



Macbeth

by William Shakespeare

an NAC English Theatre / Citadel Theatre (Edmonton)
coproduction

Study Guide

**THE NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE ENGLISH THEATRE
PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES
2007-2008 SEASON**

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Artistic Director, English Theatre**

This Study Guide was written and researched by **Jane Moore** for the National Arts Centre, English Theatre, December 2007. It may be used solely for educational purposes.

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Notes to teachers: There is an additional, separate guide online, with information on Shakespeare and Elizabethan England. For information which can be read, duplicated, and handed out, go to:
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>. In this Study Guide, suggested classroom activities follow each article, and suggested grade level(s) appear in brackets. In particular, items in the section on The Play are intended to serve as handouts.

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Production Credits

Creative Team

Director	Peter Hinton
Set and Costume Designer	Carolyn M. Smith
Lighting Designer	Robert Thomson
Original Music and Sound Design by	Sandy Moore
Fight Director.....	Jean-François Gagnon
Assistant Director	Amanda Kellock
Fight Captain	John Koensgen

Actors

Benedict Campbell as Macbeth

Diane D'Aquila as Lady Macbeth

with

Pierre Brault, Todd Duckworth, Peter Froehlich, Katy Grabstas, Kate Hurman,
Kris Joseph, John Koensgen, Matthew MacFadzean, Adrien Pyke,
Christopher Schulz, Hannah Sideris-Hersh, Michael Spencer-Davis,
Jane Spidell, and Blair Williams

Casting (subject to change)

The Destined

Macbeth	Benedict Campbell
Lady Macbeth, Ghost Queen	Diane D'Aquila

The Hunted

King Duncan, Third Murderer, Guest, Ghost King, Doctor.....	John Koensgen
Malcolm, First Murderer, Third Apparition	Matthew MacFadzean
Donalbain, Second Murderer, Ghost King.....	Christopher Schulz

The World

Banquo, Waiter, Menteith	Todd Duckworth
Lennox, Waiter, Seyward.....	Peter Froehlich
Ross, Ghost King.....	Michael Spencer-Davis
Angus, Officer, Ghost King, Nazi Murderer one.....	Kris Joseph

The Rebels

Bleeding Captain, Dead Man, Macduff, First Apparition, Ghost King	Blair Williams
Dead Woman, Officer, Lady Macduff, Second Apparition	Jane Spidell

The Guardians

Gentlewoman to Lady Macbeth, Ghost King	Kate Hurman
Attendant, Dead Man, Butler, Porter, Seyton, Ghost King, Nazi Murderer two	Pierre Brault

The Children

Witch One, Young Seyward	Katy Grabstas
Witch Two, Fleance.....	Hannah Sideris-Hersh
Witch Three, Son to Macduff	Adrien Pyke

The Dog

Slipper	Popcorn
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The Play

Synopsis (page 1 of 2)

William Shakespeare's play, Macbeth, the story of a man driven by ambition, is one of his most famous tragedies. Here is the story.

Macbeth is a tragedy. And one of Shakespeare's darkest. Set in Scotland and beset by magic, it is a story of ambition and arrogance grown wild with power and hope, in a time of violence and swirling evil.

Macbeth is a Scottish nobleman, and when the play begins he has been fighting for his lord, King Duncan. On his way home from winning the battle he meets three strange figures (witches?) who tell him that he is to be honoured – he will become Thane of Cawdor and king hereafter! Macbeth is rapt. His friend Banquo is with him, and is told that he will father a long line of kings. The first prophecy comes true immediately, when Duncan rewards Macbeth with the position of Thane of Cawdor, for his valour in war, and tells Macbeth he will honour him with a visit.

Macbeth writes his wife, Lady Macbeth, to tell her of Duncan's visit and of the witches' prophecies. Lady Macbeth is suddenly infused with ambition for the throne, and determination that Macbeth who is "too full of the milk of human kindness," will be made strong enough to seize what he wants.

In Act 2, Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth that they will have to kill Duncan and blame his guards for his death. Macbeth's harrowed reaction is evident as he sees a dagger floating before him. They do kill Duncan, and Macduff finds his dead body when he comes to meet the king. In the ensuing chaos, Duncan's two sons resolve to run, as they are in danger. ("The near in blood, the nearer bloody.") The world is turning upside down.

We see Macbeth, increasingly haunted by his insecurity, plan and commit more killings. Afraid that Banquo will be a threat to him, Macbeth hires murderers to kill his one-time best friend, and also Banquo's son, "to leave no botches in the work." Macduff has been grumbling, so Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children slaughtered while Macduff is away.

Meanwhile Lady Macbeth suffers heavily after the murders; she is unable even to visit her husband without an appointment, and she begins to sleepwalk and see blood on her hands. Macbeth also suffers – he cannot sleep or eat, hallucinates, and resolves to visit the witches for more guidance. They show him a line of kings, and the last is Banquo, holding up a mirror which reflects more kings. More prophecies tell Macbeth that he will be safe until the woods uproot themselves and come to his castle at Dunsinane. And that "no man born of woman shall harm Macbeth." Macbeth leaves the witches reassured.

Scotland is suffering. Opposing forces gather in England, where Duncan's son, Malcolm, the rightful king of Scotland is living. Macduff finds him there and asks him to save Scotland.

The last act marches to a dreadful conclusion as Lady Macbeth takes her life by jumping from the castle walls, and a battle-hardened Macbeth says that she should have died later, when there was time to mourn her. He then stakes everything on battle with the gathered opposition. He realizes the fearsome truth of the prophecies as the woods *do* begin to move. Enemy armies carry the boughs before them as disguise, and he discovers that Macduff was not "born" of a woman, but arrived by Caesarean birth. The witches have "paltered with him in a double sense," he realizes, as he is struck down, finally, and Malcolm is restored to his rightful place as King of Scotland.

The Play

Synopsis (page 2 of 2)

1. Post show. The *Macbeth* Murder Mystery: **Write a monologue**, as a policeman, or a private investigator, in which you discover what really happened to Duncan, or Banquo, or Lady Macduff and her family. (plot/characters) (grades 7-12)

2. Pre or Post show. **Improvise, or write a script**, as a television or CBC radio reporter covering the discoveries of the deaths in *Macbeth*. Do a funny version first; then a serious version. (plot, character, atmosphere) (grades 7-12)



Macbeth opera



Kabuki *Macbeth*



Medieval *Macbeth*



Orson Welles as *Macbeth* (1948)

The Play

Dramatis Personae: Main Characters

Macbeth: A Scottish lord, a thane, full of violence and poetic sensitivity, ridden by ambition.

Lady Macbeth: His wife, hardened by ambition, childless, appallingly violent, yet vulnerable.

Banquo: Macbeth's friend, a thane, foil to Macbeth, loyal to Duncan.

Fleance: Banquo's son.

Duncan: the good king of Scotland, murdered in his sleep by Macbeth.

Malcolm and Donalbain: Duncan's sons, who flee after his death. Malcolm is the eldest.

Macduff: Scottish lord, Thane of Fife, one-time friend of Macbeth, whose family is murdered; agent of Nemesis as he gathers forces against Macbeth.

Lady Macduff, wife to Macduff, cruelly murdered.

Seyward: English general, helping Macduff. Earl of Northumberland.

Young Seyward: His son.

The Witches: Three supernatural, weird sisters. They cast spells and speak with double meanings as they start Macbeth on his downward spiral and keep twisting him, around and down.

Hecate: Queen of the witches.

The Porter: Doorman to Macbeth's castle, a darkly comic character, who muses on the politics of the day and brings us comic relief.

Other characters include Macduff's son, an English doctor and a Scottish doctor, murderers, a sergeant, an old man, the Ghost of Banquo, and other apparitions.

3. Pre show. To introduce characters in a play, the teacher could write the name of a character, and a few points about that character on a cue card (eg. *Lady Macduff - angry at Macduff for leaving his family, confides in Ross, loves her son.*) Give each student a card.

Let the students mingle in the classroom, in character, with the job of conveying who they are. Then have them pair up and introduce each other (eg. maybe Ross introduces Lady Macduff). Students should know the story first. The teacher should tell it, orally, in traditional storytelling. (characters, drama) (grades 7-9)

The Play

Macbeth, the man (page 1 of 3)

Macbeth is the protagonist or tragic hero. He is an ordinary man in many ways.

Within Macbeth there seem to be two men. He inspires both our pity and our loathing. While Macbeth is a strong and brave warrior, the favourite of the king, he also has a soaring imagination and strong emotions that fill him with qualms. This duality is in everything he does. With every crime, his suffering increases. He is a very human man, connected to the earth and his body, unable to understand the forces he has unleashed, and unable to prevent himself from seeking out more and more horror. He is full of ambition from the start. He wants to act from the moment he hears the witches' greetings. He needs only the urging of his wife to push him in the way he wants to go.

Lady Macbeth tells us that he is "full of the milk of human kindness", and whilst we see none, we believe her. She says he is a man of contradictions, full of ambition, but not evil, wanting to have things the right way, but willing to have them dishonestly. He begins the play with friends and wife and a secure place in his kingdom, and ends, isolated, full of self-hatred.

Macbeth's physicality is a hallmark of his character: his fears produce violent physical reactions as he finds himself unable to sleep, or eat, he hears voices in the night, and he is unable to say "amen." He sees apparitions. He feels his hair standing on end. He is prey to his own imagination and he believes implicitly in the supernatural. He is impulsive – after his initial foreboding and unwillingness to commit regicide, he rushes his every thought into action... his conscience is fully committed and active, but he pushes past it, gags it. He suffers more and more as he "strides from crime to crime," (A.C. Bradley), but pushes aside all thoughts of pity. He is beset by horrors. His very being revolts against his doings, yet he refuses to stop, in headlong pursuit of his own tragic end.

His poet's soul lets him express his agony – he knows the guilt on his hands "would make the multitudinous seas incarnadine," yet he keeps asking the powers of darkness to aid him – and says that it were best not to know himself. At the end he is exhausted and jaded, so used to horror that he is unable to mourn the death of his wife, full of vicious irrationality as he insults and kills, cruel to helpless servants and peasants, bitter about his wasted life, mourning that he has deserved only "mooth-honour," murdering even children. Yet his deep pain as he finds himself unable to stop his own rush to evil, his suffering, and his guilt-ridden attempt to spare Macduff leave us aching for him. His infinite capacity for suffering on his headlong trip to hell, coupled with his helplessness, holds us; we pray in vain for a miracle; we can only wait for the anguish to end, and mourn when it does.

4. Pre show. Read the definition of a Tragic Hero and show how Macbeth fulfils the definition. (tragedy, character) (grades 9 and up)

5. Pre show. Write a letter to someone you love, telling them of something strange that happened to lift your heart on your way home. Then, as the person receiving the letter, write your response. Perform both. (character, motivation) (grades 7-12)

6. Pre show. Discuss the histories of several different countries, looking for political and historical characters you can compare to Macbeth. a) Choose one, and exaggerate the actions of this tyrant (if necessary.). b) Create a monologue planning the character's next evil act. Then create a monologue to show the tyrant's private suffering. Both monologues should reveal the character's intensity and imagination. Perform or have someone perform the pieces. (theme, character, relevance) (grades 11 and up)

The Play

Macbeth, the man (page 2 of 3)

7. Post show. Imagine that Macbeth has been captured. Put him on trial. Be the prosecuting attorney (or defence attorney, or judge, or witness). **Write or improvise the monologue or scene.** Do the same for Lady Macbeth. (character and events, drama) (grades 7 and up).

8. Post or Pre show.

Drama Exercise: Explore the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Teachers should hand out the edited version of Act I, Scene vii (page 7 herein.)

- a) Players should work in pairs, back to back, and read the edited version out loud.
- b) Players should read it again, conspiratorially, as though they don't want to be overheard.
- c) Players should stand ten paces apart, and read the scene as a full-blown argument.
Which reading made most sense? Why?

d) Now players start considering movement in the scene. This time Macbeth must stand rooted to the spot while Lady Macbeth can move wherever she wants. Next, Lady Macbeth must stand still while Macbeth can move about freely.

What does this exercise reveal about their relationship?

e) Chase: Lady Macbeth starts off with Macbeth following, each speaking their lines. At some point Macbeth decides not to follow her any longer and either stands still or moves in a different direction. She must then decide what to do. All choices are made instinctively.

What relationship emerges?

f) Play a persuasion scene, using only these words: Yes, No, Maybe, You, Me.

Character **A** wants Character **B** to do something together that **B** doesn't want to do.

A tries different tactics – flattery, pleading, manipulation, anything else, until **B** agrees.

g) Macbeth sits in a chair. In playing the scene Lady Macbeth uses a variety of tactics to get him to stand. He can only stand when he is prepared to murder Duncan.

h) One-word dialogues. The scene is reduced to 12 words, each accompanied by an action. What are the interpretive possibilities? Play them.

i) Choral characters. Choose two choral leaders, representing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. All the other players group behind the character they have been playing. Using the 12-word script, the choral backing group echoes each of the words, and copies each of the gestures their leader uses.

Discussion:

Pre show. When we speak and move the text in these ways, what are the learning opportunities? What are the differences between this approach to the scene and reading it aloud in class?

Interpretive choice happens in rehearsal, by negotiating the text in exactly this way. Is there a right way of doing this scene?

(characters, text exploration, dynamics, group work, drama) (grades 9-12)

The Play

Macbeth, the man (page 3 of 3)

***Macbeth* Act I Scene vii (edited)**

MACBETH: How now! what news?

LADY MACBETH: He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

MACBETH: Hath he ask'd for me?

LADY MACBETH: Know you not he has?

MACBETH: We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH: Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love.

MACBETH: Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH: What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

MACBETH: If we should fail?

LADY MACBETH: We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail.

MACBETH: Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

[Exeunt]

The Play

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is almost better known than Macbeth. She seems less human than he is, but we eventually come to pity her. Is she responsible for the tragedy?

Lady Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's most striking and fearsome characters. When we first meet her, she is conscience-less, determined and unfeeling. She is consumed by her ambition. We see her before Macbeth does - as she receives his letter. She is instantly struck by the possibility of power, determined to chastise Macbeth and counteract his weakness. He is too soft to "catch the nearest way" (She is a mistress of euphemism also). She calls upon the powers of darkness to "unsex her," to take away any female softness, and can hardly wait to persuade Macbeth to murder Duncan. She is sure of her power to do so. Ignoring Macbeth's battle prowess, and recently-won honours, and long absence, she immediately dominates him when he comes home to Glamis:

Macbeth: "My dearest love, Duncan comes here tonight."

Lady Macbeth: "And when goes hence?"

She speaks of "our great quell" and "this night's great business" as she lusts for the "golden round." She taunts Macbeth for his cowardice, and she makes the plan to murder Duncan and blame the guards. No one would dare blame the Macbeths, she says imperiously. As Macbeth wavers later she persuades him, again with the force of her will, as she says she would dash her nursing baby's head against a wall.

She has a moment of weakness during the actual murder, when Duncan's resemblance to her father as he sleeps prevents her from killing him herself, but she is steadfast thereafter, strong while Macbeth is not, telling him to put back the bloody daggers, and wash the blood off himself. Later still she covers for his unhinged horror as he confronts Banquo's ghost; "my husband is not well." We feel sympathy for her when she has to ask permission to see her husband, as his horror and suffering mount; she is alone with her knowledge of the deed she instigated, and in the sleepwalking scene she is piteous, her madness so obviously caused by her guilt: "who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him."

She fades out of the play – with a cry of women - as she falls to her death; how far indeed she has fallen. Macbeth says only that she should have died hereafter, when there was time to mourn her. The final word of her is Malcolm's triumphant dismissal of "the fiend-like queen."

9. Pre show. As an intimate friend, write a letter to lonely Lady Macbeth, to comfort her in her time of need, and to give her advice. (character, plot, style, involvement) (grades 7-12)

10. Post show. Carefully read what Lady Macbeth is saying and doing in the sleepwalking scene. Then, in the context of the play, decide what she is writing, and to whom. Last, write the letter that Lady Macbeth is working on, and perform the scene. (character, events, drama) (grades 7-12)

The Play

The Five-Act Structure

The structure is the shape of the play, the development of the conflict. Knowing the structure helps us understand how the elements work together and what is important in the story.

Act I: Exposition

The opening stage of a play, which introduces all the main elements.
(situation, some characters, conflict, possibly imagery and theme.)

Act II: Complication

The second stage of the play, in which the main conflict becomes more and more complex.

Act III: contains the Crisis.

The third stage. The turning point in the action. It is the event that changes the direction of the action.
(Sometimes, confusingly, called the structural **Climax**. See Act V below)

Act IV: Resolution.

The fourth stage. In the Resolution the dramatic elements become clearer – the two forces in conflict (good and evil) grow stronger, separately.

Act V: Dénouement. Contains the Catastrophe. Contains the emotional Climax.

The fifth stage, the “untying of the knots.”

The **Catastrophe** is the final event of a tragedy, in which the protagonist dies.

The **Climax** is the point at which the intensity of the emotions of the audience reach a peak. (Usually in the catastrophe.)

11. Pre show. Read the definition of Five-Act Structure above. Discuss the play to find the crisis. Illustrate the five-act structure by listing the events in each act. In groups, students should **reduce the story** of the play to five sentences. Create a **tableau** for each main event. Perform. (structure, plot, drama) (grades 10-12)

12. Pre show. Analyze a monologue/soliloquy in terms of the **five-act structure**. Choose one action only for each main idea. Perform it. (language, argument, structure) (grades 10-12)

13. Pre show. From Peter Hinton: “*Scene 1 of a Shakespearean play gives you all the important information for the whole play.*” **What information** does **Act I, Scene I** give us, in terms of setting, theme, characters and events? Is there a controlling metaphor or myth to analyze? (A controlling metaphor or myth dominates and helps organize the entire play (eg. a controlling metaphor in Act I, Scene I of *Twelfth Night* is hunting) (structure, imagery, everything) (grades 11 and up)

14. Post show. From Peter Hinton: “*Macbeth fits the structure of a horror film.*” **Watch** a horror film. **Analyze** the plot. How does *Macbeth* fit the characteristic plot pattern? (plot, archetypes) (grades 11 and up)

The Play

"Double, Double": Duality in *Macbeth*

There are many themes in Macbeth. Certainly ambition, and that power corrupts is a theme. Fate, and the question of whether we have free will, is another. Here we see how a major theme, that it is often difficult to know the truth, is developed.

The problem throughout the play is to know what is real and what only seems to be real. There is much duplicity and deceit and misunderstanding, and much of it is deliberate. *Macbeth* is about illusion and reality.

The most obvious source of the problem is the supernatural. We immediately see the Witches, who speak in paradoxes, "when the battle's lost and won," cast spells, appear and disappear. They are first seen by Macbeth and Banquo, and later only by Macbeth. The threat of "fair is foul and foul is fair" begins the play and hovers thickly throughout.

The problem of what is real is also seen through characters. Some characters are overt traitors, such as Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and the former Thane of Cawdor, who was "unseamed" by Macbeth. There are other characters whose actions are questionable: how friendly really are Banquo and Macbeth? How good really is Macduff, who flees the country and leaves his vulnerable family in the path of the murderer? How noble are Malcolm and Donalbain, the sons of the king, who also flee? How about Ross, who always seems to be where danger lurks?

There is also much deliberate deceit: Lady Macbeth advises Macbeth to "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it." Macbeth takes her advice to heart, saying later, "False face must hide what the false heart doth know," and "we must make our faces wizards to our hearts, disguising what they are." And finally Macbeth does not even know himself – and does not want to: "To know my deed were best not know myself."

The problem of deciding what is real confronts us through illusions also, of course, with the dagger from Macbeth's "heat-oppress'd brain," and Banquo's ghost, which is seen only by Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth's spots of blood; through events, as the paradoxes (which themselves are twisted) come true in twisted ways: the Woods *do* move to Dunsinane - but how? Who is he who is not of woman born? Can you be born without being born?

Other sources of duality in the play are the uses of dramatic irony and irony. The audience knows that Macbeth is referring to his terrible deed when he says "Twas a rough night," in answer to Lennox's description of the "unruly night." In the same way the audience knows how wrong Duncan is when he speaks of Macbeth's "great love" for him, when he thanks Lady Macduff. The audience holds its breath, knowing that death is in store for Duncan in the castle, as he tells Banquo how even the air of Macbeth's castle "sweetly recommends itself" to him. It is ironic that having persuaded her "partner of greatness" to murder Duncan, Lady Macbeth has to make appointments to see him, ironic that Macbeth and his lady in their quest for happiness and glory drive themselves into madness, unhappiness and death.

Shakespeare makes liberal use of all these methods, characters, plot, the supernatural and literary devices, to create uneasiness, and conceal the truth as he ensnares Macbeth.

15. Pre or Post show. Shakespeare's is an age of metaphor. You have to look at things allegorically to uncover the double meanings. Although Shakespeare set his plays in different times than his own, they spoke to his audience because they touched on situations happening in his own country. What situations in England are seen in *Macbeth*, which is set hundreds of years earlier than Shakespeare's time? What does this production of *Macbeth*, at the National Arts Centre, show us of our time, hundreds of years later? You may want to refer to the information on www.artsalive.ca. (theme, duality, play review, history, relevance) (grades 11 and up)

The Play

Order in *Macbeth* (page 1 of 2)

Shakespeare has favourite themes – his most overarching, the main theme of his plays, is that there is an order in the world, established by God, and you disturb it at your peril.

In medieval and Renaissance times, it was believed that the Great Chain of Being, first described by St. Thomas Aquinas, is what holds the world together. The central concept of the chain of being is that everything imaginable fits into it somewhere, giving order and meaning to the universe. Part of this belief is a belief in **The Divine Right of Kings**, which says that the King has no equal within his realm. The King is under God. Since he is the vicar of God, no one may presume to question his acts, much less contravene them.

If a man destroys a king he has stepped out of his order and the consequences will be vast - all of nature will revolt. See what happens in *Macbeth*. Macbeth's ambition leads to the overthrow of order in Scotland. If we follow the events of the play chronologically we see that one man's flaw, unbridled ambition, can turn a whole country into chaos.

In Act I, Macbeth's ambition is established very early in his asides and his guilty reaction to the witches' greeting: "Stars hide your fires- let not light see my black and deep desires." He is upset at Malcolm's being named heir to the throne: "That is a step on which I must o'erleap or else fall down – for in my way it lies," and admits, "I have no spur to prick the side of my intent, but only vaulting ambition." Disorder is associated with the witches – the thunder and lightning, and their appearance – "you should be women, but your beards forbid me to interpret you are so."

Later the disorder is evidenced in darkness, in character disorder, in the disorder of nature (especially sleep) and political chaos. Regicide is the most heinous act against the divine order, and Macbeth must suffer.

Before the murder, we see the witches, thought to be a disturbance from the nether world: they disappear like bubbles of the earth. Later we see Lady Macbeth call for help from the powers of darkness, as she says:

"Come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty..."

In Act II, when Macbeth imagines a dagger pointing to Duncan's room, we see that his senses are affected by the very thought of murder; he says that Nature seems dead, and witchcraft is abroad in the night as Murder is moving towards his target, that "wicked dreams abuse the curtain'd sleep." After the murder, Macbeth is in turmoil, his very body now revolting against his own actions. He hears voices saying, "sleep no more. Glamis hath murdered sleep"; he is unable to say "Amen," to get close to God.

From here on, we see disorder throughout Scotland - with the discovery of the murder all is chaos. Nature's disorder is reflected in nature and the affairs of men: The night is "unruly, with chimneys blown down and screams of death and lamenting heard in the air"; it is dark all day; horses eat each other; the country is questioning, Donalbain and Malcolm flee, "against nature still".

The Play

Order in *Macbeth* (page 2 of 2)

In Act III, Macbeth's murder of his friend Banquo is again a most unnatural act – in this case his motivation is fear of losing the crown to Banquo, or to Banquo's sons; and the result is Banquo's ghost at the banquet. Very unnatural! Macbeth speeds to his downfall, unable to sleep, "afflicted by terrible dreams that shake [him] nightly". In his tortured, state, unable to sleep or eat, with a mind "full of scorpions". He resolves to seek out the powers of darkness, the witches who as yet have come to him unsummoned.

In Act IV, after Hecate and the witches conspire, and show Macbeth the kings to come, he becomes a tyrant. After his irrational decision to murder Macduff's family, we see the forces of order begin to gather, as the country now under a hand "accurst" prays for a swift blessing. As the setting changes from Scotland to England, we hear that in Scotland "each new morn new widows howl, our country weeps, bleeds" under "devilish" Macbeth. England, in contrast to Scotland is orderly, under a beloved king, Edward, whose blessings surround his throne. Here the forces of order, Malcolm and Macduff, unite, and with help from the English, prepare to defeat Macbeth. The news of the murder of his "pretty chickens," is the final spur to Macduff's resolve. "Macbeth is ripe for shaking."

When we return to Scotland in Act V, it is to the sight of Lady Macbeth sleepwalking. Now she who called for darkness needs light by her constantly, as she ceaselessly attempts to wash the blood from her guilty hands: "out, out damned spot", and *her* senses are now afflicted. "Here's the smell of the blood still." The doctor can do nothing to help her. "It is a great perturbation in nature," he says. "Unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles."

Macbeth's own senses are still recoiling. We are told that "everything within him condemns itself for being there". Nothing can cure him or the country. Lady Macbeth's suicide is a very unnatural act, and it seems to glance off Macbeth, who says "she should have died hereafter," later, when there was more time to grieve for her. His irrationality is clear as he orders, "hang those that talk of fear". Life, he says, "is a tale told by an idiot".

Order is restored at the end of the play of course. Macduff provokes Macbeth into the final fight, and kills him, and young Seyward dies a soldier's death, commended by his father. Malcolm, the rightful heir, takes the throne, earls are created, and a new world is about to begin. "The time is free," proclaims Macduff.

We are left also with some unease in the knowledge that Malcolm, who is waving aloft Macbeth's bloody head, and proclaiming Macbeth "a butcher" and his lady "a fiend," is wrong. We have seen both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer. We know that they were people, albeit people who let their ambition run wild. For that ambition the entire country descended into chaos.

But with the succession of the rightful king, order has been achieved. Order always returns.

16. Pre play. a) **Read** the speech that James I gave to Parliament about his powers in 1609. **Discuss** his ideas. <http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/Jamesdrk.htm>

b) **In groups, write or improvise scenarios** with an all-powerful King, who either makes problems for his people, or solves them. Be humorous or serious. (grades 7-12)

17. Post play. Natural Order in the world today. Look at two or three recent newspapers. Then **create a documentary or an essay** to show Nature reacting to man's arrogance. (theme, relevance) (grades 11 and up)

The Play

Useful Definitions for Studying Tragedy

Macbeth is a tragedy, which is a very specific form of drama. Understanding tragedy helps us understand many complexities of the human condition. Great tragedies resonate through the centuries because we suffer in them, and learn.

Tragedy: A serious, dignified form of drama, as defined by Aristotle, involving a great person who experiences a reversal of fortune. This reversal of fortune must be caused by the tragic hero's *hamartia*, (tragic flaw, human frailty) which causes him to make a mistake.

A classical tragic hero: A person (traditionally a man) in a high position whose actions therefore have widespread consequences. He is of greater than average quality, usually of surpassing physical attractiveness and personal attributes. He, however, possesses a tragic flaw, which combines with circumstances to lead him to make an error in judgment, which causes an inevitable downfall. He becomes possessed of hubris (arrogance) and is struck down by nemesis (the righteous indignation of the gods), or the agents of nemesis. Throughout the play he has become gradually isolated, and he dies in the catastrophe. The audience, which has undergone a catharsis of pity and fear, feels a deep sense of waste. He is somehow redeemed at the end, and the audience feels that things have turned out as they should.

Catastrophe: the final event of a tragedy in which the protagonist is overthrown and dies.

Catharsis: A purging in the audience of the emotions, in the case of Tragedy, pity and fear. Aristotle believed this to be the purpose of Tragedy.

Hamartia (tragic flaw): The capacity of the tragic hero to make a disastrous error of judgment which leads to his own destruction.

Hubris: Arrogance. A person who was too happy would attract the jealousy of the gods who would destroy him for thinking he was a powerful as they were.

Nemesis: The righteous indignation of the gods at the arrogance of man- the force which directly or indirectly strikes down the man with hubris. (The principle of "just dessert," wherein you get what you deserve.)

18) Pre or Post play. a) **Read** the definition of a tragic hero above and **show how** Macbeth fulfils the definition. (character, Tragedy) (grades 9-12)
b) **Play a Tragic Hero Improv Game:** Work in groups of four to six. Ask the class for a type of work. Give someone a character trait (eg. arrogance or generosity or greed). That person has to make that trait a tragic flaw. Improvise a scene where the person causes his/her own downfall at work because of a decision he/she makes owing to that character trait. (Tragedy, structure, drama) (grades 7-12)

19. Post play. Having seen the production of *Macbeth*, how do you feel at the end of the play? **Discuss** your feelings in the context of Aristotle's theory of catharsis. Are there other words than "pity and fear" you might use for your feelings? (grades 7-12)

The Director's Vision of *Macbeth*:

Excerpts from an Interview with Peter Hinton (page 1 of 3)

Peter Hinton, the Artistic Director of English Theatre at the National Arts Centre, directs Macbeth. A director must find a way to interpret the play that will make it live for its audience. This is the "director's vision". A well-known and much-loved play like Macbeth presents special challenges for a director.

Why set the play in World War II?

I want to set the play in a period that is a surprise to the audience, that brings it closer to them. *Macbeth* has been romanticized. The play is a tragedy; I want the audience to see it that way. It's always a challenge, as the great Shakespearean plays become so familiar they lose their shock and surprise. I want it in a time that retains the heroic aspect of war. No one was protesting our involvement in the Second World War.

Also, this play was written for a new king - it looks at Protestant lines for the throne. I want to speak to our time, to our monarch. The Queen Mother's home was Glamis, in Scotland. I want to re-examine the play in terms of our recent past.

At the beginning of the play, Macbeth has quelled insurrection. He is heroic, an active, bloody, violent man. Later on stage he is horrified at the sight of blood. The question is: where is violence sanctioned, where is it appalled? Murder in the war is not murder, but rewarded. The murder of a king is horrific.

World War II was a devastating war. We still have in our memories the images of war, Berlin and London in the Blitz, bombed out. The play also has a lot to do with resistance and revolt, being written so clearly after the Gunpowder Plot, the idea of blowing up the Houses of Parliament. When I look through photos of the London Blitz and see the rubble, I find in it the image of the war-torn land in *Macbeth*. It has been exciting to explore this idea with designer Carolyn Smith.

What are the parallels between Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson and Macbeth?

Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson are key. The Abdication of the British throne was a huge event, hard for us to even imagine, with the current divorces in the Royal family.

With Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson, we have a couple who clearly wanted the throne, but it was denied them. Here we have a couple, like the Macbeths, who never had children. A couple who were courted by the Nazi party to be a royal family for the Third Reich. Wallis Simpson received carnations weekly from Von Ribbentrop. They were actively courted by the Nazis after the Abdication, in order to sway the British people and the loyalties of the Allies towards their cause. It's an interesting parallel, still historical, but a bit closer to us. When I think about the play, I think of it really as a fantasy, or a dream, or a nightmare of Edward VIII or Wallis Simpson. It is not literal.

I want to reacquaint the audience with the play, but have them see it in a different light. There are no overt political statements being made in this production. You want the play to be fresh – people to hear the lines – not draw unnecessary attention to your own cleverness.

How do you feel about your casting choices?

I am excited about everyone in the cast, and especially Ben and Diane, because they are in their 50s – they are not going to have another child. I wanted Macbeth to feel that this opportunity to be lord was his last kick at the corner office - it's the act of a man who is in the autumn of his life. Holding on to his powers, he has a certain desperation – the man in middle age, assessing what he has and hasn't done. Lady Macbeth also: Germaine Greer says that the two most powerful times in a woman's life are when she is 18 and when she is 50.

The Director's Vision of Macbeth (page 2 of 3)

Can you tell us about your design?

We are using a thrust stage. It's a very public stage, but also very intimate. It's not about the big scenic elements – here the actors are close to you. It's more 3D - we see the people in 360 degrees; it's sculpture as opposed to painting.

The design must serve a myriad of locations, and be able to change quickly. We need an environment that works for exterior battle scenes, the interior of the castle and in England. It needs to be metaphorical.

This production is set in a World War II munitions factory. A lead wall dominates the stage. There is rubble from the blitz. The detritus creates furniture, and there is a gigantic window that sometimes lets us look out at the crowd, and sometimes is a mirror that imprisons the characters in their own reflection.

Costumes are mid-century. We have a sense of the real effects of war, with mud and blood – it's not pretty, but is a contrast to the sophistication of the castle scenes. We see those who devised the war versus those who carry it out.



munitions factory in England

How will you deal with the supernatural?

There was an active belief in the supernatural. The weird sisters represent elements of fate, destiny, truth. The witches are being played in this production by children.

I wanted something to recreate the real horror of the witches, and I thought what is the most horrible, most fatal? To me it is the role of children. Any child that enters Macbeth's world is killed or chased out. Why do children figure so predominantly in the world of horror? They represent the future, innocence, a sense of what is unfulfilled in ourselves. For tragedy to work you have to get behind the tragic hero - so here you have to create a circumstance where Macbeth feels it is *necessary* to kill Duncan. To me, part of that is their childless state. Unlike Macduff, Banquo, and Duncan, who have progeny, the Macbeths are at the end of their line – they can't procreate, so they will *claim* their place by killing. Their lack of children is part of their private sorrow. So the supernatural in this production is being seen through the world of children - through the world of the unloved children, the murdered children, the murdered sense of childhood in the play.

The Director's Vision of Macbeth (page 3 of 3)

What do you want to say to young people with this play?

The play asks – how do you act in the face of so much known corruption? This play is so dangerous to children.

Also, here is some of the greatest dramatic literature ever written. Tragedy introduces students to complication in their lives. Sir Philip Sidney says in *The Defense of Poesy*: “tragedie teaches the uncertainty of the world”. Its intention is to make you skeptical, to question the world, to realize we have the human capacity to do evil and to do good, and that very human people can do horrendous evil.

What are the problems for a director?

The biggest problem for a director is to make the play breathe – to make it fresh and meaningful for the audience, while keeping it faithful to the writer.

There is no *one* way to present the play. *Macbeth* has been set in many different times and ages, done in many styles. Every director works out a vision of the play to suit his audience and time. Shakespeare himself was very liberal in his use of history – he used togas and doublets, Elizabethan dresses, at the same time, and in *Julius Caesar* he speaks of pulpits and clocks, unknown in ancient Rome. His purpose is to make the play immediate to his audience, a practice we continue today.

20. Pre or Post show. How would you set this play in Canada, now? Where? **Discuss. Play a scene** with a Canadian Macbeth. (relevance, fun) (grades 7-12)

21. Post show. Choose a short scene with a partner. Individually, work out how you would **direct it**. **What choices** would you make about casting, the historical period, lighting, colours? Is there a central metaphor? **Compare** your choices with your partner's. Note that there are different legitimate choices to be made. (drama, everything) (grades 9-12)

22. Post show. Roman Polanski was married to actress Sharon Tate, who was brutally slain by Charles Manson's followers in 1969. **Watch** the Roman Polanski film version of *Macbeth*. Research Charles Manson. Do you think you can see the influence that that crime had on Polanski's film? (Whole play, relevance, theme, directing) (grades 11 and up)

23. Pre show. From Peter Hinton: “*In Shakespeare's work, description is setting.*” **Find examples of details or images** in the dialogue that tell us exactly how to set the stage. (text, imagery) (grades 9 and up)

24. Post show. **Write a review** of the play. Give your opinion briefly about each of the main areas, with supporting examples, and choose one area, such as acting, design, or directing, to analyze in detail. (grades 7 and up)

Historical background for This Production: Great Britain, World War II (1936 – 1941)

The Abdication: Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson (page 1 of 2)

Peter Hinton sees the play as a fantasy or nightmare of Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. An "abdication" is a renunciation of the throne. Edward's abdication in 1936, shortly before the Second World War began, shook the world.

Edward VIII, a bachelor, became king of Britain and the Commonwealth on January 24, 1936, two days after the death of his father, George V. Edward soon fell in love with an American, Wallis Simpson, who was in the process of divorcing for the second time. His choice of wife created a crisis.

The monarch of the United Kingdom is supreme governor of the Church of England. At the time of the proposed marriage, and until 2002, the Church of England did not permit the re-marriage of divorced people with living ex-spouses. Therefore the constitutional position was that the King could not marry a divorcée and remain as King (for to do so would conflict with his role as Supreme Governor). Furthermore, the British government and the governments of the Dominion were against the idea of marriage between the King and an American divorcée for other reasons. She was perceived by many in the British Empire as a woman of "limitless ambition", who was pursuing the King because of his wealth and position.



Wallis Simpson and Edward VIII on their wedding day

Historical background for This Production: Great Britain, World War II (1936 – 1941)

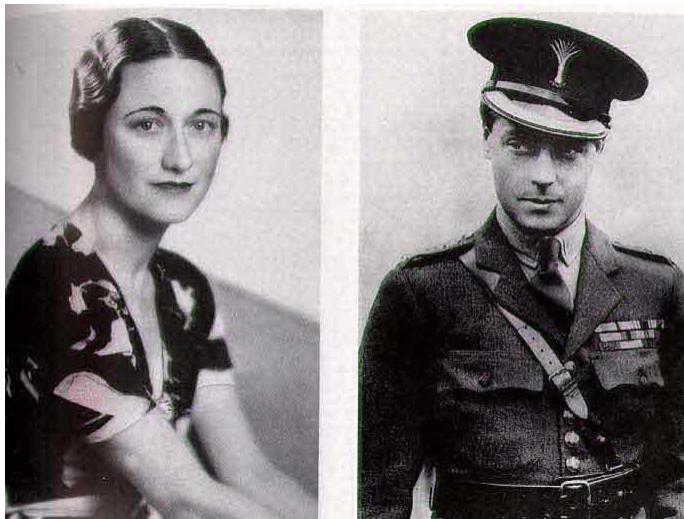
The Abdication: Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson (page 2 of 2)

On December 10, 1936, Edward announced his abdication to the government:

"After long and anxious consideration I have determined to renounce the throne to which I succeeded on the death of my father, and I am communicating this, my final and irrevocable decision. Realising as I do the gravity of this step, I can only hope that I shall have the understanding of my peoples in the decision I have taken and the reasons which have led me to take it. I will not enter now into my private feelings, but I would beg that it should be remembered that the burden which constantly rests upon the shoulders of a sovereign is so heavy that it can only be borne in circumstances different from those in which I now find myself." The next day he made a radio broadcast to his people, saying: *"I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility, and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to, without the help and support of the woman I love."*

Edward left for Europe. His younger brother, the gentle George VI, father of Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, became the next king of Britain.

The new George VI made Edward the Duke of Windsor. Edward, Duke of Windsor, married Wallis Simpson in June, 1937. She became Duchess of Windsor. She would not, however, be given the title of "Her Royal Highness". The new King's firm view, that the Duchess should not be given a royal title, was shared by his family. At first, the British Royal Family did not accept the Duchess and would not receive her formally.



The Duchess bitterly resented the denial of the royal title and the refusal of the Duke's relatives to accept her as part of the family. The couple found themselves exiled from Britain and shunned by Royal family members. They would spend most of the rest of their lives in France.

There are many reports of Wallis Simpson's compulsive ambition, (she herself called it her "insatiable ambition"), her dislike of the Royal family, and her involvement with Nazi Germany. In 1937 the couple visited Germany as personal guests of Adolf Hitler. After war broke out in 1939, the Duke worked for the British Army, while he was in France. Wallis entertained friends associated with the fascist movement, and there were suspicions that she was giving military information to the Germans. Many of her activities led people to believe she was motivated by revenge against the country that had rejected her ambition to be queen. http://ri.essortment.com/edwardviiiin_rdab.htm

Wallis and Edward were childless. On May 28, 1972, Edward died of cancer, at the age of 77. Wallis died on April 24, 1986 at the age of 89. Both are buried at Windsor Castle, in England.

Historical background for This Production: Great Britain, World War II (1936 – 1941)

The London Blitz

When Peter Hinton imagined Macbeth's Scotland he saw the landscape of the war-torn cities of World War II.

During the Battle of Britain, 1940, the German Air Force attacked south-east England over the period 10 July - 31 October, in a series of daylight raids intended to demoralize the British people and prepare the way for a German invasion.

The English Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was able to inspire a spirit of defiance and grim determination in the face of adversity. In his speech to the House of Commons on the war situation, on August 20, 1940, he gave his legendary tribute to the fighter pilots of the Royal Air Force:

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few..."

"The British nation and the British Empire finding themselves alone, stood undismayed against disaster. No one flinched or wavered; nay, some who formerly thought of peace, now think only of war. Our people are united and resolved, as they have never been before. Death and ruin have become small things compared with the shame of defeat or failure in duty. We cannot tell what lies ahead. It may be that even greater ordeals lie before us. We shall face whatever is coming to us. We are sure of ourselves and of our cause." homepage.eircom.net/~finnegam/war/blitz.htm



Forty-three thousand people died in the London Blitz.

25. Pre play. Read some of Winston Churchill's famous speeches here:

<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=393>

Compare the attitude to war evident in this famous speech by Winston Churchill, with our attitudes towards war today. Try to account for the similarities and differences. (Grades 9 and up)

26. Pre play. Listen to Winston Churchill's most famous speech:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=belzgofayo>. (Grades 9 and up)

Shakespeare and England

For information on the following topics, and for handouts that you can print for your class, go to: <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>



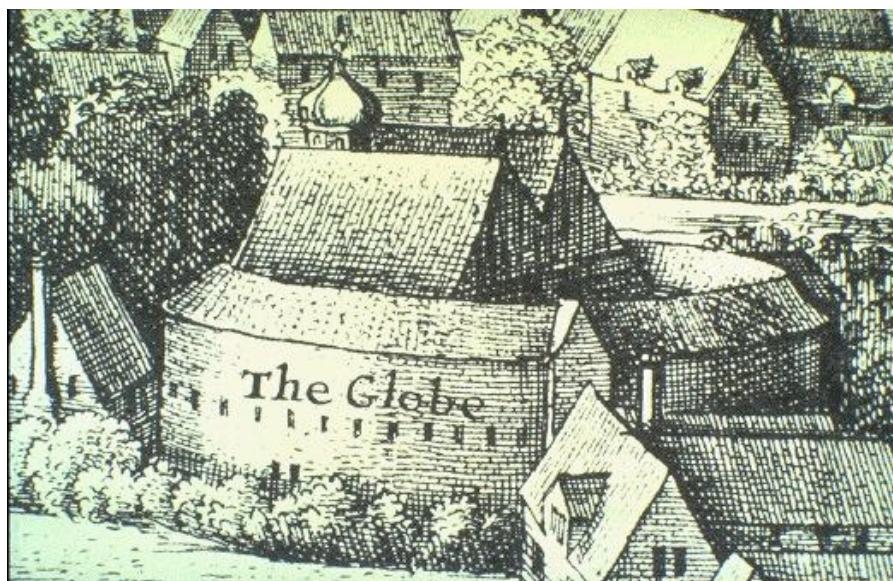
Shakespeare: A biography of Shakespeare, the greatest playwright in the English language. His plays, performed and celebrated for 400 years, are as popular as ever. <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

Shakespeare's Plays: A chronological list of Shakespeare's tragedies, histories and comedies. <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

The Sanders Portrait: This wonderful portrait, claimed to be of Shakespeare, was discovered in Ottawa suburbs, in 2001.
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

Elizabethan Stage: A description of the playhouses and thrust stages used in Shakespeare's time.
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

Elizabethan Stage (left)



The Globe Theatre

Beliefs of the Times - the Great Chain of Being and the Divine Right of Kings: An outline of dominant thoughts of the period, ideas that are key to understanding the plays.
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

Tragedy: An outline of the writings of Aristotle, Northrop Frye and Arthur Miller on tragedy.
<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/index.html#guides>

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on Macbeth

Macbeth and King James I

Shakespeare wrote this play shortly after James VI of Scotland became the King of England. There are indications that Macbeth was written with James in mind: through Banquo, the play shows James' ancestry; James' belief in Witchcraft was well-known, and the witches are integral to the play; the Porter refers to the Gunpowder Plot. James was the patron of Shakespeare's theatre company, The King's Men, and it would be natural for the politically astute Shakespeare to honour James.

Elizabeth I, Queen of England, died in 1603, with no heirs, and the English crown passed to James VI of Scotland, the only child of Mary, Queen of Scots. James then became James I of England. Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in about 1606.

James had become King of Scotland at 13 months of age, when his mother was forced to abdicate, and was imprisoned. James grew up in the custody of Scottish nobles, aware of the strife around him at court, and the constant warring between the Scots and English. He grew up to be a shrewd man who managed to reconcile his warring nobles. He has been described as the most effective ruler that Scotland ever had. Always wanting to orchestrate peace between Scotland and England, he was delighted to come to England as King.

James had strong opinions, particularly about the role and position of a king in a society, and about religion. He wrote on the evils of his time, witches, (he believed that he had been persecuted by witches, the agents of Satan), and tobacco, a newly blessing from the new-found Americas. Henri IV of France called James I "*the wisest fool in Christendom*".

James was to be disappointed in his reception by the English. The English considered the Scots barbaric, and James a buffoon. Soon after he arrived in England, there was an attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament, and all those within - all the government and nobles of the country. This is the Gunpowder Plot. James was aware of the way his own father had died, blown up with gunpowder as he was sleeping. James' own mother, Mary, and her soon-to-be third husband, Bothwell, were accused of that deed. James must have been terrified by his near escape. Guy Fawkes was executed for the Gunpowder Plot.

Shakespeare's company, which became *The King's Men* under James's patronage, sometimes staged their plays for his entertainment, just as they had for Queen Elizabeth before him. During the reign of James, literature and learning flourished in England.

It is thought that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* using Scottish history as his source, and added references to the Gunpowder Plot, and to the witches and to Banquo as a tribute to James. In the Scottish history of the 11th century, especially in Holinshed's history, Shakespeare found drama and violence — the slaughter of armies and of innocent families, the assassination of kings, the ambush of nobles by murderers, and the brutal execution of rebels. He also came upon stories of witches and wizards providing advice to traitors. Shakespeare must have thought such stories would be perfect for the new Scottish King, who already believed that traitors to the Crown might use witchcraft. James had already himself had women executed as witches.

James I of England, James VI of Scotland, is the ancestor of both Prince Charles and Lady Diana, Princess of Wales.

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on *Macbeth*

A Counterblaste to Tobacco:

excerpt from a treatise by James I, King of England, Scotland and Ireland

(page 1 of 2)

James I, writing on the evils of the world:

"Have you not reason then to be ashamed and to forbear this filthy novelty, so basely grounded, so foolishly received and so grossly mistaken in the right use thereof. In your abuse thereof sinning against God, harming yourselves both in person and goods, and raking also thereby the marks and notes of vanity upon you, by the custom thereof making yourselves to be wondered at by all foreign civil nations, and by all strangers that come among you to be scorned and held in contempt; a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."

27. Pre show. Carefully read King James' writing on tobacco above. Write your own diatribe, using archaic expressive language, on a modern-day social "evil," such as for example fast-food, soft drinks, low-slung pants, rap music, breast implants, or clogs. Share. (words, fun, history) (grades 7 and up).

28. Pre show. Try out this exercise in Shakespearean English from Sarah McVie (an instructor for the NAC Shakespeare for Kids program)

"I like to choose each insult from the play, write it down on a cue card and give one to each student. I divide the class into boys and girls — make two lines, centre stage, facing each other. They deliver the insults, one pair at a time. Students can't touch each other, but if they want to they can add a physical gesture. The insults are so rich — you knave, you cur, you whoreson malt house drudge... even without looking up the words, you understand. It's all in the sound of it... you will find it through playing — it's all about playing." A variation: **Give insults and compliments** — boys must give compliments ("you are the wonder in a mortal eye"), and girls reply with an insult ("you sludge"). Or vice versa. (Vocabulary, language, drama, warm up) (grades 7 and up)

29. Pre show. An iamb is a rhythm. Two syllables: dah DUM. "*I think I will*". It is the rhythm of your heart, and the natural rhythm of English speech. Iambic pentameter is therefore the chosen rhythm of most English poets, including Shakespeare. Read the material on iambic pentameter on <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/shakespeare.html>.

Try **speaking in iambs** as you walk around the classroom. One syllable per footstep. Then **sit in a circle**. Everyone should **speak** one line of five iambs:

"I think that I will brush my teeth tonight." You don't have to rhyme.

When you are comfortable, **try rhyming**, each second person rhyming with the person before. In order to make this work, the person giving the first line should choose a word with a common sound at the end of the line. (language) (grades 7 and up)

30. Post show. Writers create images through pictures. Poets especially do this, and Shakespeare is a master poet. Shakespeare writes his plays in pictures. If we see the pictures, we understand his text, see settings, feel mood. The images of darkness and light are a very important part of *Macbeth*.

Search through the play to find images of dark and light, such as "Stars hide thy fires; Let not light see my dark and deep desires". Note other uses of colour: "this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red."

Then write a poem to somehow summarize the play, using the colours in *Macbeth*.

Write a free verse stanza, or section, for each of these colours: black, red, green, gold, and any other colour you discover. Begin and end with black. (words, imagery, text, emotion) (grades 9 and up)

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on *Macbeth*

A Counterblaste to Tobacco (page 2 of 2)

31. Pre show. Shakespeare's vocabulary was almost 30,000 words. The vocabulary of the average English-speaking person today is 10,000. Shakespeare invented new words and wrote images and phrases that we use every day. Introduce a new 'old' word to students every day. Use word games, like Balderdash to let the dictionary be a place of fun. Try this matching game. (vocabulary, fun) (grades 7-12)

Match the words from *Macbeth* in Column A with their correct meanings in Column B.

Column A

1. Sear (sere)
2. Hie
3. Palter
4. Kerns
5. Hereafter
6. Lily-livered
7. Mouth-honour
8. Bane
9. Murky
10. Perturbation
11. Foisons
12. Luxurious
13. Blood-boltered
14. Chaudron
15. Beldams
16. Kite
17. Seeling
18. Scotched
19. Eternal jewel
20. Posterity
21. Weird
22. The traveling lamp
23. Incarnadine
24. Husbandry
25. Trammel up
26. Minion

(solutions provided on Table of Contents page)

Column B

- a) Dark, cloudy
- b) Make red
- c) Entangle
- d) Descendants
- e) Soul
- f) Wounded
- g) Entrails
- h) Thrift
- i) Dry, withered
- j) Of the Fates
- k) Foot soldiers
- l) In the future
- m) Ruin
- n) Lip service
- o) Goods, resources
- p) Sun
- q) Darling
- r) Clotted
- s) Trifle
- t) Hurry
- u) Cowardly
- v) Bird of prey
- w) Disturbance
- x) Old hags
- y) Eyes sewn shut
- z) Lustful

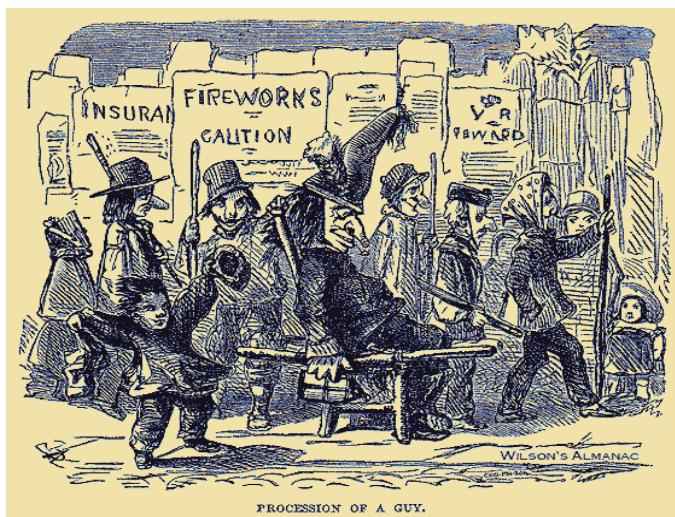
Next, can you find where they are used in the play?

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on *Macbeth*

The Gunpowder Plot

Shakespeare mentions the Gunpowder Plot in Macbeth. Shakespeare's father was said to be a friend of Catesby, the head conspirator of the Gunpowder Plot.

A few years after the Gunpowder Plot, Parliament passed an Act, called the Act of Succession, which forbade the monarch (king or queen) from either becoming, or marrying, a Catholic.



Catholics in England had expected James to be tolerant of them. What he did was order all Catholic priests to leave England. This so angered some Catholics that they decided to kill James and put a Catholic on the throne. Their anger led to a plot to kill not only the King of England, James I, but also everyone sitting in the Houses of Parliament with him when he opened Parliament on November 5th, 1605.

Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators, having rented out a house right beside the Houses of Parliament, managed to get 36 barrels of gunpowder into a cellar of the House of Lords. The explosive expert, Guy Fawkes, had been left in the cellars to set off the fuse. He was caught when a group of guards checked the cellars at the last moment. He was arrested and sent to the Tower of London, where he was tortured, by order of James. He eventually gave away the names of his fellow conspirators. Of those involved, some were shot as they were found and chased, and others were captured, sent to the Tower, and eventually hanged, drawn and quartered, as was Fawkes, in January 1606.

In celebration of his survival, James ordered that the people of England should have a great bonfire in the nights of every November 5th. This fire is traditionally topped off with an effigy of Guy Fawkes. Guy Fawkes' Day is still celebrated in England every November 5th, with fireworks and a stuffed "guy" (see image above) burning in a bonfire, to chants of "*remember, remember the fifth of November, with gunpowder, treason and plot.*" http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/gunpowder_plot_of_1605.htm

32. Pre play. Research The Gunpowder Plot of 1605. What modern-day equivalents can you find of citizens' attempts to unseat their government? **Discuss.** (history, politics, relevance) (grades 11 and up)

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on Macbeth

James I and Witchcraft: The North Berwick Witch Hunt (1591)

Hundreds of people in Europe and America were condemned as witches, tortured and killed. James himself was heavily involved in punishing witches, as this story shows.

King James himself was involved in the North Berwick witch hunt as a victim (he believed), and then, surprisingly to us, as an interrogator, judge and demonologist.

James married Anne of Denmark, by proxy, in 1589. When she sailed to Scotland to meet him, storms at sea drove back her fleet. Her Danish Admiral blamed the storms on witches. James then went to Copenhagen to meet her, and stayed the winter. When they sailed back to Scotland together in May, 1590, they were met again by fierce storms and dense fog. In July, a report from Scotland to England said that witches had been taken in Copenhagen, “*upon suspicion that by their witche craft they had staied the Queen of Scottes voyage into Scotland, and sought to have staied likewise the King's retorne*”. (Cal.Scot. p.454). Soon the storms were also blamed on a group of Scottish witches.

In November, the English ambassador, Bowes, in Scotland, sent this report:

“The King and Counsall is occupied with the examinacions of sundry witches taken in this contrye, and confessing both great nombers and the names of their fellowes; and also strange and odiouse factes done by them; which upon the full trialls of their causes are intended to be hereafter published. And some of good qualities are like to be blotted by the dealings of the wickett sorte.” (Cal.Scot. p.501)

We see that King James himself took over some of the interrogation. He was eager to uncover the witches’ attempts to kill him by raising storms and fog at sea, by working on wax images to make him waste away, and by manufacturing poisons. He fully intended to publish an account of the affair. He was anxious to discover complicity within the nobility. James’ involvement is told in these reports from Ambassador Bowes: “*The King by his owne especiall travell has drawn Sampson, the great witch, to confess her wicked doings, and to discover sundry things touching his own life, and how the witches sought to have his shirt or other linen for the execution of their charmes. In this Lord Claud and other noblemen are evill spoken of. The witches known number over thirty, and many others accused.*” (Cal.Scot. p.505)

On 23 February, 1591 the suggestion was made that the man behind the witches was the English ambassador himself, “*being a little black and fatt man with black haire ... had bene with them in a celler and given them gold to hange up and charme a tode for the hurte of the King in his life, and to hinder the issue to come of his bodie.*” and once again Bowes reports that “*The King will have their examinations printed soon after they are ended...*” (Cal.Scot. p.526)

By April 1591, the witch hunt was seeking to blame the king’s cousin, Francis, Earl of Bothwell. The king allowed Bothwell to go into exile, but he continued in public to speak against Bothwell. He told Parliament on 29 May, 1592 that Bothwell “*sought his destructioun, first by witcheckraft, bothe when he was in Denmarke, and when he was at home, as the depositiouns of the witches would testify, that he might succeed to the crowne...*” (Cal.Scot. p.160)

Agnes Sampson, the village midwife accused first, was sentenced to be “*ta'en to the Castell of Edinburgh, and thair bund to ane stake and wirreit, quhill she was deid; and thaireftir hir body to be brunt in assis.*” The witches were all sentenced to gruesome deaths.

Edward H. Thompson, <http://homepages.tesco.net/~eandcthomp/newes.htm>

33. Pre show. Research witchcraft in Canada today. Who are the Wiccans? What are their beliefs? Write a story or a short script that shows how they influence someone. (history, current events) (grades 9-12)

34. Pre or post show. Create spells in rhyme, in tetrameter (four iambs to the line.). Cast the spell, and improvise in groups of four, to see what happens. (language, witches, fun) (grades 7 and up)

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on *Macbeth* *Macbeth, Shakespeare and Curses*

There is an old theatre superstition that says *Macbeth* is cursed, and any actor who says the word "Macbeth" in the theatre will bring disaster upon the production. Any actor using the "M" word in a dressing room "*should immediately leave the room, turn around three times, break wind or spit, knock on the door and ask permission to re-enter*". Alternatively, (and less cumbrosomely) the line "*Angels and ministers of grace defend us*" (Hamlet 1.iv) can be quoted (Cassell's Companion To Theatre, 1997). You can refer to the play by one of its many nicknames: "The Scottish Play", "the Scottish Tragedy", "Mackers"

Another famous curse is associated with Shakespeare. Shakespeare was buried on April 25, 1616, in the same church where he had been baptized, Holy Trinity Church, in Stratford-Upon-Avon. His tomb is covered with a stone inscribed with this curse:

*Good Frend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To digg the dust encloased heare!*



*Blese be Ye man Yt spares thes stones
And curst be he Yt moves my bones.
engraving of curse on Shakespeare's tomb*

Shakespeare is said to be buried 17 feet deep - further security for the sanctity of his bones!

A sinking feeling: By the mid-18th century, Shakespeare's original gravestone had sunk so far into the chancel floor that the town fathers replaced it with another stone bearing the identical inscription.

Why the curse? It was common practice to open graves in order to make room for new burials, and to store the bones in the nearby charnel house. Whether or not Shakespeare composed the curse, it seems to have been effective - the charnel house has long since been torn down, but Shakespeare's bones have never been disturbed.

35. Pre or Post show. Write a story to tell what really happened backstage during the dress rehearsal of your high school musical. (grades 7 and up)

Historical Background: Scottish Influences on *Macbeth*

Excerpts from *The Curse of The Play*, by Robert Faires

This next article is just for fun. But be careful what you say in the theatre when you go to see the play!

Here is a list of deaths and accidents associated with productions of *Macbeth*.

In its very first performance, Hal Berridge was to play Lady Macbeth at the play's opening on August 7, 1606. Unfortunately, he was stricken with a sudden fever and died. It fell to the playwright himself to step into the role. In a performance in Amsterdam in 1672, the actor in the title role is said to have used a real dagger for the scene in which he murders Duncan, and done the deed for real. In 1721 the actors drove a rude nobleman and his friends from the theatre. Unfortunately for them, the noblemen returned with the militia and burned the theatre down. *Macbeth* was being performed the night of May 10, 1849, when a crowd of more than 10,000 New Yorkers gathered to protest the appearance of British actor William Charles Macready. The protest escalated into a riot, and the militia fired into the crowd. Twenty-three people were killed, 36 were wounded, and hundreds were injured. Abraham Lincoln read *Macbeth* on board the River Queen, on the Potomac River, on the afternoon of April 9, 1865. Within a week, Lincoln himself was dead by a murderer's hand.

During the first modern-dress production at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1928, a large set fell down, injuring some members of the cast seriously, and a fire broke out in the dress circle. In the early 1930s, Lillian Boylis took on the role of Lady Macbeth but died on the day of final dress rehearsal. Her portrait was hung in the theatre and some time later, when another production of the play was opening, the portrait fell from the wall. In 1934, actor Malcolm Keen turned mute onstage, and his replacement, Alistair Sim, like Hal Berridge before him, developed a high fever and had to be hospitalized. In 1937, a 30-year-old Laurence Olivier was rehearsing the play at the Old Vic when a 25-pound stage weight crashed down from the flies, missing him by inches. In addition, the director and the actress playing Lady Macduff were involved in a car accident on the way to the theatre, and the proprietor of the theatre died of a heart attack during the dress rehearsal. In 1942, a production headed by John Gielgud suffered three deaths in the cast -- the actor playing Duncan and two of the actresses playing the Weird Sisters -- and the suicide of the costume and set designer. In 1947, actor Harold Norman was stabbed in the swordfight that ends the play and died as a result of his wounds. His ghost is said to haunt the Colliseum Theatre in Oldham, where the fatal blow was struck. Supposedly, his spirit appears on Thursdays, the day he was killed. In 1953, Charlton Heston starred in an open-air production in Bermuda. On opening night, when the soldiers storming Macbeth's castle were to burn it to the ground onstage, the wind blew the smoke and flames into the audience, which ran away. Heston himself suffered severe burns in his groin and leg area from tights which had been accidentally soaked in kerosene.

In 1988, the Broadway production starring Glenda Jackson and Christopher Plummer is supposed to have gone through three directors, five Macduffs, and six cast changes. In 1998, in the Off-Broadway production starring Alec Baldwin and Angela Bassett, Baldwin somehow sliced open Macduff's hand.

For additional reference on the *Macbeth* curse, see Richard Huggett's *Supernatural on Stage: Ghosts and Superstitions in the Theatre* (NY, Taplinger).

<http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A78882>

Stage Productions of Macbeth: A History (page 1 of 2)

Peter Hinton set Macbeth in World War II. What periods and styles have other directors used?

This list shows some of the many different styles which directors have used for *Macbeth* over the years. The story goes that *Macbeth* was first performed before King James I at Hampton Court in 1606. No one knows for certain if that is true. The first record of a production was written by Samuel Forman, who described a performance he saw at the Globe Theatre on Bankside, in 1611. Richard Burbage, Shakespeare's friend and fellow actor played Macbeth. The diarist Samuel Pepys saw *Macbeth* at least three times in the 1600s and thought it was excellent.

Sir William Davenant (who claimed to be Shakespeare's illegitimate son) presented a radically changed version in 1672. *Macbeth* became a musical spectacular with the witches comic, as they flew, danced and sang. Davenant cut out the Porter and the Doctors, had Seyton change sides at the end and changed the language so as not to offend his audience. Scenes were added - Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff talked together. Macduff's role was greatly enlarged at the expense of Malcolm's. The witches even turned up to support Macduff against Macbeth.

The 18th century actor David Garrick wrote and added a dying speech for Macbeth, expressing sorrow and self-condemnation. Garrick's harrowing portrayal was held to be the definitive Macbeth for a generation.

Charles Macklin's production at Covent Garden in 1773 marked the departure from the then-prevalent practice of doing Shakespeare in contemporary dress. Macklin (c. 1697-1797) insisted on special costumes emphasizing a "Highland" setting in medieval Scotland. He introduced the tartans and kilts that would become standard in *Macbeth*.

Only in the 20th century were the spectacular operatic effects removed. Most modern versions are based on the First Folio of 1623, but in every production some adaptation takes place. The play has been set in 19th century Cuba, Hitler's Germany, and the First World War. It has been adapted as a classical opera (by Verdi) and a rock opera (*Jack To A King*, in 1992). An all black version *Umbabatha* was created in 1972 with Macbeth as a Zulu back in 19th century South Africa. Recently a production at the Globe had no interval, Macbeth in a dinner jacket, Lady Macbeth in an evening dress and witches (two of them men) grooving to 1920s jazz.

Read this description of the 1936 production of *Macbeth*, the first to feature an all black cast, directed by Orson Welles, then just out of his teens:

"At 6:30 p.m., 10,000 people stood as close as they could come to the Lafayette Theatre in New York City on Seventh Avenue near 131st Street, jamming the avenue for ten blocks and halting northbound traffic for more than an hour. Spotlights swept the crowd as mounted policemen strove to keep the entrance to the theater open for the arriving ticket holders. The lobby was so packed people couldn't get to their seats; the curtain, announced for 8:45, didn't rise until 9:30. When it finally did, on a jungle scene in Haiti, complete with witches and voodoo drums, the frenzied mood outside the theatre was matched by that within."

Orson Welles drastically revised Shakespeare's text to build up the witches' role and turned Hecate into a male ringleader of the forces of darkness, which dominated the play and controlled Macbeth from the very beginning.

Stage Productions of *Macbeth*: A History (page 2 of 2)

In 1849, rival productions of *Macbeth* in New York City led to one of the most famous fights in theatre history: the Astor Place Riots. Supporters of the two Macbeths - the English William Charles Macready (1793-1873) and the American Edwin Forrest (1806-72) - broke into fighting that spilled out into the city streets.

In 1933, Theodore Komisarjevsky presented a controversial *Macbeth* at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon. The set was deliberately non-realistic, consisting of a bare stage covered with aluminum and dominated by a spiral staircase, and, in later scenes, a hanging platform of twisted metal. The moody lighting only illuminated part of the stage, while the costumes matched the silver-grey colour of the set (Lady Macbeth's costume in the banquet scene included a crown made of saucepans and a breastplate apparently fashioned out of saucepan lids).

In 1967 Peter Hall directed Paul Scofield as Macbeth. Hall's production was praised for rethinking the play in a Christian context, emphasizing its often-overlooked religious themes. The production began and ended with the display of a crucifix; the Porter was interpreted as a guardian of Hell-Gate.

In 1976 Trevor Nunn directed it at The Other Place, the Royal Shakespeare Company's studio theatre in Stratford, with Ian McKellen as Macbeth and Judi Dench playing Lady Macbeth in a version that was later deemed definitive. Scenery and lighting were kept to a minimum. Actors sat on upturned crates outside the playing space, a Brechtian chalk circle. John Barber wrote in the Telegraph:

"There is no raised stage. Everything is plain, quiet, austere. Actors wear modern dress, barely raise their voices, and sit with the audience when not performing. A few lamps and packing cases, and a clanging bell are the only accessories."

In 1996, Tim Alberry directed *Macbeth* with Roger Allam and Brid Brennan. The Absurdist set was dominated by a castle battlement positioned downstage. The men wore 20th century military dress, while many of the women characters wore medieval sheathes. The witches were played as deranged, bearded Victorian governesses. The minimalist production deliberately de-emphasized the play's sense of terror and religious imagery.

Gregory Doran directed *Macbeth* in 1999. The fast-moving production presented Macbeth (played by Antony Sher) as a dynamic warrior/military dictator driven insane by his lust for power. Set in a militaristic state, the production drew parallels with the Balkan conflict and the Ceausescu regime in Romania.

Sources: <http://www.lyttonplayers.co.uk/>, and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

A very successful film version of *Macbeth* was directed by Roman Polanski in 1971.

Sources to Explore

Movies, Television

Macbeth, Roman Polanski, 1971; excellent, dark film.

Kurosawa's **Macbeth, Throne of Blood**, 1957.

The Tudors, television series, Showtime, CBC; currently airing plus available on DVD; acclaimed.

Elizabeth, 1998 feature film, starring Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Joseph Fiennes, directed by Shekhar Kapur, written by Michael Hirst; countless awards.

Anne of the Thousand Days, 1969, starring Richard Burton and Geneviève Bujold; many awards.

A Man For All Seasons, story of Henry VIII and Sir Thomas More, written by Robert Bolt, starring Paul Scofield, Orson Welles, John Hurt, Robert Shaw; marvelous film, six Oscars.

Judgement at Nuremberg, starring Spencer Tracy, William Shatner, Marlene Dietrich, Burt Lancaster; "a feast of performances" based on true events, Nazi war criminals on trial.

The Woman I Love, 1972, made-for-TV movie starring Faye Dunaway and Richard Chamberlain; focuses on Edward VIII's love affair with Wallis Simpson.

Edward and Mrs. Simpson, 1978 seven-part miniseries; focuses on both the romance and constitutional crisis that triggered the abdication.

Wallis & Edward, 2005 Granada production made-for-TV movie; billed as the first scripted account of the romance from Wallis Simpson's point of view.

Plus, scenes from many of the historical stage productions of *Macbeth* mentioned in this Study Guide can be viewed by doing a search using the name "Macbeth" on www.youtube.com.

Books

Elizabeth the Queen, play by Maxwell Anderson.

Cue for Treason, novel about Shakespeare's England, for young readers, by Geoffrey Trease.

A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599 by James Shapiro

Shakespearean Tragedy by A.C. Bradley; Literary criticism.

Aristotle's **Poetics**.

Tragedy and the Common Man, Arthur Miller's essay on modern tragedy.

The Fools of Time by Northrop Frye; an analysis of Shakespearean tragedy.

The Elizabethan World Picture by E.M. Tillyard.

Shakespeare's Imagery by Caroline Spurgeon; invaluable.

Asimov's Guide to Shakespeare by Isaac Asimov; very readable and accessible summary and explanation of the plays.

Websites

-**The Tudors** television series – try the family tree, see the cast and costumes: <http://www.sho.com/site/tudors/home.do>.

-Web site for learning about **Macbeth** – includes video: -

<http://www.rsc.org.uk/exploringshakespeare/keyidea/macbethkeyidea.htm>

-Read James I's speech to Parliament: <http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/Jamesdrk.htm>.

-Listen to various speeches from **Macbeth** with QuickTime: <http://library.thinkquest.org/2888/>.

-NAC website has information and help for teachers with verse, meter:

[rhythm.http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/shakespeare.html](http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/activities/shakespeare.html).

-**Tragedy and the Common Man** by Arthur Miller – read it online: <http://theliterarylink.com/miller1.htm>.

-The speeches of the British Prime Minister during the Battle of Britain:

<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=393>.

-Listen to Winston Churchill giving his most famous speech: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=belzgofxfayo>.

Events

National Arts Centre celebrates Shakespeare's birthday on Sunday April 27, 2008 (14:00-17:00). The public is invited to attend the celebrations, as Shakespeare for Kids presents scenes on the Fourth Stage.

Theatre Etiquette

Please take a moment to prepare the students for their visit to the National Arts Centre to explain what good theatre etiquette is, and why it will enhance the enjoyment of the play for all audience members.

- 1.** *Macbeth* will be performed in the Theatre of the NAC. Matinées at the NAC are for students and the general public. It is important for everyone to be quiet during the performance, so that others do not lose their immersion in the “world of the play”. Do not unwrap candy. Do not talk during the play, or between scenes. Unlike actors in movies, the actors onstage can hear and see disturbances in the audience and will give their best performances when they feel the positive involvement of audience members. The appropriate way of showing approval for the actors’ performances is through laughter and applause. For the enjoyment of all, people who disturb others during the show may be asked to leave the Theatre.
- 2.** Do not put your feet on the back of the seat in front of you. If someone needs to pass you in the row, it is courteous to stand and allow that person to pass you. Do not climb over seats. Avoid wearing scented products such as cologne or aftershave, as many people are sensitive or even allergic to these.
- 3.** If you plan to make notes on the play for the purposes of writing a review, please do not try to write them during the performance. Seeing this can be distracting for actors. Wait until intermission or after the performance is finished to write your reflections, please.
- 4.** It is important that there be no electronic devices used in the Theatre so that the atmosphere of the play is not interrupted and others are not disturbed. **Cell phones, pagers, and anything that beeps must be turned off.** Cameras and all other recording devices are not permitted in the Theatre.
- 5.** Tickets with assigned seats will be distributed by your teacher, and to avoid confusion it is important to sit in the designated seat. In the Theatre, all even-numbered seats are on the left side, and all odd-numbered seats are on the right. This means, for example, that seats 10 and 12 are actually side by side.
- 6.** Programmes may or may not be distributed at this student matinée. Information on the artists who put this production together, however, can be found in this Study Guide for those who wish to use it in writing a review. Some programmes can be made available to teachers if desired as a teaching aid to show how a programme is put together.
- 7.** As of this writing, the production has an estimated running time of 2.5 hours (including one intermission), so it is important to make a trip to the washroom before the show starts. Anyone leaving while the play is in progress may unfortunately not be allowed back into the Theatre until after intermission.



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Images 1940s England



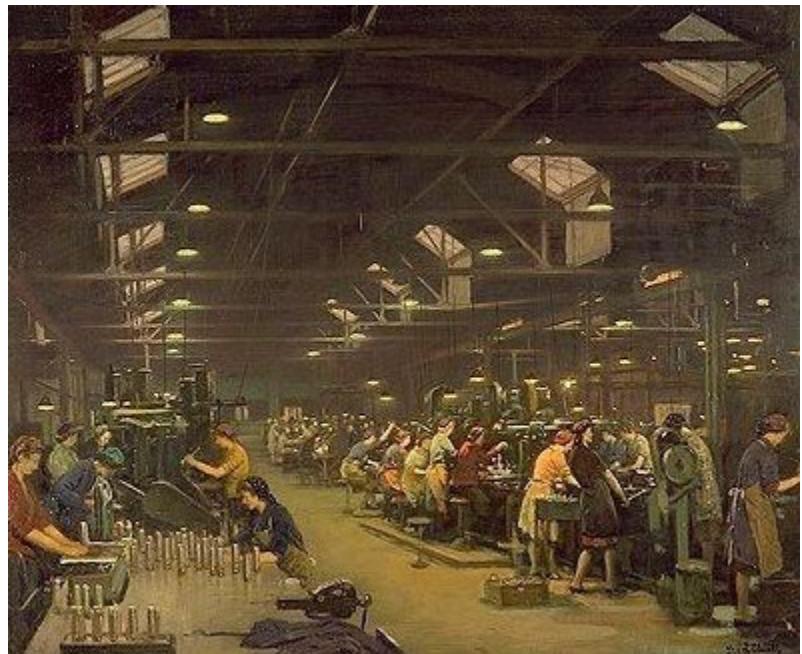
milkman in rubble during the Blitz



ambulance on High Street during the Blitz



factory worker



munitions factory

Images Portraits



William Shakespeare
(as painted by John Sanders)



Anne of Denmark



King James I



Edward VIII (circa 1970)



Wallis Simpson (circa 1970)