeth to kill King Duncan and even aids him in the task. In the end, she discovers her conscience and cannot cope with the consequences of their actions.



### Scottish Nobility

Duncan - King of Scotland. Regarded as a good ruler by his subjects. Duncan is very impressed with Macbeth and honors him greatly with additional titles.

Malcolm - Son of King Duncan. He is wrongly blamed for the death of his father, but he eventually regains his family's throne after gathering an army in England.

### Other Notable Characters

Three Witches - Known as The Weird Sisters who tell Macbeth the prophesy that he will be king. They set the wheels into motion that eventually destroy Macbeth. They are similar to the Fates in mythology.

### The Mechanicals

Ross - A nobleman of Scotland. Knows of Macduff's plan to seek out Malcolm to reclaim the throne. He aids in the battle against Macbeth.

Banquo - A nobleman of Scotland and friend of Macbeth. Witnesses the prophesy that the Three Witches tell Macbeth. He suspects Macbeth for the murder of King Duncan which consequently results in his demise.

Macduff - A nobleman of Scotland. He leaves Scotland to find Malcolm so he can convince him that he is needed in Scotland. It is his history and foil to Macbeth that ends in Macbeth's demise.

Lady Macduff - The wife of Macduff. She, along with her children, are killed by murderers sent by Macbeth.

Fleance - Son of Banquo. He escapes the murderers sent to kill him and his father and therefore secures the line of Banquo to survive.



# Vocabulary

Below are selected words from *Macbeth* that will assist in the comprehension and background knowledge for the production.

**Hail** - to praise and applaud; to greet or salute; to summon.

**Kinsman** - cousin, relative, or family.

**Knell** - a stroke or sound of a bell that often indicates something ominous such as a death, funeral, or disaster.

**Mortal** - lethal or capable of causing death; human without magic or powers.

**Noble** - aristocratic; high birth, rank or station; royal; honorable or respectable.

**Rent** - to separate into parts with force or violence; to disturb (the air) sharply with loud noise.

**Surcease** - to stop some action; to come to an end.

**Thane** - a member of an aristocratic class ranked between earls and ordinary freemen that were granted lands by the king or by lords for military service; the chief of a clan.

**Usurp** - to seize a position, office, power, etc. by force or without legal right; to use without authority or right.

**Weird** - developed from the Middle English use of weird sisters for the three fates in Germanic mythology who were the goddesses who controlled human destiny; involving or suggesting the supernatural; unearthly or uncanny; concerned with or controlling fate or destiny.





# *Macbeth*

## **Pre-Performance Anticipation Guide**

Read each statement and decide whether you agree or disagree with it. For each statement, write *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*. Make comments in the space below each one. You will have the opportunity to discuss your ideas with the class afterwards.

1. Ambition has no limits.
2. True loyalty is never blind.
3. It is natural for humans to strive for power.
4. People control their own fate.
5. The more desperate a person becomes, the more reckless they become as well.

# *Macbeth*

## Post-Performance Anticipation Guide

After watching the performance, decide whether your opinion has changed for each statement. For each statement, write *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* as well as if that has changed. Make comments in the space below each one with evidence - either from your experience of watching the performance or directly from the text to support your opinion. You will have the opportunity to discuss your ideas with the class afterwards.

1. Ambition has no limits.

2. True loyalty is never blind.

3. It is natural for humans to strive for power.

4. People control their own fate.

5. The more desperate a person becomes, the more reckless they become as well.

# Themes

One of the brilliant things about Shakespeare is that each of his plays is rich with themes that are central to the human experience. When a director approaches a Shakespearean text, they must choose which themes to emphasize. The following themes are important to this interpretation of *Macbeth*.

## Fate vs. Free-Will

The Three Witches spark the debate of whether Macbeth has a choice as to his future or not. He seeks them on several occasions for their dark prophecies, but he alone chooses to stay on the path to make them come true. All of the signs and symbols mentioned in the play such as a man not born of woman, the woods, etc. seem to be too convenient for just chance. All the while, the audience watches each character make the choices that forever alter their own lives.

Questions: Does Fate or Free-Will lead the characters of the play? What details from the text can you pull to support your choice?

## Conflict Resolution

The characters in this play all approach how to resolve their problems in different ways. Some flee, some hurt others, etc. Can you name some of the situations where conflict resolution was needed in this play?

Questions: What alternatives could the characters in this play employed to resolve their problems? Are there resources that they had that they did not utilize? What were their motivations that led to poor decisions and outcomes - grief, emotions, miscommunication, denial?

### Steps to Resolve Conflict:

1. Identify the Problem.
2. Focus on the Problem.
3. Attack the Problem, NOT the Person.
4. Listen with an Open Mind.
5. Treat a Person's Feelings with Respect.
6. Take Responsibility for Your Actions.

## Ambition

What may be the greatest theme of *Macbeth* revolves around the fine line between ambition and unchecked ambition. In the world of the play and, indeed, society as a whole, those who display acts of bravery, a sense of drive, and passion to further their lot in life are praised as being ambitious. However, the problem that the play presents to the audience is how that ambition can be twisted into something corrupt and unstoppable. Macbeth begins the play as a character who has done great deeds and has earned all of his accolades. When the promise of more is offered to him, his thirst for power and reckless ambition leads him to violence, murder, and pure evil.

Questions: What is Macbeth's point of no return? When does his ambition become too great of a burden?

## **Pre-Show and Post-Show Activities for Exploration**

Please complete the following activities before & after the performance.

### **Before the Performance**

1. Familiarize your students with *Macbeth* and discuss with your class the parts of this play - characters, themes, plot, etc. What are their expectations of experiencing this performance?
2. Examine the major themes of *Macbeth*. For each theme, have the students list examples from their own lives and from the modern world around them. Prepare the students to look for these themes in the performance and discuss how they relate or do not relate to their own lives. Can you think of any pieces of art that are based on, connected to, or inspired by this play or these historical events? What do they have in common and how do they differ?
3. What types of technical theatre are needed for the performance including sets, props, costumes, sound, and lighting? Find specifics from the script and add some of your own to the list. How do these elements add to the experience? What do you expect from our Spring Tour of this show that has to adapt to many different locations?

*Don't forget to prepare some questions for the Q&A with the Actors! Some suggestions may be:*

- How do you prepare to play multiple characters?
- What sort of training or education do you need to be an actor or to be involved in theater?
  - What would you do if you felt that you had no one to turn to about a problem?
  - What's your favorite play written by William Shakespeare?
  - What kind of roles are your favorite to portray on stage?

### **After the Performance**

4. Many theatre artists believe in the superstition that saying "Macbeth" outside of the performance of the play itself could lead to being cursed. Are there any superstitions that you believe in that alter how you live your life? How are these traditions or superstitions important? Why are they passed down from generation to generation? How do they intersect with the concepts of fate and free-will?
5. Write a letter to one of the characters in the play and give them some helpful advice. Pick a spot in the play where they believe that they could've stopped the chaos before it truly began. What could they do to avoid these events? What resources could help or even save them?
6. Compare the actors' physical choices to what their characters were saying in the scenes. Give three examples of how their physical choices- space, pace, levels, etc. enhanced the impact of their performance. Is there a choice that you would've made differently? What would it have been and why?



# Shakespeare Links & Resources

Type the word Shakespeare in a search engine and you will find a plethora of information on him, his works and his environment. Show your students that the internet can be a great way to research and gather valuable information - especially when you can't find it at your local library. We also recommend watching the theatrical versions of some of the scenes they will experience in the *Macbeth* Spring Tour for comparison and chance to open up discussion about their comprehension of the choices made.

[www.absoluteshakespeare.com](http://www.absoluteshakespeare.com)  
*Comprehensive Resource of Works*

[www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618](http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618)  
*The Folger Shakespeare Library*

[www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/](http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/)  
*The Penguin & Signet Classic's Teacher Guide*



## Classroom Challenge:

Write a letter to the Kentucky Shakespeare Professional Actors who performed in the *Macbeth* performance. Describe what you liked about the performance and how it helped to see Shakespeare be performed rather than just reading it. Describe what you did, saw, and heard.

What was your favorite part?

Mail to:  
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616 Myrtle St.  
Louisville, KY 40208

or

Email to: [education@kyshakespeare.com](mailto:education@kyshakespeare.com)