***Macbeth*** Study Guide (Please Do NOT Write On This)

**Directions**: Answer in complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What are three purposes for scene 1? What **mood** was Shakespeare trying to create with this brief scene?

2. “Fair is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and foul is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

3. What do the witches predict for Macbeth? For Banquo?

4. What does the following question mean and why is Macbeth asking this?

“The Thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me in borrowed robes?”

5. Like Macbeth, Banquo too is surprised that the witches have predicted Macbeth’s new title. What does Banquo say about the motives of the “instruments of darkness?” How can this relate to today?

6. How do soliloquies differ from asides? What is the purpose of each?

7. What information is conveyed in the following aside? Why is this information in an aside?

8. In an aside, Macbeth says, “Stars, hide your fires. Let not light see my black and deep desires.” What are Macbeth’s desires? Why was this said in an aside?

9. What are Macbeth’s arguments to himself against killing Duncan?

10. How and why does Lady Macbeth use persuasion when speaking with Macbeth?

11. In a very famous quote from this play, Lady Macbeth advises Macbeth to:

*Bear welcome in your eye,*

*Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,*

*But be the serpent under it..*

What does she mean by this? Why is she saying this?

12. The power of persuasive speaking is important in this play as it is with life. Explain why this is an important quote in the play. Who says it and in what context is it said.

*But screw your courage to the sticking-place,*

*And we’ll not fail.*

13. What is Lady Macbeth’s plan?

14. Explain the significance of Macbeth’s dagger apparition. What does it symbolize? What does is show

about Macbeth’s thoughts?

*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.*

15. After Macbeth murders King Duncan, he hears voices. What are the voices telling him and what

might these voices represent?

16. Why won’t Macbeth take the daggers back to the scene of the crime?

17. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth differ in their initial reactions to the murder of King Duncan. Explain the

quotes and explain what they show about each person’s character.

Macbeth “Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand?”

Lady Macbeth “A little water clears us of this deed:

How easy it is then.”

18. How does Lennox describe the night, and what is Macbeth’s response? Explain the relevance.

19. What excuse or explanation does Macbeth give for killing the guards (grooms)? What is his real

reason?

20. Do you think it was smart Malcolm and Donalbain to leave? Why?

21. In his aside, what do we learn that Banquo suspects? Why was this commentary placed in an aside?

22. Why does Macbeth fear Banquo?

23. What happened to Banquo and to his son Fleance?

24. What begins to happen to Macbeth? Who does he see? What does this show about Macbeth’s mental state and what does is show about his feelings about what he’s done?

25. How does Lady Macbeth defend her husband’s outbursts?

26. We know that Malcolm is in England and Macduff has joined him there. **Why**?

27. What is the setting of **act IV and** what are the witches doing? Why are they doing it?

28. “Double, double \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

Fire burn and cauldron \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

29. Fill in the Blank:

“By the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of my thumbs,

Something \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this way \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

30. To whom is Witch 2 referring when she says this ^? Why?

31. When Macbeth looks into the cauldron, he sees three apparitions (said by voices in our script).

What are the three things that the apparitions tell Macbeth?

32. How does Macbeth feel about the messages from the apparitions? **Why**?

33. Why does Malcolm say this to MacDuff? What does it mean?

*“Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief*

*Convert to anger; blunt not the heart; enrage it”*

34. What is the setting at the beginning of **act V?**

35. What are the doctor and the gentlewoman discussing?

36. What is Lady Macbeth doing with her hands as she enters the room? What might this symbolize?

What is she suffering from?

37. How is the line, **“Out, damned spot,” ironic to her previous line in act II of, “a little water clears us of this deed”?**

38. Why does the doctor say that Lady Macbeth needs a priest/the divine more than a doctor/physician?

39. Malcom and Macduff were determined to defeat Macbeth. How did they have their soldiers to disguise themselves? Why is this disguise significant?

40. What happened to Lady Macbeth?

41/42. After learning about Lady Macbeth, Macbeth presents this soliloquy:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow*

*Creeps in this petty pace from day to day*

*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.*

41/42. Macbeth’s speech here ^ is very famous and memorable. What does it mean for the actions of the play? Why is he saying this?

43. What does the speech mean? How can this speech relate to today?

44. Diction (important words and phrases): What are the most powerful words/sentences/phrases in the “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tommorow” soliloquy ?

Explain why.

45. Give examples and explain how literary devices are used in this speech. (Personification, repetition, imagery etc.)

46. Based on their actions in the play, were you surprised that the acted so strongly about her death? Explain.

47. What **key piece of news** does the messenger tell Macbeth? What was his reaction?

48. What does Macbeth mean when he says, “I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born”?

49. What does Macduff tell Macbeth about his birth and how does Macbeth react?

50. Who is now the king of Scotland? Why this person?

**Post Reading Activity:**

Watch the multiple versions of Macbeth’s speech and compare. How does each interpretations as actors emphasize the influence of the supernatural, ambition, evil, inner conflict differently? How are they staged differently? Look for Ian Mckellen, Patrick Stewart, and Daniel Mayes.

Speeches: “Is this a dagger?”

“Out, out damned spot!”

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow”

**Post Reading Discussion:**

**#1** Macbeth is a tragedy. Is Macbeth at tragic hero? If Macbeth is indeed as tragic hero, what are the 4 things that lead to his downfall?

#2. Describe the supernatural events throughout the play (witches, ghosts, apparitions, earthquakes), their importance and what it tells the reader in relation to the characters and the setting.

#3. How have both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth changed during the course of the play? Cite evidence to support your response.

#4. ***Macbeth*** shows ambition and the power it has on an individual person. Some say, Lady Macbeth is the real driving force behind the murder of Duncan. Whose ambition, Lady Macbeth’s, Macbeth’s or both is responsible for the tragic outcome of the play? Make sure that you use examples for support.

#5 “Macbeth is basically a man of conscience but with a fatal weakness: ambition.” Discuss.

#6 “After the murder of Duncan, neither Macbeth nor Lady Macbeth evokes pity or even sympathy for the duration of the play.” Do you agree? How does the killing of Lady Macduff differ from the previous killings and what does is reveal about Macbeth’s personality? What do think about Lady Macbeth’s advice to “Look like the innocent flower / but be the serpent under it”?

*#7* Discuss and explain: ‘Macbeth’s tragedy is that he understands the evil nature of his actions, but proceeds with them anyway.’ Can you be too ambitious?

#8 What are some modern day situations / scenarios that are similar to those in ***Macbeth***?

#9 Explain how Macbeth’s attitude/feelings toward the following characters **transforms** throughout the

play.

* Please include discussion/explanation pertaining to the following characters:
  + Banquo
  + Lady Macbeth
  + Duncan
  + The witches.

Make sure you use examples (the before and after) for each part for support in your discussion.

**Final Project** **Ideas**:

In groups of 3-4, re-write a scene from ***Macbeth*** in a modern setting. Perform the scene for the class.

Create a modern setting for the play and do a presentation about who you would cast as the actresses/actors, the setting you would use, and samples of re-written lines.

Art: Use famous lines in the play / scenes in the play for a painting, collage or some type of visual art.

Psychology: In the play we saw Lady Macbeth rubbing her hands and she and Macbeth both saw ghostly figures. How do people who are under extreme guilt/stress react and show that guilt? How do police identify guilty suspect by their body language / eye contact etc?

Multi-modal presentation about issues, famous quotes, themes, events, and personalities that are presented in the play?

Persuasive Speech – Understanding persuasion (Lady Macbeth)

Write an alternate ending to the play. What would happen if Lady Macbeth lives? What if Macbeth lives? What happens next? You choose from where the story changes and what happens to each character.

Research The Gunpowder Plot of 1605, a plan to assassinate King James I. Compare your findings with the play and the killing of Duncan.

**Macbeth On Trial:**

You’ll need to imagine that you are part of the *defense or prosecution* team during an investigation of King Duncan’s murder. Write opening and closing statements and questions that you would use to cross-examine characters.

-Present your case to the court after collecting your evidence in the form of interviews, character profiles, witness statements, forensic evidence, and exhibits such as alleged murder weapons.

-Make use of diagrams, maps and crime scene photos.

-Don’t forget to make full use of the text of *Macbeth*.

**Personal Connection:**

Take some of the famous quotes / speeches / ideas and discuss how they relate to you personally. Must be a thoughtful analysis and discussion.

Ex. A time when the quote “Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it” related to my life was…

Ex. What is something that you’ve done, that you wish that you could undo or get a re-do? Do you feel guilty about it? Have you tried to make it right?