

Shakespeare
birthplace trust

Children's Folio Teacher Resources Pack



MACBETH

PROPS LIST

Swords

Letter

Fake blood

Bells

Cauldron

Witches' ingredients in a bag



VOCABULARY LIST

Heath - open land

Attire - clothing

Thane - a Scottish nobleman

Glamis (gl-arms) - a village in Scotland with a castle

Cawdor - a village in Scotland with a castle

Fife - a large village in Scotland with a castle

Hail - greetings

Kinsman - relative

Prithee - pray thee

Mock the time - fool or deceive the time

Marshall'st - shows

Confound - confuse

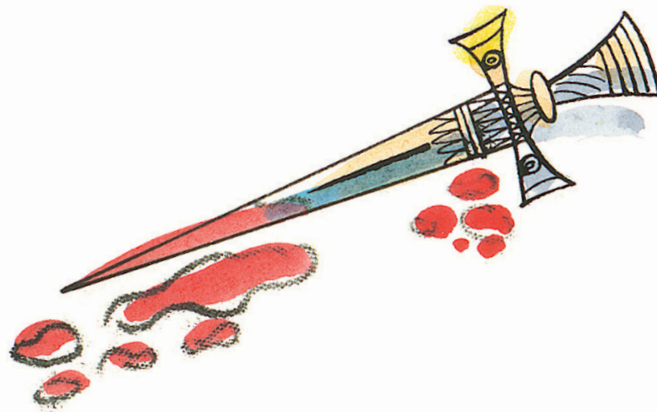
Sovereignty - title of King

Filed - defiled/ ruined

Entrails - innards

Wrack - damage/ ruin

Untimely ripped - prematurely removed by caesarean section



MACBETH: SHORT SCENES

Divide the class into five equal groups. Each group has one scene, and is tasked with representing the scene as a freeze frame, as a short modern language re-telling, or perhaps both. Showing the scenes back in the right order to the rest of the class helps establish the linear narrative.

GROUP A

Macbeth and Banquo, fresh from the battle, encounter the witches. The witches hail both of them and foretell that Macbeth shall be King, and that Banquo's sons will be kings...

GROUP B

King Duncan comes to Macbeth's castle, with Macduff and other Lords. He goes to greet Macbeth who is stood aside with Lady Macbeth, plotting...

GROUP C

Duncan is murdered, and his two attendants lie sleeping. Lady Macbeth smears the attendants with blood from the murder weapon, while Macbeth stands apart, terrified by what he has done...

GROUP D

Banquo has just been killed on Macbeth's orders. That night, his ghost appears at a banquet, terrifying Macbeth. But Lady Macbeth and the other guests can't see the ghost...

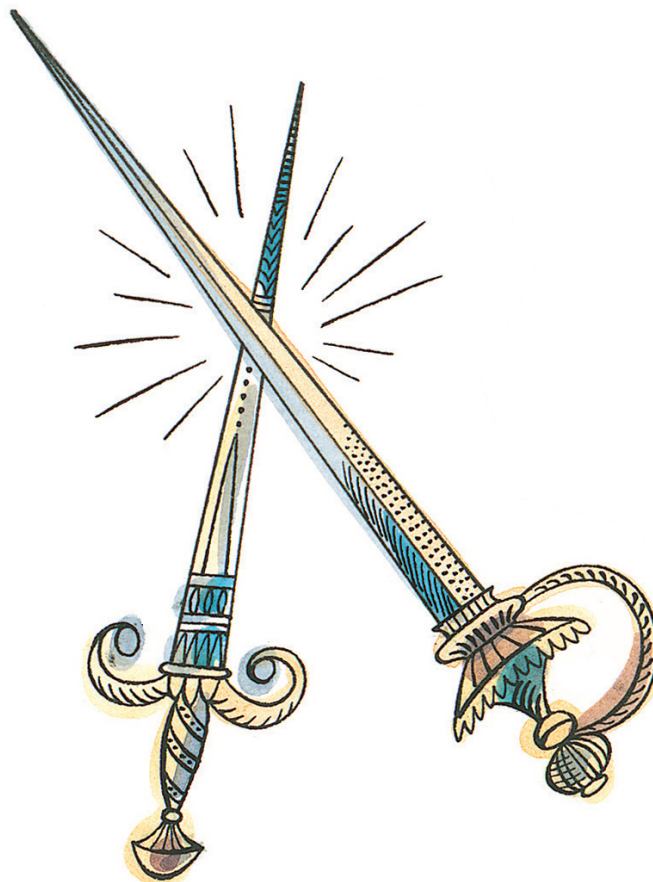
GROUP E

A messenger arrives to tell Macbeth that Lady Macbeth has died- just then Macduff and the English Army arrive, they fight and Macduff kills Macbeth.



EXTENSIONS

- Each group begins with a freeze frame - ask the rest of the class to interpret the image and talk about what it represents. The active group can then act out or explain their freeze frame to the audience.
- With a timer, set a very strict and short time limit to replay each scene - and stick to it! The group should rehearse knowing what their performance time limit (eg one or two minutes) should be.
- Rehearse the scenes in modern language and then with the appropriate part of the Folio text - ask the group and audience to comment on any differences.





MACBETH: “I AM...” SCENE BUILDER GAME

This drama exercise is a great whole class or group activity which works perfectly for getting everyone involved.

The purpose is to build a large freeze frame, bit by bit, which plunges us into the world of the play and which then can be brought to life. For the Children's Folio Macbeth, a large group scene summary of the whole play can be very effective - and could become a visual tableau to begin a production with?

‘I AM...’

Everyone stands in a large circle or in front of the stage or playing area.

Begin with a quick discussion about play - what are the most visual and dramatic moments?

Explain we are going to build the scene, but remind the group we will need to represent objects as well as people.

One by one the actors enter the space, announce what they are going to do, beginning with “I am...” and make a freeze frame (or a repeated action if staying still is too hard) that demonstrates. So for example “I am one of the Witches casting a spell”. “I am the witches cauldron” “I am Banquo’s ghost” “I am Macduff fighting Macbeth at the end...”

Each person must stay in place as others join in, to create the picture around them.

You may - especially if pupils are stuck for ideas - want to encourage the actors to join up with each other, and build on what they already see, eg “I am another witch, making a potion in the cauldron.”

VARIATION

Use recorded sound effects to help create the atmosphere.

Once the picture is built with everyone involved, bring it to life by adding movement or sounds created by the actors. This can be chaotic, so a further variation is to ‘switch’ each sound or movement ‘on or off’ in turn.

MACBETH IN CONTEXT

Here are a few historical facts to give context to the writing of the play - with some discussion questions following.

1599 King James VI of Scotland publishes a book called *Daemonologie* in which he discusses and condemns witchcraft which he describes as 'the enlargening of Satan's tyranny and crossing of the propagation of the kingdom of Christ'.

1603 King James VI of Scotland inherits the English throne, taking the new title of James I of England. He claims descent from Banquo. He has a double or 'twofold' coronation in Scone and Westminster, becoming 'treble' king of Great Britain, Ireland and France.

The Lord Chamberlain's Men, with which company Shakespeare is employed, is appointed James' official troupe of players and receives the new title The King's Men. The company is granted red cloth for new capes and is invited to join James' coronation procession.

1604 Fierce debates take place between James and believers in the supremacy of Parliament over the crown.

1605 An assassination attempt, commonly known as the Gunpowder Plot, on King James was foiled. A group of Catholic conspirators led by Robert Catesby planned to blow up the Houses of Parliament, with James in attendance, using 36 barrels of gunpowder. The conspirators were either shot dead or tried and executed.

1606 Shakespeare's tragedy of *Macbeth* is performed - as far as we know - for the first time.

QUESTIONS

Can you see any parallels between the story of *Macbeth* and what was happening in Britain at the time?

Why do you think *Macbeth* did not set the play in 1606?

Shakespeare was writing for the King's Men, so King James had to like it, or Shakespeare was in trouble. Why do you think James would have approved of the play?

MACBETH: MAIN CHARACTER SUMMARIES

Three Witches

The Three Witches are the mysterious characters whose prophecies drive Macbeth to his tyrannical desire for power. They leave the audience questioning whether they are agents of fate or independent agents manipulating humans' lives. Does Macbeth make the prophecy come true by his greed, or is it inevitable?

Macbeth

Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, is a brave Scottish general in King Duncan's army. However, upon hearing the three witches' prophecy that he would become King of Scotland, he becomes tyrannical. With his wife's help and encouragement he kills King Duncan, but this fills him with deep regret and guilt.

Banquo

Banquo is a Scottish general known for his bravery like his friend Macbeth. They meet the witches together upon returning from battle, who tell him that he will not be king, but that his descendants will inherit the throne. When Macbeth takes the throne, Banquo pledges loyalty to him despite his suspicions, but Macbeth has him murdered, seeking to secure his position as king. Banquo's ghost appears and haunts Macbeth at the banquet that night.

Lady Macbeth

Even more ambitious and ruthless than her husband Macbeth, Lady Macbeth plots to murder King Duncan upon hearing of the witches' prophecy. She encourages Macbeth to murder, gives the guards drugged wine, and lays out the bloody daggers. However, her guilt soon turns her mad as well and, tormented by nightmares, she sleepwalks as she tries to wash out the invisible bloodstains on her hands. She dies offstage as the play reaches its end.

Macduff

Macduff, Thane of Fife, is loyal to King Duncan. He is the first to discover Duncan's dead body and never believes it was the servants who killed him. Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children murdered. Full of grief and revenge, he challenges Macbeth one-to-one and slays him. A child of a caesarean birth, he thus fulfils the witches' prophecy that no man of woman born would harm Macbeth.

Other characters in the Children's Shakespeare Macbeth: Ross, King Duncan, Murderer, Messenger.



Shakespeare
birthplace trust

Registered Charity Number: 209302



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

www.shakespeare.org.uk

Text © 2024 The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Illustrations © 2024 Emily Sutton

From SHAKESPEARE'S FIRST FOLIO: ALL THE PLAYS Written by William Shakespeare,
abridged by Anjna Chouhan for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust & Illustrated by Emily Sutton
Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd, London, SE11 5HJ. www.walker.co.uk

