

Macbeth

Close look at Act One

Comprehension Question

1. Find the word meaning Scottish lord.
2. Why would you say that the play begins in a supernatural way?
3. What is the event that has just happened? Who brings news to whom? What is the news?
4. When the witches meet Macbeth and Banquo, what do they predict? How soon does the first prediction come true?
5. The witches' predictions begin to form in Macbeth's mind. What does Duncan provide fresh evidence for?
6. What opinion does Lady Macbeth have about the evidence? What is your first impression of her?
7. What are the influences on Macbeth? How has he become the driving force?
8. Before the actual murder, what tricks does the witches use on him? What part do they play?

Act I, Scenes I-IV

Duncan and his sons that Macbeth has been brave in the battle and brought about victory for King Duncan's army.

...at the Thane of Cawdor has been a traitor, and he is sentenced to death by Duncan and Macbeth.

...Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches. The witches hail Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and King hereafter.

...Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches. The witches hail Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and King hereafter. Banquo is told that he will not be king.

...brave Macbeth, well he deserves that name.

...with his former title greet Macbeth.

...that most disloyal traitor the thane of Cawdor.

A soldier tells Duncan and his sons that Macbeth has been brave in the battle and brought about victory for King Duncan's army.

Ross reveals that the Thane of Cawdor has been a traitor, and helped the king of Norway. He is sentenced to death by Duncan and his title is given to Macbeth.

Macbeth is one of the most popular Shakespeare plays studied by many students. This matching game is a fun way to help student to gain a deeper understanding of the characters and of the key events within the first act of the play.

Suitable for pupils aged 10+

The Learning Outcome will be that students will be able to demonstrate a greater understanding of the first act of the play and will be able to work collaboratively.

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Developed by Rosemary Hogbin and Pat Howson
Illustrated by Peter Bennett

Theme: Macbeth

Age range: 10+

Context:

Macbeth is one of the most popular Shakespeare plays studied by many students. This matching game is a fun way to help student to gain a deeper understanding of the characters and of the key events within the first act of the play.

Preparation:

Print out the A4 sheets.

If possible, laminate the "Act One" sheets, the "Questions" sheets and the "Information" sheets, then cover the pages of the cards with 'clear pvc self adhesive film'. Then cut out the squares to make the cards.

HOW TO PLAY:

Part 1 - Students works in pairs or threes. Give each pair an "Act One" sheet outlining the main events after the battle between Duncan's armies and King of Norway, a set of "Pictures" cards and a set of "Events" cards. Students have to read the "Act One" sheet and match in the correct order "Pictures" cards with "Events" cards. Then, each pair joins with another to compare matches.

Part 2 - Give each pair a "Question" sheet on the same events and an "Information" sheet. They have to work collaboratively and formulate answers. Then, each pair joins with another to discuss their answers.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to demonstrate a greater understanding of the first act of the play and will be able to work collaboratively. If you have found further learning outcomes please share them by emailing collaborate@mantralingua.com.

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(You can purchase a professionally printed, sound-enabled version of this activity with pre-cut cards from www.mantralingua.com. Students can use PENpal to record and re-record aurally onto the pages and cards. Recordings can be saved and used for assessment, or shared with other classes and schools via "ShareLINK".)

Act 1, Scenes I-IV

1. A soldier tells Duncan and his sons that Macbeth has been brave in the battle and brought about victory for King Duncan's army.
2. Ross reveals that the Thane of Cawdor has been a traitor, and helped the king of Norway. He is sentenced to death by Duncan and his title is given to Macbeth.
3. Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches. The witches hail Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and King hereafter. Banquo is told he will father Kings but that he will not be King.
4. Macbeth is confused and tries to question the witches. He knows he is Thane of Glamis but the other predictions amaze him.
5. The Witches vanish.
6. Macbeth tries to make sense of what the witches have said. He discusses their words with Banquo.
7. Ross arrives to summon Macbeth and Banquo to Duncan's palace. Duncan has told Ross to call Macbeth Thane of Cawdor. The first prediction of the witches has come true.
8. At Duncan's castle, Duncan makes his eldest son, Malcom, Prince of Cumberland and Macbeth is confirmed as Thane of Cawdor.
9. Macbeth sees Malcom's position as an obstacle to the final prediction coming true. He is already beginning to be ambitious for the throne.
10. Duncan tells Macbeth that he will return with him to Macbeth's castle. This is a great honour. Macbeth says he will send a message to his wife at home.

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...you shall
be king

...your children
shall be kings



...King Duncan bade me from him,
call thee Thane of Cawdor

Glamis and
Thane of
Cawdor. The
greatest is
behind



...our eldest Malcom whom we name
hereafter the Prince of Cumberland







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...King Duncan bade me from him,
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3. What is the event that has just taken place? Who is involved? Who brings news to whom? What is that news?

4. When the witches meet Macbeth, what do they predict? How soon does the first prediction come true? Why has this come about?

5. The witches predictions begin to influence Macbeth. What thoughts begin to form in his mind? What news announced by Duncan provides fresh anxiety? Why is it a worry?

6. What opinion does Lady Macbeth have of her husband? What evidence is there to suggest that Lady Macbeth is superstitious? What are your first impressions of Lady Macbeth?

7. What are the influences that affect Macbeth's decisions? Who has become the driving force behind Macbeth? How?

8. Before the actual murder, how does Macbeth's mind play tricks on him? What part does Lady Macbeth play?

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The beginning of the story in brief

Three witches meet in thunder and lightning and discuss Macbeth. They say they will meet him after the battle.

Some of the Scottish lords (thanes) have rebelled against their king Duncan. To help the rebels, the Norwegians have sent an army. There has been a great battle.

King Duncan waits for the report of the battle. A badly wounded captain reports that although the rebels had strong forces, Macbeth and Banquo were the heroes because they fought so bravely. The wounded man is sent for treatment.

Another soldier named Ross arrives giving further news of the battle. Ross tells that Macbeth has triumphed, capturing the leader of the rebels, the Thane of Cawdor, and making a very favourable peace treaty with the King of Norway. Duncan sentences Cawdor to death and gives the title to Macbeth.

The three witches wait for Macbeth. They hear his drum. The witches chant and predict that he will be Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland. Banquo, who is with him, asks about his future. The witches tell him that his descendants will be kings. The witches disappear and Ross arrives. He tells Macbeth that he is now Thane of Cawdor. Macbeth is astonished that the first prediction has come true.

The first seeds of ambition are sown in Macbeth's mind as he considers the possibility of the second prediction coming true. Macbeth has the 'horrid image' of murdering Duncan himself. He decides to leave it to fate.

Macbeth is warmly welcomed by Duncan, declares his loyalty to the king, but is appalled that the king's son Malcolm is declared heir to the throne. Macbeth, now ambitious for the throne, sees Malcolm as an obstacle. Macbeth invites the king to his castle and rides ahead to prepare for his coming. He has already written to his wife telling her what the witches have predicted.

When reading his letter, Lady Macbeth is scathing about her husband's lack of will to pursue what the witches have promised. She thinks he may be too decent and squeamish to murder Duncan. The fact that Duncan shows that fate is on her side and she calls on evil spirits to help her murderous plans.

Lady Macbeth is gracious in her welcome to the king and urges Macbeth to hide his murderous intent behind welcoming looks. She says that she will manage the death of Duncan.

Macbeth wrestles with his conscience, to kill or not to kill. And what will happen afterwards? There are bound to be repercussions. Heaven will be against such a dreadful deed, but ambition drives him on. After much consideration Macbeth reveals that he has decided not to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth accuses him of cowardice and lack of manliness. Lady Macbeth will make the King's bodyguards so drunk that murdering the King and blaming it on the guards will be easy. Macbeth agrees but says they should hide their evil thoughts with pleasant looks.

Alone, Macbeth hallucinates, imagining he sees a dagger leading him to Duncan's bedchamber. Lady Macbeth, the worse for drink, waits for Macbeth to return. She has drugged the guards but fears that the murder has not been done. Macbeth returns, saying the king is dead.

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