

Rhetoric Literature
Shakespeare – *Macbeth*
Due: Co-op #10

Read Act I and Act II of *Macbeth*

Be sure to read all stage directions and refer to your character list.

I highly recommend listening to *Macbeth* WHILE you follow along in your own script. Here are some options:

- Spotify – Go to Browse and scroll down to boxes of genres
 - Find the box that says “Word” and click
 - Scroll to find Shakespeare Tragedies and click
 - There are two separate recordings of Macbeth by professional actors. Listen to the first few scenes of each one to see which appeals to you. Both are dramatized and the witches are pretty creepy.
- YouTube – there are multiple options here – too many to list

Setting is more than just establishing a time and place for the action of a play. The playwright must create an atmosphere through the dialogue and the stage directions. The setting is also used to underline and give clues to important details of the plot.

List 5 specific setting details that add to the atmosphere/plot of each act. Please cite where you find the detail.

ACT I

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

ACT II

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Tragedy – You were given some elements of tragedy in your class notes. Watch for these elements as you read. *Words of Delight* author, Ryken, goes deeper into the elements of a tragedy, a tragic plot, and a tragic hero. Here are his lists:

Tragedy

- There is downward movement of the plot from positive experience to tragedy.
- The tragic hero begins in an exalted position and ends in disgrace (usually death)
- The key element in the downward plunge is the hero's great mistake (tragic flaw)
- Tragedy always includes an element of choice
- Tragedy focuses on the destructive potential of evil in human experience
- Tragedy is not the spectacle of the ordinary, but rather extraordinary, calamity
- Tragedy deals with suffering that has been caused by something – not just the ordinary trials of life.

Tragic Plot – 6 phases

1. Dilemma (situation which forces the tragic hero to make a moral choice)
2. Moral Choice (tragic hero makes a wrong choice – influenced by his fatal flaw – choice brings downfall)
3. Catastrophe (tragic hero's life collapses in catastrophe as a result of his choice – often dragging down those close to him also)
4. Suffering (The tragic hero, and others close to him, suffer as a result of his moral choice and catastrophe)
5. Perception (the hero experiences insight into what went wrong or an awareness of what he lost)
6. Death

Tragic Hero

- not initially a villain, though he may degenerate into one by the end of the story
- is a person of exalted social position (until modern times, tragic heroes were almost always kings or rulers)
- is a representative of his society. He is strong, aggressive and willing to test the limits of humanity. He is in the vulnerable position from which a great fall is possible.
- is typically larger than life. They have a certain overflowing abundance of energy and possess that intangible quality which we call greatness of spirit
- has a tragic flaw in his character, which the Greeks called "hamartia" – missing of the mark (Biblical word for sin).
- is always responsible for his own downfall, usually through a bad choice. He always initiates his own destruction
- in Greek drama, we tend to sympathize with the tragic hero in the end because the punishment seems greater than the crime. In other tragedies, the hero gets what he deserves.

Read through these lists. Keep all these in mind, because we will revisit these elements when we finish the play.

For now, discuss elements 1 & 2 of the Tragic Plot

Dilemma – what is the situation that forces the hero to make a moral choice? (2-3 sentences)

Moral Choice/Fatal Flaw – What is Macbeth’s fatal flaw that causes him to make the moral choice? What choice does he make? Does he wrestle with this choice? How? (4-5 sentences)

“Fair is foul and foul is fair” – the witches foreshadow with this statement. List at least 3 instances where this paradox shows up in the first 2 acts of *Macbeth*.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.