CHICAGO youth SHAKESPEARE
be not afraid of greatness

CYS PRESENTS

MACBETH

Learning Resources: Teacher Packet

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Introduction

About This Packet

The following materials have been provided to support the teaching of *Macbeth*. They are provided for teachers to use as they are and, of course, for teachers to adapt as they see fit. We suggest the shared materials be done in the following sequence, but the selection and sequencing of the materials are ultimately determined by the teachers, depending on their students and the focus of their class.

Sequence*

Part One: Background Information

- Provide background knowledge of Shakespeare's language and the historical events surrounding the play. Introduce play with short summaries and story maps.

Part Two: Movies

- Use films before reading to preview the story, characters, and themes to create context, clarify understanding and make comparisons.

Part Three: Games & Activities

- Using games and kinesthetic activities to understand the story.

Part Four: Table Read

- Begin analyzing elements of the text (characters, themes, etc.) and language (verse, words, etc.).

Part Five: Final Project

- Create a performance project as a way for students to showcase what they've learned and display their understanding of the play.

***This sequence helps the students create a base understanding of the text and allows them to focus on the main ideas and themes of the story. ***

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Manon Spadaro, Chicago Youth Shakespeare's Artistic Director.

Contact Info:

Manon Spadaro
Founding Artistic Director
manon@chicagoyouthshakespeare.org

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TIPS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE[1]

Here are some of the most important things I've learned (often the hard way) about making Shakespeare engaging, rewarding, and successful for students of all ages and levels.

1. DON'T GIVE HISTORY LESSONS!

In the beginning, most students do not care about Elizabethan theater, Stratford-Upon-Avon, or Ann Hathaway! Go figure. What engages them are the juicy plots, outrageous characters, and overall fun found in the plays. Avoid biographical and historical lessons altogether at first – hang pictures of the Globe and the Bard around the room, if you like, but don't talk about them unless asked.

INSTEAD

Tell your students the real reason you are teaching Shakespeare: not because it's fun, even though it is; not because it's in the curriculum, even though it is; and not because the Renaissance is fascinating, even though it is. We teach Shakespeare because his works are central to the English theater and literary canon; his creation of many of the words we still use, and his development of stories and characters still affect us all – all over the world! For us to leave Shakespeare out of an English or theater course would be like leaving the cell out of a biology course—like leaving the Greeks out of a world history course. As teachers and students, we are here to educate and be educated. Whether or not it's fair or good or true, in order to be considered culturally literate and well-educated, people must have some familiarity with Shakespeare's works. Share with your students a list of familiar words and phrases invented by Shakespeare. They'll be impressed—they'll want more.

2. DON'T ASSIGN ROLES AND READ A WHOLE PLAY!

It just doesn't work—not even with most adults. These plays were intended to be seen, performed, and heard—400 years ago! Not only do Shakespeare's plays lack the kind of narrative voice found in novels, but they also contain invertedsyntax, archaic and metaphorical expressions, and ultra-complex concepts. All of these elements enhance the quality and beauty of Shakespeare's works once they are understood and appreciated, but a cold reading alienates students, leaving them feeling hopeless about ever understanding a play.

INSTEAD

Supply students with engaging visual, kinesthetic, and FUN introductory activities and resources that make the plot, themes, and characters easily accessible. Once students feel some power, they are in a position to build appreciation for the rich language.

3. DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF TO TRADITIONAL METHODS AND ASSESSMENTS!

Students' accomplishments can be measured in various ways, especially in a Shakespeare unit. Avoid objective tests that concentrate on character names, plot sequence, and other cold, hard facts. Who remembers the names of all those guys who killed Caesar? And who cares?

INSTEAD

Again, engage students in substantive activities and assessments that require them to think, interpret, and DO. Don't ask these kinds of questions: What is the name of Juliet's cousin? Rather, require your students themselves to ask questions that show they are thinking, considering, and wondering about the

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plays. Have them recite sonnets or passages they've memorized. Have them design and explain maps depicting their own concepts of a play or sonnet. Have them interpret, prepare, and perform scenes from plays.

4. FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION!

I once read an article on teaching Shakespeare that said, "PUSH BACK THE DESKS!" Don't be a slave to the formation of desks in your room. Change them daily, depending on the day's plan. Desks suck students into isolation and stasis. Get students standing in a circle and on their feet in groups. Use the halls, the outdoors, the atrium, and the gymnasium. March, sing, play games, shout, play follow-the-leader. Get those high school students out of their prematurely "grown-up" comfort zones. They will love you and thank you for it in the end.

5. SHUT UP!

This is the most important thing I am still learning. Of course, we literary and theatrical scholars have great, insightful ideas about the texts we love. Of course, we know volumes about the subjects we teach. But often our willingness to share what we know robs our students of exploring and discovering for themselves. The best cure is to shut up. Shut up the textbook, too. Photocopy the original plays for your students (or get your school to buy individual copies), and let the text speak for itself. No one knows the "right" interpretation of any play. (Foremost scholars still argue over whether Hamlet is actually a procrastinator or a man of action—or neither. So don't pretend you KNOW, either!) Avoid asking questions that assume a single interpretation. Example: What is Hamlet's fatal flaw? This question assumes Hamlet has a flaw. Does he? Most Shakespeare scholars now reject the tired theory of "fatal flaw" in tragic heroes.

INSTEAD

Allow your students to come to new conclusions. Require them to ask questions that beg discussion. Good questions have no quick and easy answers.

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About Our Production

Artistic Director's Note

It was clear, even in our earliest discussions of *Macbeth*, that there were about a bazillion parallels between the world of this famously 'cursed" play and the extraordinary time we are living through right now. This realization opened the door to a spiraling list of existential questions from our young artists, such as:

What is fate? How much do we determine our own fate, and how much do we rely on others to guide us? How susceptible are we to the power of suggestion? Is it human nature to believe what we want to hear? Is truth always subjective? How can we tell the difference between truth and fiction? What is the thing that allows human beings to trust one another; and what happens to a society when people stop trusting each other or don't know whom to trust?

Luckily, the creative process relies more on asking the right questions than it does on finding the answers; although the question of "Why this play now?" seemed to literally answer itself.

We hope that our reimagining of Shakespeare's "Scottish Play" invites audiences to ponder some questions of their own, to embrace curiosity over surety, and like the talented young artist of this ensemble, to recognize all that we still have to learn from one another about our shared human experience. Shakespeare was right: "What's done cannot be undone." There really is no going back for any of us; but fortunately, there is always tomorrow.

CYS's Macbeth: A Stage Play & A Film!

Producing live theatre always comes with a host of expected and unexpected challenges. Producing live theatre in the age of COVID requires a combined arsenal of creativity, flexibility, and old-fashioned good luck. Beyond keeping our ensemble members as safe as possible, our primary goal was to make sure they'd have a chance to share their work with an audience.

This season we were fortunate to offer our young artists the unique opportunity to create a cinematic version of *Macbeth*, while simultaneously preparing for live performances on the stage. The film was shot by **Kyle Hamman** of KBH Media, assisted by CYS Ensemble members, **Isabel Dudas** and **Sydney Gralike** – both first-year film students at DePaul. Our film version of *Macbeth* promises to offer audiences a distinctly different experience from the stage production.

Why This Play Now

Chicago Youth Shakespeare's professional company for young artists begins each new project with the same old question: *"Why this play now?"* Finding the answers helps to guide our creative process.

Click here to view their responses!

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Part One: Background Information

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CYS PAGE TO STAGE

A young actor's guide to making the most of Shakespeare's words

The Basics: Learn the story and the words

If you expect to portray any character authentically, **you need to know their story!** Who is your character? What is their relationship to the other characters in the play? As you read through your script, take note of the following:

- **How is your character described by other characters in the play?**

  Ex. "He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
  The fits o' the season." (Ross describing Macduff in Act IV. ii)

- **How does your character describe themself?**

  Ex. "Sinful Macduff. They were all struck for thee." (Macduff describing himself in IV. iii)

- Track your character's path through the course of the play and fill in any *unanswered questions*. Unanswered questions are references in the text to people, places, and events that the character knows or has experienced, but that are not explained further in the text of the play. It is the actor's job to fill in the details (using their imagination).

  Ex. In IV.iii of *Macbeth,* Ross has to tell Macduff the tragic news that his family and servants have all been killed. Upon hearing the news, Macduff references his "wife and babes" and "all my pretty chickens" but Shakespeare never tells us *exactly* how many children Macduff has, their ages, or really anything about Macduff's relationship to his family. These would all be unanswered questions for the actor playing Macduff. The unanswered question for the actor playing Ross in this scene would be, *how did I hear the news about Macduff's family, and from whom?*

- Read through your lines OUT LOUD – including the cues. This will give you a clearer idea of what your character wants and WHY he or she is saying what they are saying. Pay attention to what comes *before* the line. What are you responding to?

- Look up any words that are unfamiliar, but **start with what you do know first**. Here are a couple of great online resources that are also free!

  C.T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*

  The Shakespeare Pronunciation App (available for android and IOS)

- Remember to always SPEAK IN YOUR OWN VOICE! Your interpretation is what will make your character truthful and compelling.

- Use the guidelines in this handout to help you unpack & annotate your text.

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Understanding Punctuation

They didn't use many punctuation marks 400+ years ago; BUT, the punctuation marks they *did* use were very important. Punctuation was meant to help people speak out loud, not to read silently to themselves. This was all part of the art of "rhetoric", meaning "to phrase" or "to persuade". A great resource, (and the most reliable example of what Shakespeare *might* have intended in terms of punctuation) is the First Folio. (More about that on p. 10.)

- **the period (.)** In Shakespeare's plays and sonnets, the most important mark was the period**.** The end of a sentence indicated a change in thought – (or the end of one thought and the beginning of a new one). **If you don't see a period, [or a question mark, or an exclamation point], *then the thought doesn't change***.
- **the colon (:)** was used in place of "therefore" or "because". What goes before or after the colon is part of the same thought. The **semi-colon (;)** was often used in place of "and", and commas were there as indicators for breath, meaning, *you don't have to breathe on the comma*, but it indicates a good place to do so.
- **apostrophes (')** replaced missing letters within a word. Think of them like 400-year-old contractions. Here are a few examples:

!s = it is	i' = in
ope = open	e'er = ever
o'er = over	o/ = o/en
gi' = give	a' = he
ne'er = never	e'en = even

Iambic Pentameter

Listen to your heartbeat. That is an iamb - comes from the Greek word – meaning "to beat". Iambic pentameter is your heartbeat times 5. It is also the average length of an average thought in English. We all speak that way. It's the natural rhythm. If there's an *extra iamb* in a line of verse – there is a reason. (A line that has an extra beat ending in an unstressed syllable is considered a "feminine ending" and often suggests uncertainty.)

[ex.] To be | or not **|** to be | that is | the question

The opposite of an iamb is a **trochee** - (when the emphasis is on the first syllable of the iamb rather than the second). A trochee is used for magic incantation.

[ex.] Double | double | toil and | trouble

Fire | burn, and | cauldron | bubble

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Poetry and Prose

Prose is governed by rules of grammar: subject, verb, object, etc. Verse follows rules of grammar *and rhythm*. The basic rule is that the high-born people speak poetry and the low-born speak prose - but Shakespeare messes with that - he breaks the rules. What is important to notice, though, is ***when*** Shakespeare switches between prose and poetry within a scene or even a speech. THAT is the KEY MOMENT of the scene or speech!

Impulse Precedes Language

What comes first: "ouch" or a hand on a hot stove? **Language is the result of character in action**. Something to keep in mind: ***Why does this particular character say these particular words in this particular order at this particular moment?***

Shakespeare coined thousands of words and phrases and had a vocabulary of over 25,000 words. So Shakespeare's words were sometimes difficult even for his own audiences to understand. To help your audience understand the words:

- **Make the words sound like what they mean**, (especially the NOUNS). [ex.]

  "Is this a dagger which I see before me?"

  Why does Macbeth choose to say "dagger" and not hatchet, penknife, or sword at that moment? Because the word "dagger" perfectly describes what Macbeth *sees* at that particular moment. We see an image of something in our mind's eye before assigning a noun to identify it. The noun "dagger" is the *only* word Macbeth can choose to describe that particular image.

- **Push the VERBS, but leave the ADJECTIVES & ADVERBS alone.**
  - Verbs are action words. Plays are about actions. Push the verbs and you will move the action of the play forward!
  - Adjectives and adverbs describe the nouns and the verbs, so there's no need to "gild the lily". Shakespeare did a masterful job of embellishing his own images. What you need to do is to tell the story! Take for example the famous typing test sentence: "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog". Now, which makes more sense to you: "The quick brown over the lazy"; or "The fox jumped over the dog"? Nouns and verbs tell the story and move the action forward.

Listen for Literary Devices

- **Alliteration and Assonance** - When a character speaks using alliteration, (repetition of identical or similar consonant sounds), or assonance, (repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds), the actor should emphasize it. Use the repetition of sounds to illustrate your point
- **Rhyming couplets** are also there to make a point! Say them with style. The same goes for **"O"s, "Ah**" s., and **repeated words**. Remember, it is always more important the second (or third) time you say it, otherwise, why would you repeat it?
- **Antithesis,** (the setting up of opposites), is in all classical literature, but it runs rampant in Shakespeare (and ESPECIALLY in *Macbeth*). When a character contradicts themself in Shakespeare, you've discovered something about that character's humanity.
- **Single Syllable Lines of text** (affectionately known at CYS as ***SSLOTs***), tend to be particularly truthful

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or passionate, showing the speaker at his/her most direct. Saying a line of text made up of single-syllable words forces the speaker to *slow down*. This is a clue that what you're saying (or hearing) is VERY important.

[ex.] "It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood."

- **Lists:** When Shakespeare's characters list things, look at the order - does it follow the right chain of being? If the list is out of order -- it is symbolic. (Ex. Kate's last speech in *Taming of the Shrew* – Act 5, Scene 2, Lines 152-178) Also – lists almost always need to build – in intensity, volume, and speed.
- **the I/You, I/Thou Relationship:** When "you" changes to thee/thou within a speech you pay attention to that, just like you pay attention to changes from prose to poetry. "You" was more formal, whereas "thee/thou" was the familiar form.
- **Soliloquies**

soliloquy: noun so·lil·o·quy \sə-ˈli-lə-kwē\
An act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play. Origin | Middle English: from late Latin soliloquium, from Latin solus 'alone' + loqui 'speak'.(Oxford Dictionary)

The important thing to remember about soliloquies in Shakespeare is that you're never just talking to yourself! During Shakespeare's time, the audience and the actors were in the same light, so the audience was ***always*** present. The "fourth wall" as we know it in the contemporary theatre did not exist in Shakespeare's theatre. So when a character is speaking alone on the stage, he/she is still there ***with*** the audience and is speaking directly ***to*** the audience.

the First Folio and the Quartos

7 years after Shakespeare's death - (1623) - the First Folio was published. The Folio aimed to be one of the most carefully printed books *ever* and to tell the actor HOW the speech was to be spoken. The Quarto had no scene breaks or scene directions. The First Folio divided the plays into 5 acts, some into scenes, but there were still very very few stage directions. The stage directions that are there, are very important. There was a 2nd, a 3rd, and a 4th Folio, but The First Folio is the only real authoritative text of Shakespeare. When the Quarto text differs from the Folio - (particularly in Lear and Hamlet), the Quarto text is the play Shakespeare wrote, and the Folio text reflects the changes the actors made in performance. There are literally thousands of differences between the First Folio and any edition. So – *it is important to remember that you shouldn't open a modern edition of Shakespeare under the misconception that this is what he actually wrote*. You have to go back to the Quarto and the First Folio if you want to get closest to what Shakespeare's real intentions might have been.

Below is a link to a great introduction to / explanation of the First Folio: http:// www.friendlyfolio.com/first_folio/. The lettering in the Folio is inconsistent and sometimes confusing – (the letter U looks like a V, the letter S looks like a curvy F, etc.,) but if you look at it side by side with a modern edition, you'll catch on quickly. Also – letters are capitalized in odd places in The Folio – typically to signify a word that should be stressed or emphasized. A lot of Shakespeare companies consider the Folio their "go-to" text since it was written to be used by actors in performance. Check out the First Folio edition of *Macbeth* *and have fun geeking out!*

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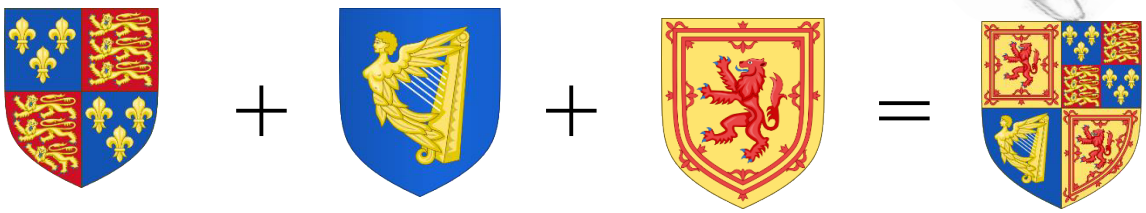
Background Information: MACBETH²

History, politics, & literature

1603:

Queen Elizabeth I dies childless, and her council declares her cousin, King James VI of Scotland, the nev monarch of the realm.



When James VI of Scotland ascended the throne as James I of England and Ireland, the three kingdoms were unified under a single monarch.

The nation was uneasy. At the time, Catholicism was outlawed, and James was the son of the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth had executed years earlier.

Catholics and Catholic sympathizers were regularly tortured and publicly executed. What if James was too tolerant of "papists?"

Then, in 1605 a group of Catholic conspirators led by Guy Fawkes and Father Henry Garnet nearly succeeded in blowing up Parliament while it was in session, which would have killed the king and his ministers. The barrels of gunpowder they hid in the basement of Westminster were discovered, the plot was foiled, and the traitors were interrogated, tortured, and executed. The nation celebrated.

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Shakespeare likely wrote *Macbeth* around 1606, and the play is heavily informed by current events. Not only is it a play that begins and ends with regicide (the murder of a king), but it is a play about Scottish kings - one of which was sitting on the throne, and the recent target of an assassination attempt

Shakespeare did not wholly invent the story of *Macbeth.* Like many of his plays it is based (loosely) on history, and Shakespeare drew his narrative (including the three witches) primarily from Raphael Holinshed's popular *Chronicles of England*.

King James was also a staunch persecutor of witches, and wrote extensively on witchcraft. The witches in *Macbeth*, however, predict James's own monarchy. As he was considered to be a descendent of Banquo, whose children will, as the witches prophesy, become kings, the play also tells the history of James's direct ancestors.

Shakespeare deftly interweaves ancient history with present-day tensions. The Porter's speech on "equivocation" (using ambiguous language to conceal the truth and avoid incriminating oneself) can be considered to be a reference to the trial of Gunpowder Plot conspirator and Jesuit priest Henry Garnet, who refused to directly answer any question put to him by his accusers.

And yet, Shakespeare himself can be said to equivocate. The play ends with Malcolm, Duncan's son, ascending the throne. We know that Banquo's children will become kings, and so Macbeth is left eerily open-ended: will the cycle of violence continue as the children of Duncan and Banquo wrestle over the throne?

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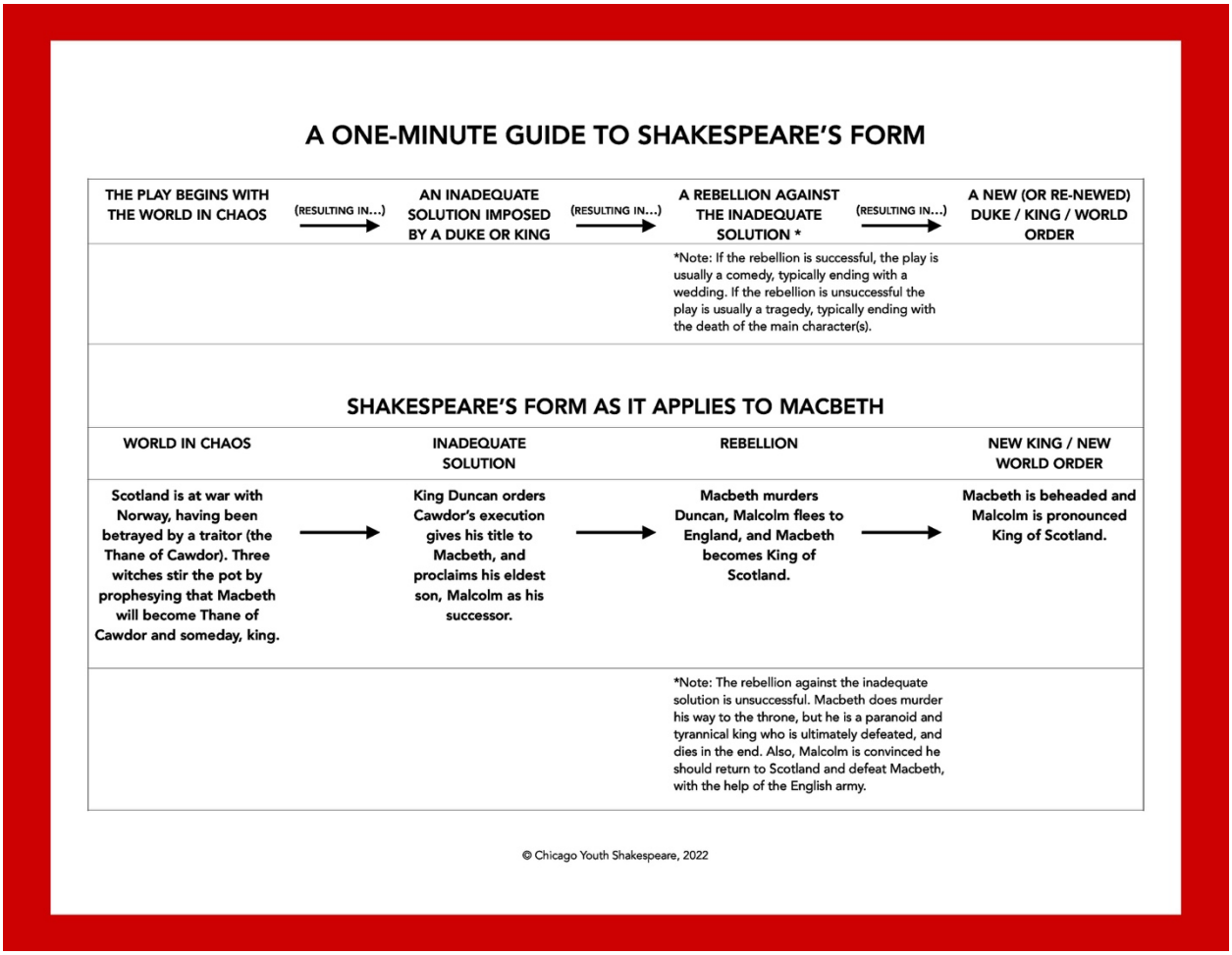
Shakespeare's Form

Three witches tell Macbeth that he is going to be king; he and Lady Macbeth kill people so he can become king; both of them die.



A ONE-MINUTE GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE'S FORM

THE PLAY BEGINS WITH THE WORLD IN CHAOS	(RESULTING IN…) →	AN INADEQUATE SOLUTION IMPOSED BY A DUKE OR KING	(RESULTING IN…) →	A REBELLION AGAINST THE INADEQUATE SOLUTION *	(RESULTING IN…) →	A NEW (OR RE-NEWED) DUKE / KING / WORLD ORDER
				*Note: If the rebellion is successful, the play is usually a comedy, typically ending with a wedding. If the rebellion is unsuccessful the play is usually a tragedy, typically ending with the death of the main character(s).		

SHAKESPEARE'S FORM AS IT APPLIES TO MACBETH

WORLD IN CHAOS		INADEQUATE SOLUTION		REBELLION		NEW KING / NEW WORLD ORDER
Scotland is at war with Norway, having been betrayed by a traitor (the Thane of Cawdor). Three witches stir the pot by prophesying that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and someday, king.	→	King Duncan orders Cawdor's execution gives his title to Macbeth, and proclaims his eldest son, Malcolm as his successor.	→	Macbeth murders Duncan, Malcolm flees to England, and Macbeth becomes King of Scotland.	→	Macbeth is beheaded and Malcolm is pronounced King of Scotland.
				*Note: The rebellion against the inadequate solution is unsuccessful. Macbeth does murder his way to the throne, but he is a paranoid and tyrannical king who is ultimately defeated, and dies in the end. Also, Malcolm is convinced he should return to Scotland and defeat Macbeth, with the help of the English army.		

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Short Summary of Macbeth[3]

Three witches tell the Scottish general Macbeth that he will be King of Scotland. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth kills the king, becomes the new king, and kills more people out of paranoia. Civil war erupts to overthrow Macbeth, resulting in more death.

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Story Map

The following pages feature an original, graphic-novel-style story map, designed and illustrated by Finola Cahill, one of our CYS Ensemble artists.

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Part Two: Movies

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Movie Adaptations

Watch a filmed version of Macbeth first. This can be used as an introductory element that helps provide context before reading the play.

Filmed Versions

The Tragedy of Macbeth (2021)

-Denzel Washington as Macbeth
-Frances McDormand as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on Apple TV
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 1-80
Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 44-118
Act 5, Scene 5, Lines 20-31

Macbeth (2015)

-Michael Fassbender as Macbeth
-Maron Cotillard as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on HBO max
Video Clip Links:
Act 3, Scene 1, Lines 66-75
Out, damned spot

Macbeth (2010)

-Patrick Stewart as Macbeth
-Kate Fleetwood as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on Broadway HD or PBS Masterpiece
Video Clip Links:
Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 44-77
Act 2, Scene 2, Lines 18-79
Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 113-134
Act 4, Scene 1, Lines 4-140

BBC Television Shakespeare: Macbeth (1983)

-Nicol Williamson as Macbeth
-Jane Lapotaire as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on BritBox
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 31-175

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Royal Shakespeare Company TV Adaptation (1979)

-Ian McKellen as Macbeth
-Dame Judi Dench as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on Broadway HD
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 5, Lines 1-86
Act 1, Scene 7, Lines 29-71
Act 5, Scene 5, Lines 18-31

Throne of Blood (1957)

- Toshirô Mifune as Taketoki Washizu (Macbeth)
- Isuzu Yamada as Lady Asaji Washizu (Lady Macbeth)
Can be viewed on HBO Max
Video Clip Links:
Throne of Blood - Information Video
The terrible folly of suffering (Macbeth meets the three witches)

Filmed Stage Versions

Royal Shakespeare Company (2018)

-Christopher Eccleston as Macbeth
-Niamh Cusack as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on Marquee TV
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 39-81
Act 2, Scene 2, Lines 18-73
Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 44-77
Act 3, Scene 4, Lines 57-90

Stratford Festival (2016)

-Ian Lake as Macbeth
- Krystin Pellerin as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on Broadway HD

Shakespeare's Globe (2013)

-Joesph Millson as Macbeth
-Samantha Spiro as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed on the Globe Player
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 40-72
Act 5, Scene 5, Lines 1-31

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Macbeth – One-Man Version (2013)

-Alan Cummings
Available as an audiobook on Audible
Video Clip Links:
Act 1, Scene 7, Lines 1-16
Act 1, Scene 7, Lines 34-67

Folger Theatre (2008)

-Ian Merrill Peakes as Macbeth
-Kate Eastwood Norris as Lady Macbeth
Can be viewed free on Youtube (Links Below)
Macbeth - Part 1 | Folger Theatre and Two River Theater Company
Macbeth - Part 2 | Folger Theatre and Two River Theater Company

Other Helpful Videos

Shakespeare Uncovered: Macbeth with Ethan Hawke – Can be rented on Amazon Prime

Links to Other Sources:

BBC Shakespeare Lives
Alan Cumming - In Performance | The New York Times
Daniel Mays as Macbeth: 'Is this a dagger which I see before me?' | Shakespeare solos

Movie Discussion Assignments and Question Ideas

Choose 1 to 3 filmed versions then compare.

Assignment Suggestions:

-Divide the class into groups and assign them each a movie version to watch. Each group can have an individual group discussion before having a full class discussion.

-Watch a few movies together as a class. Once the movies are done you can divide the class into groups to discuss, have a full class discussion, or both.

-Give each group a few questions to focus on then come back together as a class.

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Questions

-What do we know? (Main plot points)

-What are three things we liked?

-What were three things we found confusing?

-What can a film reveal that theatre can't?
-How did viewing the film help you better understand the overall plot or a particular character?

-How is music used to set a mood or highlight the dialogue?

-What visual elements had the strongest impact?

-What was visually represented instead of said, replacing the dialogue?

-How were characters altered, what was gained or lost by cutting a character or their lines?

-How did the visual elements help draw your attention to an element of the plot, a character, or a symbol that you might have missed or failed to understand when reading the play?

-How do the portrayals of characters compare among the films (The Witches, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth)?

-How could the film/production be influenced by the time period it was filmed/performed?

-What type of camera shot was chosen for certain images you are looking at, what effect does this have on what you can see in the shot and your general reaction to it?

-How does the setting and time period affect your understanding of the play?

-What elements of the dialogue from the play are used and what is left out, what scenes were kept and which were left out among the movies, and why do you think the directors made those choices?

-Does the film version introduce or emphasize anything about the characters and/or their relationships that you had not noticed in the play?

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Part Three:
Games & Activities

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Class Activities

CYS Composition Assignment Instructions

Using only the excerpt of text from the play, (some or all, words and lines can be in any order / mashed up), and the "ingredients" below, work together to create a devised piece that tells a storyof its own.

Essential Ingredients:

- ➔ Everyone must speak at some point
- ➔ This piece should be no longer than 90 seconds
- ➔ The piece should have a clear beginning, middle, and end (must include)

In addition to the three *Essential Ingredients* above, incorporate at least three more ingredients from the list below into your devised piece.

Ingredients to include: (Choose at least 3 and no more than 5)

- ➔ A moment of group music, song, or rap
- ➔ A group gesture when a specific word or phrase is spoken
- ➔ A moment of dance
- ➔ A moment of slow motion/fast motion/rewind
- ➔ A moment where everyone speaks in unison
- ➔ A repeated word, phrase, or line (this can be repeated once or multiple times)
- ➔ A "popcorned" line of text – (each individual speaks one word at a time from an entire line)
- ➔ A moment of group stillness or tableaux: (a still image that communicates a place or an idea)
- ➔ A moment of chaos: collective, frantic energy
- ➔ A dramatic entrance or exit by one or more characters
- ➔ A moment of silence
- ➔ A line or word of text is repeated or echoed

Helpful Hints / Things to think about:

- ➔ FIRST - Read through the text out loud as a group. As you're reading, underline any phrasesor words that stand out for you.
- ➔ Create and inhabit your characters (who are you?)
- ➔ Pick a relationship between the characters (What are you doing together?)
- ➔ Pick a location even if it is abstract (Where are you?)
- ➔ Have a collective point of view – what are you trying to say to your audience? What do youwant them to take away from this performance?
- ➔ Play with the text and have fun. There is no wrong way to do this!

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Composition Text: (Act 1. Scene 7. Lines 1-28.)

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'ld
jump the life to come. But in these cases We still
have judgment here; that we but teach Bloody
instructions, which, being taught, returnTo
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.

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Narrative Improv

*Note: It is recommended that you follow the Narrative Improv with the Line Toss activity.

Macbeth Narrative Improv

Classroom setup: Ideally, you'll want to move the desks out of the way (if you can) and arrange the students' chairs in a circle or semi-circle.

Before you begin:

- Choose 2 STRONG readers. They will be the narrators. Hand out copies of the narrative to each of these volunteers and have them read through it together. Alternatively, the teacher can be the narrator.
- Choose 2-3 sound students to be in charge of the sound effects. Hand them a copy of the narrative and a list of sound effects and tell them to prepare ways to produce the sounds, using objects in the room, their own voices, or sounds they can download from computers or their phones. They are also free to create other special effects appropriate to the narrative, such as opening and closing window blinds, turning lights off and on, etc. You might also have them find a couple of musical examples to set the mood? *Alternatively – the whole group can make the sound effects just by using their voices and bodies during the improv.*
- Ask for 2-3 casting/directing crew volunteers. They will be in charge of handing out roles and getting students on and off the "stage" when needed. Give the casting/directing people a copy of the narrative and a list of roles. Have them assign the roles as quickly as possible. *Alternatively – the teacher could assign the roles in advance, perhaps splitting the larger roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth between two students. *Note: do not cast by gender (in true Shakespeare fashion).*

Cast of Characters

(In order of appearance, with hyperlinks and descriptions from Shakespeare-Navigators.com)

Three Witches, (AKA, the Weird Sisters)

Duncan, King of Scotland

A bleeding Sergeant

Donalbain, younger son of King Duncan.

Lennox, a Scottish nobleman who turns against Macbeth's tyranny.

Ross, a Scottish nobleman who turns against Macbeth's tyranny.

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Angus, a Scottish nobleman who turns against Macbeth's tyranny.

Banquo, a Scottish general, and Macbeth's best friend.[4]

Lady Macbeth, Macbeth's wife.

Messenger in the Household of Macbeth.

TWO GUARDS* - **These characters are only spoken about in the play – they never actually appear on stage, but it's helpful (and fun) to include them in the Narrative Improv so the students can see the actions that are being described.*

Macduff, a Scottish nobleman, Thane of Glamis (pronounced "GLAHMZ")

Fleance, son of Banquo.

Porter, the gatekeeper at Macbeth's castle.

Old Man, who can remember events from seventy years back.

Servant in the household of Macbeth.

Three Murderers

Hecate, goddess of Witches.

Another Lord, friend of Lennox.

Lady Macduff, wife of Macduff, and victim of Macbeth's murderous anger.

Son of Macduff, and victim of Macbeth's murderous anger.

Messenger

Doctor, who observes Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking.
Gentlewoman, an attendant of Lady Macbeth

Seyton, the only follower of Macbeth who stays with him to the very end.

Siward, a renowned English general.

Young Siward, Son of Siward.

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NARRATIVE IMPROV KEY:

ALL CAPS	Character names (give new characters a moment to get on stage before continuing).
dot dot dot …	A reminder to pause from the narration so actors can improvise dialogue andactions.
“quotations”	Say “quote” before reading the line, then the actors will repeat it.
italics	S*tage directions / actions* - read these out loud so the actors know what to do.
Bold italics	Sound effects
****WHOOSH****	Spoken by the Narrator to indicate the end of a scene – everyone goes back to their seats.

Click Here for a copy of the Narrative Improv script!

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Line Toss[5]

This exercise has been modified by CYS as a classroom activity designed to follow an introduction to the play through Narrative Improv.

Objective: Students will be able to repeat, recognize, and even memorize lines from a Shakespeare play while having fun and familiarizing themselves with its characters, language, and premise.

Materials: - Bean bag, ball, or anything you can toss safely in your classroom.
- Quotes from the play are printed onto little strips of paper*.

*Below you will find a series of quotes from *Macbeth*. **Quotes printed in black** were taken directly from the narrative improv above. **Quotes printed in red** are considered "wild card" quotes – taken from the play, but not included in the narrative improv. Print out the page of quotes and cut the quotes into individual slips of paper. When you're ready to play, throw all of the strips into a hat and have each student take one strip. You can also just pass the strips of paper out to your students.

Helpful tip: Be sure to print enough quotes so that every member of the class has at least one line to say. Make sure to also include at least 5 "wild card" quotes. You'll be surprised at how well your students are able to guess not only the speaker but also where in the play these wild card lines might have occurred.

Procedure:

- In a large open space (no desks!), ask students to stand in a circle so that they can all see one another's faces.
- Walk around within the circle, handing each student a slip of paper with a quotation. Read each quote aloud as you hand them out.
- Explain the purpose of the game: to become acquainted with some of the important quotes from the play and to get more comfortable speaking Shakespeare's words out loud.
- Start by having students read the line on their slip of paper to themselves. Then ask everyone to speak their lines out loud - all at once. (It helps to do this on the count of 3.) Repeat this a few times and encourage students to say their lines clearly, loudly, and confidently, (even if they aren't sure of what they're saying just yet)! Reading all together at first gives students the opportunity to practice saying the words out loud without the pressure of others listening.
- When you're ready to play, hand the ball or bean bag to a student in the circle (or you can go first, to get the ball rolling)! The person with the ball reads their line out loud, then makes eye contact with another student in the circle, and tosses the ball /bean bag to that student. The new student now says their line and repeats the process of tossing the ball to another new student in the circle, and so on. This continues until everyone has said their line and the ball is returned to the first student (or to you if you started things off).
- Go around the circle again and have the students toss the ball to the same person they tossed it to the first time. Once everyone has had two opportunities to say their line and toss the ball, stop/pause briefly. During this pause, the teacher can pose some questions to think about, such as:
    - Do any of the lines you're speaking and hearing heard sound familiar? Which ones?
    - Does anyone have a guess as to which character might have said their line in the play?
    - Does anyone have a guess as to *when* in the story their line might have been spoken, or *why*?

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- Start tossing and reading once again, in the same order as before, and begin asking each reader to offer their best guesses to the questions above. If the reader has no answer, invite others to guess. Any answer is valuable because it allows you to BRIEFLY clarify the context of the line (who says it in the play, why is it said, to whom, and when, etc.). Don't take much time with these explanations; keep the game going!

  **IMPORTANT: Encourage your students to guess and be wrong! The point of the game is not about being right! It's about giving students the opportunity to speak and hear some of the important quotes from the text and then fill in the blanks together! You'll be amazed at how accurate most of your students' guesses will be!*

- You can play this game multiple times by choosing new lines to hand out.

Introducing the play actively using Narrative Improv and followed by Line Toss offers students a low-pressure and active way to gain a clearer sense of the play's characters and conflicts, a way to quote and understand Shakespeare, and to discover that the language is not too difficult to figure out. Best of all, they have had fun experiencing Shakespeare's text as it was intended to be enjoyed: not silently and statically on a page, but spoken aloud in a lively way!

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Line Toss Quotes

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair
Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

“he unseam'd him from the nave to the chops,
And fix'd his head upon ourbattlements”

“No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth”

“The Thane of Cawdorlives!
Why do you dress me in borrowed robes?”

“The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies”

“Stars hide your fires
Let not light see my black and deep desires”

“ I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way.”

“Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here”

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“Screw your courage to the sticking place and we’ll not fail”

“Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?”

“Sleep no more, MACBETH doth murder sleep”

“My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white”.

“Knock, knock, knock. Who’s there in the name of Beelzebub?”

“There’s daggers in men’s smiles.”

“Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble”

“By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes”

“Beware MACDUFF, the Thane of Fife!”

“None of woman born shall harm MACBETH!”

“MACBETH shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam Wood to High Dunsinane Hill
shall come against him.”

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“Dispute it like a man” “I shall do so,
But I must also feel it as a man.”

“Out! Damned spot! Out I say!”

“All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand”

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,”

“Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more”

“If thou beest slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children’s ghosts will haunt me still.”

“my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.”

“I bear a charmèd life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.”

“Macduff was from his mother’s womb untimely ripp’d”

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Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.

God. God forgive us all!!
Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers. The sleeping and
the dead Are but as pictures: 'tis the
eye of childhood That fear a painted
devil.

Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent,
but only Vaulting ambition,

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!'

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor,
Glamis, all As the weird women
promised, and I fear Thou play'dst
most foully for't:

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Part Four: Table Read

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Table Read

We move on to the table read now that the students have created a strong base knowledge of what the play is about.

Here at CYS we never recommend reading the whole play in class. Instead, you can choose to read specific Acts or Scenes or you can choose to read an abridged version. Here is a link to CYS's script for *Macbeth* that you can read aloud.

When teaching Shakespeare, you don't need to read the entire play cover-to-cover, but we do suggest supplying students with a copy of the entire text*. Additionally, if you find your class is more eager for the text, feel free to assign individual reading as homework, and hold optional after-school readings in your room.

*We strongly encourage educators to use a standard edition of Shakespeare, (many of which are available online), like the Folger, the Arden Series, Oxford, Cambridge, etc… We also want to strongly discourage you from using the *No Fear Shakespeare* series, as the simplified "translations" they offer are both watered-down and frequently inaccurate. Using a "No Fear" edition of a Shakespeare play is actually antithetical to the learning process, as it deprives students of the opportunity to discover the richness of the words and their meaning for themselves.

Set-up

If you can we encourage you to get your students out of rows and into a circle.

- This allows students to see each other as they read.

Divvy out roles for each scene or act.

- It can be easier for students to follow the action when the same person reads a character through the entire scene or act.

Students should be on their feet when they work with the text. When a student is reading their part have them stand up and feel free to move around.

Feel free to summarize shorter scenes instead of reading them aloud.

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Language Exercises

A LINE THAT IS BEAUTIFUL . . .[6]

This is a good assignment that can be done during class or as homework: Have

students read on their own and write down:

1. A line that is beautiful
2. A line that is strange
3. A line that is ugly/disturbing
4. A line that sounds powerful
5. A line that is easy to understand

When students come together, they can sit in a circle and read one of their lines. This is a non-threatening assignment that requires little understanding of the unfamiliar language. It provides students with a sense of ownership because the "answers" are based on their individual preferences. As with line-tossing, you may build upon it by having everyone repeat the line. You could also post areas of a wall with the headings BEAUTIFUL, STRANGE, UGLY, POWERFUL, and EASY and have students tape strips of lines under the appropriate headings as the weeks go by.

Always be on the lookout for ways to *ease* students into Shakespeare so that they appreciate the richness of the language.

HOW DOES A WORD FEEL?

Students and the teacher sit in a circle. The teacher explains the importance of tone in language and performance. Select and print words from the play that carry tone. Examples: moonlight, stubborn harshness, sickness, heaven, liquid pearl, hated potion . . . Hand the list out. Select a word from the list and tell students to think about the way the word feels. How should it sound? On the count of three everyone says the word in a tone that conveys its feeling. Repeat the process with a variety of words.

You can extend the exercise by asking students on this day or another to get into groups and have them read aloud some of their own lines with the same kind of consideration for tone.

PROSE AND VERSE

Tell students to take out their texts and look at a specific passage or speech that is in verse. What do they see in terms of capitalization, margins, line length, etc? Ask them to count the syllables in the first line—then the second— then the third. They begin to discover Shakespeare's ten-syllable constructions in each line. Now ask them to beat the accents of

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the words in the line. As you help them see the iambic pentameter, you can explain Shakespeare's tendency to use verse with situations and characters that are of a higher class in structured situations. Now have students turn to a prose passage. Ask them what they notice in terms of contrasting capitalization, line length, margin, etc. It's regular writing, right? Who is speaking this way? How does the character or her/his situation differ from the former one in verse?

Extend the lesson by sending students to their groups to discuss their own characters' use of prose and/or verse. What is Shakespeare signaling about the situation and characters? How might it affect interpretation and performance?

As you read here are some activity suggestions to keep the class engaged:

1. Before each reading try a little stretching, yawning, and tongue twister or two (Go to p. 48).
2. Make mistakes fun! Anytime a word is mispronounced, or a student is uncertain of a word's pronunciation have the entire class chant the word 10 times together. You can even add vocal sound effects for when a word is said wrong before you begin your chant.
3. List the five major characters in Macbeth. At the end of each act write a sentence for each character that begins, "What I most want is…" and "What I'm most afraid of is…".
4. After each act, as a class, agree on five main plot points or important events from that act. You will use the plot points/events for the "Tableau Story Telling Exercise" on page 37.
5. Have students write down questions as they arise during your readings. Once the scene is over collect the questions and read them to the class, and encourage the student to answer the questions.
6. While reading you can connect the material to the movie adaption you chose or show other video clips.

Discussion Questions: What is the play about? What stands out? How does the play connect to now? What do you think this specific line means? How to elements of the play connected to your own experience? How do some characters present themselves publicly vs. privately? What is some inside information the audience/reader might have that other characters don't have? Are there questions that have arisen that are not answered in the text? Examples: Did Lady Macbeth have a baby? Why does Malcolm go to England?

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Tableau Story Telling Exercise

This activity involves students working together to create a series of stage pictures that represent specific moments from the play.

- Tableau: a group of models or motionless figures (in this case students) representing a scene from a story.

As you have your table read, we recommend that you stop after each act and agree on five main plot points or important events from that act. That way, when you get to this exercise, the students can refer back to your discussion and the plot points you've chosen. This allows the students to focus on creating evocative stage pictures rather than on remembering the right moments to portray. You do this activity upon completion of your table read.

Below, the plot of Macbeth has been divided into five basic sections, one to accompany each act.

Act 1
Act 2
Act 3
Act 4
Act 5

Assignment Suggestion:

1. Divide the class into five groups and assign each group an act.
2. Students create and present a series of five tableaux depicting the key moments in each act.
3. Each group act will follow the next in order.
4. Students can present their five-part tableaux sequence by incorporating music as they move from one tableau to the next.
5. Students may also title each of their images in their sequence with a "newspaper/magazine" headline. Depending on the type of newspaper they decided they are writing for will influence the way the headlines are presented. Example: New York Times vs. People Magazine.
6. The class can discuss the difference in headlines depending on what kind of newspaper/ magazine each group chose. Additionally, the class can discuss what images the groups chose to represent the key moments.

There will be a total of 25 images with each group depicting 5 images.

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Part Five:
Final Project

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Performance Project*
(Final Project)

The point of this assignment is so that the groups become experts on their individual scenes and that they grasp the main ideas. Additionally, the purpose is to highlight how physical performance can deepen a student's understanding of the text.

Important Things to Note:

- The final scenes can be abridged versions, much like the movies you watched earlier. The students can have the choice to cut parts of their scenes.
-Teachers allow your students who are anxious to participate in a way that they are comfortable with. They could make sound effects, be the casting director, act out smaller parts, or they could be the director of the scene.
Encourage non-gender-based casting.
-When performing scenes look for moments to interact with the audience.
-Allow students to incorporate music, props, costumes, or other artistic elements to their performance projects.
-Do not make this assignment about memorization! Instead, assess students based on their *understanding* of the text and their character(s), and the clarity and creativity of their final performance.

Performance Assignment:

You may work by yourself, with a partner, or in a group. (If a student chooses to work alone, they can select a soliloquy to perform).

As a class, come up with a list of the main scenes that are necessary to the plot, then divide the class into groups, and assign them a scene from the list.

You can have them read or watch their assigned scene online for homework.

Involve all the group members to some extent (you may choose to have a director who does not act, or have an actor play several small parts, etc.) Try to pick a scene that spreads the work and lines out evenly.

Have a strong interpretation. This means that each performance will emphasize something specific in the scene that relates to a theme or idea in the play.

Include theatrical suggestions: be clear about where the stage is, where the audience should sit, what the scenery is (if there is any), use props and costumes suggestions, make use of lighting or a soundtrack or anything else you can think of that will add to a clear interpretation of the scene. Include strong blocking decisions.

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Small Written Assignment:

1. Have the students create a group vision statement. The statement can be any length but must address how they came up with their interpretation, what about the language of the scene led them to the ideas they had for shaping their performance?

2. The students should find at least one performance of the scene to watch and analyze for their research. Have them write an analysis (as a group) that addresses the following questions: Did you find this scene to be an inspiration to your own? What do you think is strong about the scene? What did you find lacking? Generally, what did you learn about your scene by watching others perform it?

3. Lastly, have the students demonstrate a clear understanding of the scene or soliloquy. Have them answer the following questions: "What is the scene/soliloquy about? Why is it important to the play as a whole? What is going on in the scene? What theme did you emphasize and how?"

Performance Project Exercises:

While working on their scene have the groups shorthand their scene.

- Have students paraphrase their lines next to the actual text, then as an in-class rehearsal technique, have them run the scene using their paraphrased text.
- Have them take the big ideas of the scene and say them in their own words.
- You can even have students perform "condensed" scenes for each other – not as final assessments – but as an in-class rehearsal activity. Once they've paraphrased their lines, have them perform a "60-second version" of the scene, then a "30-second version", and a "10-second version". Scene condensing is also a great way to get to the "meat" of what's going on – plus it's fun.

*Non-performance assignment suggestions:

- Storyboard or comic strip for a particular act or even a scene from the play.
- Costume design, poster collage, or magazine cover for 3 favorite characters: tons of possibilities here

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Additional Resources

Additional Resource Links

Internet Shakespeare Editions
Shakespeare's Words by David and Ben Crystal
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Folger Shakespeare Digital *Macbeth*
Folger's Digital First Folio

Tongue Twisters

We recommend doing between 3-5 rounds of each!

Unique New York
New York Unique

Red Leather, Yellow Leather

She stood on the balcony,
inexplicably mimicking him hiccuping,
and amicably welcoming him home.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers; a peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.

My Mummy makes me munch my M&M's on a Monday morning.

Betty Botter bought some butter
But she said the butter's bitter
If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter
But a bit of better butter will make my batter better
So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood
As a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood

If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose?

I wish to wash my Irish wristwatch

Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?

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Sources

[1] Todd, Susan Gayle. “Tips For Teaching Shakespeare.” *Chicago Youth Shakespeare.* 2021

[2] Hunter, Lee. “Macbeth: History, Politics, & Literature.” *Chicago Youth Shakespeare*. 2016

[3] See “Macbeth: Synopsis and Plot Overview of Shakespeare's Macbeth.” *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/macbeth/?gclid=CjwKCAiA1JGRBhBSEiwAxXblwa1mBmMxfpNVaZ6ddrMyJf59TJVjec8Q_uu9bHwkl-6pq_Tyma0QGBoCd2UQAvD_BwE.

[5] An Introductory Exercise From the Folger Library Shakespeare Series for Teaching Shakespeare Through Performance. This exercise has modified by CYS as a classroom activity designed to follow an introduction to the play through Narrative Improv. This activity, and many more valuable performance materials are found in The Folger Library Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night’s Dream . Ed. Peggy O’Brien. New York: Washington Square Press, 1995.

[6] Todd, Susan Gayle. “LANGUAGE EXERCISES: A LINE THAT IS BEAUTIFUL.” *Chicago Youth Shakespeare.* 2021

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