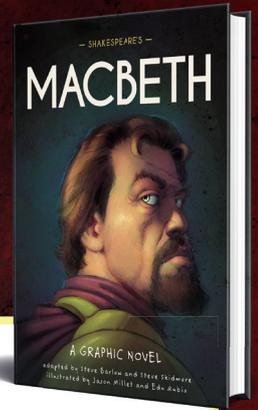


- MACBETH -

Adapted by: Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore

Teaching notes by Eva John



P.6 – 8

Discussion:

What do you think Ben Jonson means when he says that Shakespeare's plays would prove to be "not of an age, but for all time"?

Think of a movie to fit each of the different genres mentioned:

- thriller
- comedy
- love story
- fantasy
- romantic comedy
- horror

P.9

Discussion:

Why do you think some people develop a "lust for power"?

Can you think of examples of people with such ambitions from different walks of life?

ACT 1

P.12, 13

Drama:

In groups of three, experiment with different ways of delivering the lines of the three witches. Think about the characteristics and qualities you are trying to convey.



Discussion:

How does this scene act as a hook, an opening tactic that immediately captures your audience's imagination?

How do you think you would respond to:

- a supernatural experience on a dark, foggy night?
- A foretelling of your future? Do you think the ideas generated in your mind would direct you into behaving differently?

How is the visionary quality of the three witches' prophesy conveyed by the artist?

Writing:

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"

Jot down different things, creatures, people, events that might fit this seemingly contradictory description.

Be alert to any mention of fairness and foulness throughout the text.

P.14

Discussion:

How is Macbeth's character introduced?

Writing:

P.17 – 19

“Where have you been, sisters?”

Compose an interesting range of answers that would fit with the plot and the characters as you know them so far. Be as inventive as possible, thinking carefully about the rhythm of your answers and your choice and combinations of words.

Discussion:

How has the artist conveyed the unsettling nature of the three witches?

How do you think the witches are feeling at this point?

How much control do you predict they will have over the ensuing events?

Are the witches real? Or are they a metaphor? Give reasons to support your answer.

P.20 – 23



Drama:

Either:

In groups of five, act out the meeting of Macbeth and Banquo with the three witches, conveying Macbeth's response as it develops during the course of the encounter.

Or, in pairs:

Hot seat Macbeth and Banquo, taking time to consider questions and possible answers, before launching into the activity.

Writing:

Write down questions you think Macbeth might like answered after the encounter with the witches?

Write down the questions you think Banquo might want to ask?

Reading and writing:

Read a range of horoscopes or fortune cookie predictions. What do you notice about them?

E.g.:

Gemini

- Some people don't like your ideas. But you prefer to think for yourself. If this is being discouraged socially or in your working environment, you will consider walking away. You are beginning to feel restricted and restless when there are strict rules and regulations.
- A fresh start will put you on your way.
- Be on the lookout for future events - they cast their shadows beforehand.
- Better ask twice than lose yourself once.
- A faithful friend is a strong defence.
- Every flower blooms in its own sweet time.
- You will conquer obstacles to achieve success.

Are they vague or specific, or a mixture? Are they open to interpretation, so that they can be applied more widely?

P.22 – 23**Discussion:**

What does Banquo mean when he says to Macbeth, "The Devil tells the truth in small things, to tempt us into evil over great things."?

Can you think of any modern examples where this has been the case?

Writing:

Print a copy of the second and third panels on p. 23, with the thoughts removed from the bubbles.

Write the thoughts that you think might be going through Macbeth's mind after the witches' prophesy.

Discussion:

Do you think doing something terrible becomes more acceptable or likely the more frequently you consider it?

P.24 – 25

Discussion:

How do people often feel when a friend, colleague or acquaintance receives good fortune?

Writing:

Infer what Banquo might be thinking at this point in the tale, when he is watching Macbeth, and create thought bubbles to trace the path of his musings.

P.26 – 27

Drama:



In pairs, act out the dialogue between Macbeth and his wife. Think carefully about body language and vocal interpretation, so that you can suggest more than the words alone tell you.

Try it again with a different emphasis and decide which works best and for what reasons.

Discussion:

Where do I stand?

Who is the prime motivator – Lady Macbeth or Macbeth?

Make a line with string along the floor. Those who think Lady Macbeth wields more power stand to the right side, those who think Macbeth does, stand to the left. If you are unsure, stand at a point between the two that best reflects your opinion.

How would you describe the balance of power in the relationship of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? What evidence is there to back up your inferences?

You can change your position on the line if your opinion has changed.

Revisit this activity at the end of the play and note whether you have changed your mind.

P.29

Drama:

Conscience Alley: select someone to play Macbeth. Divide in to two lines, facing each other. One side is going to advocate killing Duncan, giving reasons, the other side is going to give reasons for not committing murder. When he comes to the end of the line, Macbeth must announce his decision and the reasons he has for reaching this.

P.30 – 31

Drama:

In pairs, take the parts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Argue your points regarding the fate of Duncan.

Discussion:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Lady Macbeth's plan?

ACT 2

P.34 – 35

Drama:



Taking on the role of Macbeth, act out the scene.

Now consider Shakespeare's words:

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.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.

In small groups, read the text together, identifying any unfamiliar words.

Take it in turns to read the soliloquy in different ways:

- Whispering
- Altering dynamics – soft, loud, fast slow
- Exaggerating the pauses indicated by the punctuation
- Pacing, whilst speaking
- Remaining motionless when speaking

Decide on which elements of delivery are most effective, practise and perform to the others.

Discussion:

Why is Macbeth seeing a dagger which he cannot touch?

What is the mood of the speech?

How does this speech move the action on in the play?

P.36 – 39

How would you describe the difference between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth at this point in the play?

What strategies does Lady Macbeth use to deal with Macbeth's conscience?

P.42 – 43

Discussion:



What do you think about the way Macbeth has laid the blame for Duncan's murder on his servants?

P.44 – 45

Discussion:

People's actions can be misinterpreted, as in the case of Malcolm and Donalbain fleeing the castle. Can you think of any other examples here people have misinterpreted events? Why do you think this happens?

ACT 3

P.46

Discussion:

Why do you think Lady Macbeth delays the conversation between Macbeth and Banquo?
Why should Macbeth doubt his own safety?

P.48 – 49

Discussion:

What do you think motivates the two men to murder? How does their motivation differ from Macbeth's?

P.50 – 51

Discussion:

How has the balance changed in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship?
What do you think are the important ingredients for leading a fulfilling life?
What elements do you think lead to unhappiness?
Which words in the three witches' prophecy does this passage bring to mind?

P.54 – 55

Writing:

List all the pressures you can think of, bearing down on Macbeth, which have led him to this disturbed state of mind.

P.58 – 59

Discussion:

Can you think of any modern examples of when people in power have been deserted by allies who no longer trust them?

What do you think about the idea that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"?

P.60 – 61

Discussion:

What symbolism does the artist use on these pages to reflect the political events taking place?

Why do you think he chose to do this?

ACT 4

P.62 – 68

Writing:

Innovate on the “Double, double...” words to create your own incantation. Be imaginative with your ingredients.

Discussion:

What do you think about Macbeth’s approach to the witches on this occasion?

How does the artist convey the prophecies?

Writing:

Note the facts that Macbeth gleans from the three witches and his reaction to these facts?

P.71

Discussion:

How does Macbeth stand to benefit from the murder of Macduff’s wife and children? How does he justify it to himself?

Do you think one bad deed leads to committing more? Give reasons and examples to back up your opinion.

P.73

Discussion:

How would you describe the situation at Macduff’s castle?

Why do you think Shakespeare chose to show the relationship between Lady Macduff and her son, just before they are murdered?

Drama:

Create a freeze frame of the scene just before the murders take place. One person can tap different characters within the frame to thought track, finding out what you think is going through the different characters’ minds at this point.

Discussion:

Can you think of any examples where dishonest or dishonourable people have ganged up together against honourable men?

P.75

Writing:

Look at the composition of the illustration. What adjectives could you use to describe the murderer? What metaphor or simile could you create to describe him?

P.79

Discussion:

Why has the artist chosen to depict Macduff from this angle in the final frame on this page?

How would you direct someone to deliver this line in the play, thinking about what you want to convey to the audience through body position and tone of voice?



ACT 5

P.80 – 82

Discussion:

Look at the portrayal of the different characters in this scene by the artist. When are close-ups and long-shots used? Why do you think this is?

Drama:

Read the following words of Lady Macbeth from the Shakespeare text and, in pairs, annotate what she is referring to and whom she is addressing at each point. What does this indicate about her state of mind and what are the implications for Macbeth, if she is behaving in this manner?

Yet here's a spot. ...

Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One; two. Why, then 'tis time to do't. Hell is murky! Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? ...

The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now? –What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

... Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh! ...

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave. ...

To bed, to bed. There's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

P.87

Discussion:

How does Macbeth react to the news of his wife's death? Explain how Macbeth feels about life.

Do you think he would have felt like this if he hadn't pursued his ambitions so heartlessly?

Reading:

Look closely at the text from the play:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
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.*

Using a highlighter, identify the parts which the authors have paraphrased.

P.88 – 91

Discussion:

Where do I stand?

The witches are tricksters.

Make a line with string along the floor. Those who think the witches deliberately tricked Macbeth stand on the right side, those who think the witches' prophecies were given in good faith, stand to the left. If you are unsure, stand at a point between the two that best reflects your opinion and debate your points with each other.

You can alter your position on the line if your opinion changes.

What does this episode tell you about human nature and attitudes to fortune telling?

P.92 – 93

Macbeth's death is not seen on stage. Why do you think it is depicted in this graphic representation?



Postscript

Writing:

List the factors leading to the deaths of:

- Duncan
- The guards
- Banquo
- Macduff's wife and children
- Lady Macbeth
- Young Siward
- Macbeth

Compare your findings to see if you have missed any reasons or if you disagree with any given.

Character diamante poem.

Choose a character, such as Macbeth.

Think of two nouns that have opposite meanings in connection with that character and how they develop during the course of the play. E.g. hero/villain, friend/foe.

Because a diamante poem is diamond-like in form, it must begin and end with single words that form the top and bottom.

- Line one: Noun
- Line two: Two adjectives that describe the noun in line one
- Line three: Three verbs that end with “ing” and describe the noun in line one
- Line four: Four nouns—the first two must relate to the noun in line one and the second two will relate to the noun in line seven
- Line five: Three verbs that end with “ing” and describe the noun in line seven
- Line six: Two adjectives that describe the noun in line seven
- Line seven: Noun that is opposite in meaning to line one (antonym diamante) or the same in meaning (synonym diamante) as the noun in line one

Drama:

In small groups, decide on key points in the story and retell the story in five tableau images.

Writing:

Mini-saga challenge

Create a mini-saga summarising the plot of Macbeth. The title can contain up to fifteen words and the body of the text has to be fifty words exactly.

Check your summary against the one by the authors on Page 98 and see if you have missed any important points.

Question setting:

Divide into small groups using an allocated section at the end of the book:

- The inspiration for Macbeth
- Themes of Macbeth
- Shakespeare’s language
- Fun Facts
- Shakespeare’s timeline

Re-read several times so that you can devise five thought-provoking questions that you quiz each other on.

Discussion:

How do you think the authors, who were not the illustrators, conveyed their vision to the artist?

Look at an extract of their script alongside the finished pages. They use abbreviations: AW and C/U in their directions. What do you think these might stand for?

What do you notice when you compare the script with the finished book?

PAGE 92

SPREAD 41

AW 92-1

THIS AND THE SUBSEQUENT FRAMES ON THIS SPREAD FOLLOW THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN MACBETH AND MACDUFF. MACBETH MOUNTS A FEROCIOUS ATTACK.

SPEECH BUBBLES

MACBETH: ...let me see what you're made of!

AW 92-2

MACDUFF PARRIES MACBETH'S SAVAGE BLOW. SURROUNDING FIGHTERS DISENGAGE AND STOP FIGHTING, TURNING TO FACE THE ACTION.

AW 92-3

SWORDS LOCKED, MACBETH AND MACDUFF STRUGGLE FACE-TO-FACE

AW 93-4

MACDUFF AND MACBETH HAVE PARTED: THEY ARE NOW BATTLING IN A RING FORMED BY FORMER COMBATANTS FROM BOTH ARMIES WHO HAVE BROKEN OFF THEIR OWN FIGHTS TO WATCH

PAGE 93

SPREAD 41

AW 93-1

MACDUFF STRIKES THE KILLING BLOW! MACBETH IS MORTALLY WOUNDED: THOUGH HE IS STILL STANDING, HE CANNOT RAISE HIS SWORD TO DEFEND HIMSELF

AW 93-2

C/U OF MACDUFF (FACE OR EVEN EYES ONLY), IN A BATTLE RAGE AS HE PREPARES TO DELIVER THE COUP DE GRACE

AW 93-3

MACDUFF DELIVERS AN UNSTOPPPABLE BACKHANDED SWING. MACBETH'S HEAD FLIES FROM HIS SHOULDERS

Discussion:

Art works depicting characters from Macbeth

These two paintings by Henry Fuseli (1741 – 1825) depict the three witches and Macbeth's and Banquo's meeting with them on the heath.



These two quotes from the play, refer to the witches:

'You should be women, and yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you are so.'

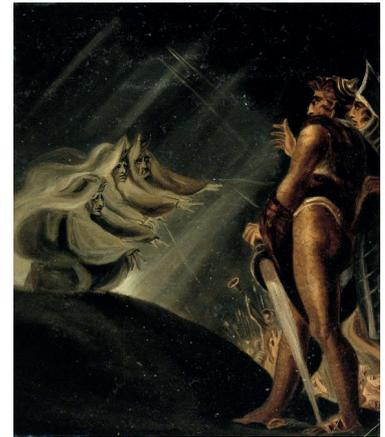
'You secret, black, and midnight hags.'

Do you think the artist has depicted them in this way?

How do the two paintings differ?

Which painting has the most impact on you? Why do you think this is?

How do you imagine the weird sisters?



John Singer Sargent's 1889 oil painting, *Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*.

Is this how you envisioned Lady Macbeth?

Can you think of a point in the play where Lady Macbeth places a crown on her head? Why do you think the artist chose to depict this?



Discussion:

How did you feel about the resolution of the play?

Why is Macbeth a tragedy?

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