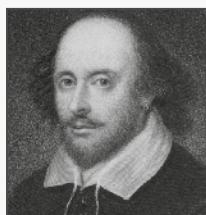




Playwright



William Shakespeare

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act IV

Concept Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words as you read Act IV of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (6).

WORD	YOUR RANKING
pernicious	
laudable	
treacherous	
avaricious	
integrity	
sanctity	

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read DRAMA

Tool Kit

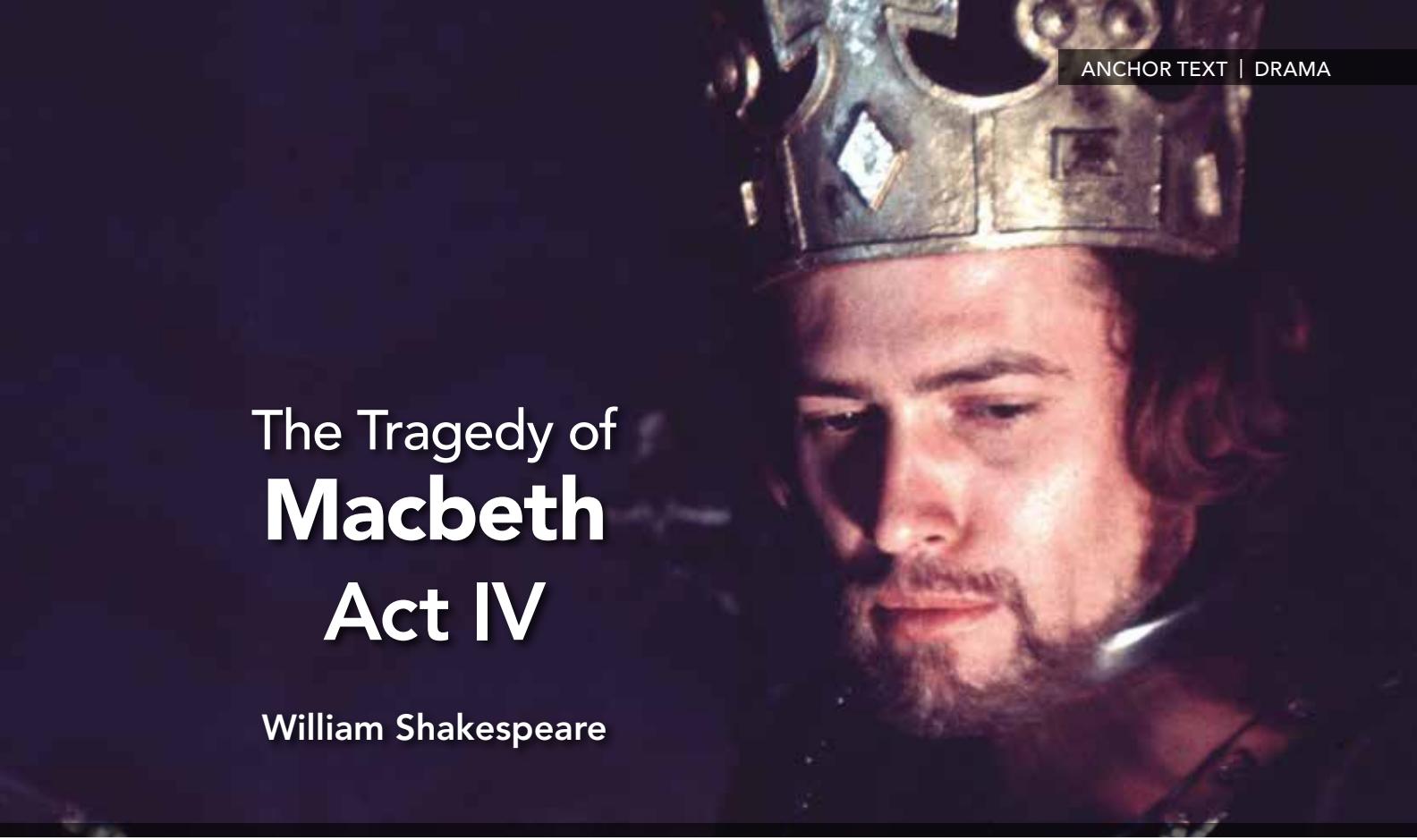
First-Read Guide and Model Annotation



STANDARDS

Reading Literature

12.RL.RRTC.10 Read and comprehend a variety of literature throughout the grades 11-12 text complexity band proficiently, with a gradual release of scaffolding at the higher end as needed.



The Tragedy of Macbeth

Act IV

William Shakespeare

REVIEW AND ANTICIPATE

In Act III, Macbeth hires murderers to kill Banquo and Banquo's son, Fleance. The murderers botch the job, killing Banquo but allowing Fleance to escape. Then, at a state banquet, Macbeth is shocked to see the ghost of Banquo sitting in the king's chair. Macbeth decides to visit the witches again, determined to know "the worst." At the end of Act III, we learn that Malcolm is in England preparing to invade Scotland, and that Macduff has gone to join him. In Act IV, Macbeth seeks help from the witches to secure his power. The forces of good, however, are beginning to gather against him.

Scene i • A witches' haunt.

[*Thunder. Enter the Three Witches.*]

First Witch. Thrice the brinded¹ cat hath mewed.

Second Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig² whined.

Third Witch. Harpier³ cries. 'Tis time, 'tis time.

First Witch. Round about the caldron go:

- 5 In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights was thirty-one
Swelt'red venom sleeping got,⁴
Boil thou first i' th' charmèd pot.

- 10 **All.** Double, double, toil and trouble;

NOTES

1. **brinded** striped.

2. **hedge-pig** hedgehog.

3. **Harpier** one of the spirits attending the witches.

4. **Swelt'red . . . got** venom sweated out while sleeping.

5. **fork** forked tongue.

6. **blindworm's** small, limbless lizard's.

7. **howlet's** small owl's.

8. **maw and gulf** stomach and gullet.

9. **ravined** ravenous.

10. **blaspheming Jew . . . Tartar's lips** For many in Shakespeare's audience, the words *Jew*, *Turk*, and *Tartar* evoked stereotypical enemies of Christianity.

11. **slab** sticky.

12. **chaudron** (SHOH druhn) entrails.

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark the repeating lines in the witches' speeches, lines 10–36.

QUESTION: Why does Shakespeare have the witches repeat these verses?

CONCLUDE: How does this repetition emphasize the idea that the witches are using language to cast spells?

Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Second Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the caldron boil and bake;

Eye of newt and toe of frog,

15 Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork⁵ and blindworm's⁶ sting,

Lizard's leg and howlet's⁷ wing,

For a charm of pow'rful trouble,

Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

20 **All.** Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,

Witch's mummy, maw and gulf⁸

Of the ravined⁹ salt-sea shark,

25 Root of hemlock digged i' th' dark,

Liver of blaspheming Jew.

Gall of goat, and slips of yew

Slivered in the moon's eclipse.

Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,¹⁰

30 Finger of birth-strangled babe

Ditch-delivered by a drab,

Make the gruel thick and slab:¹¹

Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,¹²

For th' ingredience of our caldron.

35 **All.** Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Second Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,

Then the charm is firm and good.

[Enter Hecate.]

Hecate. O, well done! I commend your pains;

40 And every one shall share i' th' gains:

And now about the caldron sing,

Like elves and fairies in a ring,

Enchanting all that you put in.

[Music and a song: "Black Spirits," etc. Exit Hecate.]

Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,

45 Something wicked this way comes:

Open, locks,

Whoever knocks!

[Enter Macbeth.]

Macbeth. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!

What is 't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

50 **Macbeth.** I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches: though the yesty¹³ waves
Confound¹⁴ and swallow navigation up;
55 Though bladed corn be lodged¹⁵ and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warder's heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope¹⁶
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germens¹⁷ tumble all together,
60 Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.

First Witch. Speak.

Second Witch. Demand.

Third Witch. We'll answer.

First Witch. Say, if th' hadst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

Macbeth. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

First Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
65 Her nine farrow;¹⁸ grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet¹⁹ throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low,
Thyself and office²⁰ deftly show!

[Thunder. First Apparition: *an Armed Head*.²¹]

Macbeth. Tell me, thou unknown power—

First Witch. He knows thy thought:
70 Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

First Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff!
Beware the Thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough.

[*He descends.*]

Macbeth. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks:
Thou hast harped²² my fear aright. But one word more—

75 **First Witch.** He will not be commanded. Here's another,
More potent than the first.

[*Thunder. Second Apparition: a Bloody Child*.²³]

Second Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

Second Apparition. Be bloody, bold, and resolute! Laugh to scorn
80 The pow'r of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

[*Descends.*]

NOTES

13. **esty** foamy.

14. **Confound** destroy.

15. **lodged** beaten down.

16. **slope** bend.

17. **nature's germens** seeds of all life.

18. **farrow** young pigs.

19. **gibbet** (JIHB iht) gallows.

20. **office** function.

21. **an Armed Head** symbol of Macduff.

22. **harped** hit upon.

23. **a Bloody Child** symbol of Macduff at birth.

24. take ... fate get a guarantee from fate (by killing Macduff).

25. a Child ... hand symbol of Malcolm.

26. top of sovereignty crown.

27. impress force into service.

28. bodelements prophecies.

29. lease of nature natural lifespan.

30. mortal custom natural death.

31. glass mirror.

Macbeth. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure.

And take a bond of fate.²⁴ Thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

[*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child Crowned, with a tree in his hand.*²⁵]

What is this,

That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?²⁶

All.

Listen, but speak not to 't.

90 Third Apparition. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill
Shall come against him. [Descends.]

Macbeth. That will never be.

95 Who can impress²⁷ the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodelements,²⁸ good!
Rebellious dead, rise never, till the Wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature,²⁹ pay his breath
100 To time and mortal custom.³⁰ Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

All.

Seek to know no more.

Macbeth. I will be satisfied. Deny me this,

105 And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that caldron? And what noise is this?

[*Hautboys.*]

First Witch. Show!

Second Witch. Show!

Third Witch. Show!

110 All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

[*A show of eight Kings and Banquo, last King with a glass*³¹ *in his hand.*]

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eyelids. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

115 A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!



^ The witches finish their brew.

What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more.
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
120 Which shows me many more: and some I see
That twofold balls and treble scepters³² carry:
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-boltered³³ Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.³⁴ What, is this so?

125 **First Witch.** Ay, sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I'll charm the air to give a sound.

130 While you perform your antic round,³⁵

NOTES

32. **twofold . . . scepters** coronation emblems and insignia of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, united in 1603 when James VI of Scotland became James I of England.
33. **blood-boltered** with his hair matted with blood.
34. **his** his descendants.
35. **antic round** grotesque circular dance.

pernicious (puhr NIHSH uhs) *adj.*
harmful, often in a way that is not
readily noticed

That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and vanish.*]

Macbeth. Where are they? Gone? Let this **pernicious** hour
Stand aye accursèd in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

[*Enter Lennox.*]

135 **Lennox.** What's your Grace's will?

Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?

Lennox. No, my lord.

Macbeth. Came they not by you?

Lennox. No indeed, my lord.

Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse. Who was 't came by?

140 **Lennox.** 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

Macbeth. Fled to England?

Lennox. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Time, thou anticipat'st³⁶ my dread exploits.

145 The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it.³⁷ From this moment
The very firstlings of my heart³⁸ shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts be it thought and done:

150 The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to th' edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:

155 But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are.

[*Exit.*]



Scene ii • Macduff's castle.

[*Enter Macduff's Wife, her Son, and Ross.*]

Lady Macduff. What had he done, to make him fly the land?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. He had none:
His flight was madness. When our actions do not,

NOTES

Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not

5 Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

Lady Macduff. Wisdom! To leave his wife, to leave his babes, His mansion and his titles,¹ in a place From whence himself does fly? He loves us not; He wants the natural touch:² for the poor wren, 10 The most diminutive of birds, will fight, Her young ones in her nest, against the owl. All is the fear and nothing is the love; As little is the wisdom, where the flight So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dearest coz,³

15 I pray you, school⁴ yourself. But, for your husband, He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows The fits o' th' seasons,⁵ I dare not speak much further: But cruel are the times, when we are traitors And do not know ourselves;⁶ when we hold rumor 20 From what we fear,⁷ yet know not what we fear, But float upon a wild and violent sea Each way and move. I take my leave of you. Shall not be long but I'll be here again. Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward 25 To what they were before. My pretty cousin, Blessing upon you!

Lady Macduff. Fathered he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,

It would be my disgrace and your discomfort.⁸

I take my leave at once.

[Exit Ross.]

30 **Lady Macduff.** Sirrah, your father's dead; And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

Lady Macduff. Poor bird! thou'dst never fear the net nor lime,⁹ 35 The pitfall nor the gin.¹⁰

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for. My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

40 **Lady Macduff.** Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell¹¹ again.

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet i' faith,

1. **titles** possessions.

2. **wants . . . touch** lacks natural affection.

3. **coz** cousin.

4. **school** control.

5. **fits o' th' seasons** disorders of the time.

6. **when . . . ourselves** when we are treated as traitors but do not know of any treason.

7. **when . . . fear** believe rumors based on our fears.

8. **It . . . discomfort** I would disgrace myself and embarrass you by weeping.

9. **lime** birdlime, a sticky substance smeared on branches to catch birds.

10. **gin** trap.

11. **sell** betray.

12. for thee for a child.

13. swears and lies takes an oath and breaks it.

14. enow enough.

15. in . . . perfect I am fully informed of your honorable rank.

16. doubt fear.

17. homely simple.

18. fell fierce.

laudable (LAWD uh buhl) *adj.*
praiseworthy

19. shag-eared hairy-eared.

With wit enough for thee.¹²

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

45 Lady Macduff. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.¹³

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must
50 be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

55 Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers enow¹⁴ to beat the honest men and hang up them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him. If you would not, it were
60 a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

[Enter a Messenger.]

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honor I am perfect.¹⁵

I doubt¹⁶ some danger does approach you nearly:

65 If you will take a homely¹⁷ man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell¹⁸ cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer.

[Exit Messenger.]

70 Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often **laudable**, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly. Why then, alas,

75 Do I put up that womanly defense,
To say I have done no harm?—What are these faces?

[Enter Murderers.]

Murderer. Where is your husband?

Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

Murderer. He's a traitor.

80 Son. Thou li'st, thou shag-eared¹⁹ villain!

Murderer. What, you egg!
 [Stabbing him.]
 Young fry²⁰ of treachery!
Son. He has killed me, mother:
 Run away, I pray you! [Dies.]
 [Exit Lady Macduff crying "Murder!" followed by Murderers.]

⌘ ⌘ ⌘

Scene iii • *England. Before the King's palace.*

[Enter Malcolm and Macduff.]

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macduff. Let us rather Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom.¹ Each new morn
 5 New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out Like syllable of dolor.²

Malcolm. What I believe, I'll wail; What know, believe; and what I can redress.
 10 As I shall find the time to friend, I will. What you have spoke, it may be so perchance. This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues, Was once thought honest: you have loved him well; He hath not touched you yet. I am young; but something
 15 You may deserve of him through me;³ and wisdom⁴ To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb T' appease an angry god.

Macduff. I am not **treacherous**.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is. A good and virtuous nature may recoil
 20 In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon; That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose: Angels are bright still, though the brightest⁵ fell: Though all things foul would wear⁶ the brows of grace, Yet grace must still look so.⁷

Macduff. I have lost my hopes.
 25 **Malcolm.** Perchance even there where I did find my doubts. Why in that rawness⁸ left you wife and child, Those precious motives, those strong knots of love, Without leave-taking? I pray you,

NOTES

20. fry offspring.

1. Bestride . . . birthdom protectively stand over our native land.

2. Like . . . dolor similar cry of anguish.

3. deserve . . . me earn by betraying me to Macbeth.

4. wisdom It is wise.

treacherous (TREHCH uhr uhs) *adj.* guilty of deception or betrayal

5. the brightest Lucifer.

6. would wear desire to wear.

7. so like itself.

8. rawness unprotected state or condition.

NOTES

9. **safeties** protections.

10. **affeered** legally confirmed.

11. **in my right** on behalf of my claim.

12. **England** king of England.

13. **sundry** various; miscellaneous.

14. **grafted** implanted.

15. **opened** in bloom.

16. **confineless harms** unbounded evils.

17. **Luxurious** lecherous.

avaricious (av uh RIHSH uhs)
adj. greedy

18. **Sudden** violent.

19. **continent impediments**
restraints.

20. **intemperance** lack of restraint.

21. **nature** man's nature.

Let not my jealousies be your dishonors.

30 But mine own safeties.⁹ You may be rightly just
Whatever I shall think.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country:
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy wrongs:
The title is affeered.¹⁰ Fare thee well, lord:
35 I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

Malcolm. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
40 It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds. I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;¹¹
And here from gracious England¹² have I offer
Of goodly thousands: but, for all this,
45 When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer, and more sundry¹³ ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be?

50 **Malcolm.** It is myself I mean, in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted¹⁴
That, when they shall be opened,¹⁵ black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.¹⁶

55 **Macduff.** Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damned
In evils to top Macbeth.

Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious,¹⁷ **avaricious**, false, deceitful,
Sudden,¹⁸ malicious, smacking of every sin
60 That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent impediments¹⁹ would o'erbear,
65 That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

Macduff. Boundless intemperance²⁰
In nature²¹ is a tyranny; it hath been

Th' untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
70 To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey²² your pleasures in a spacious plenty.
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.
We have willing dames enough. There cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
75 As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

Malcolm. With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection²³ such
A stanchless²⁴ avarice that, were I King,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands.
80 Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
85 Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming²⁵ lust, and it hath been
The sword of²⁶ our slain kings. Yet do not fear.
Scotland hath foisons²⁷ to fill up your will
Of your mere own.²⁸ All these are portable,²⁹
90 With other graces weighed.

Malcolm. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
95 I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,³⁰
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I pow'r, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound³¹
All unity on earth.

100 **Macduff.** O Scotland. Scotland!

Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.

Macduff. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled³² tyrant bloody-sceptered,
105 When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne³³
By his own interdiction³⁴ stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed?³⁵ Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,

NOTES

22. **Convey** secretly manage.

23. **affection** character.

24. **stanchless** never-ending.

25. **summer-seeming** summerlike.

26. **of** that killed.

27. **foisons** (FOY zuhnz) plenty.

28. **mere own** own property.

29. **portable** bearable.

30. **division . . . crime** variations of each kind of crime.

31. **confound** destroy.

32. **untitled** having no right to the throne.

33. **truest . . . throne** child of the true king.

34. **interdiction** exclusion.

35. **blaspheme his breed** slander his ancestry.

36. Died prepared for heaven.

integrity (ihn TEHG ruh tee) *n.*
moral uprightness

37. trains enticements.

38. modest wisdom prudence.

39. detraction slander.

40. For as.

41. at a point prepared.

42. the chance . . . quarrel May our
chance of success equal the
justice of our cause.

43. stay wait for.

44. convinces . . . art defies the
efforts of medical science.

sanctity (SANGK tuh tee) *n.* holiness;
goodness

45. presently amend immediately
recover.

46. evil scrofula (SKROF yuh luh),
skin disease called “the king’s
evil” because it was believed
that it could be cured by the
king’s touch.

110 Oft’ner upon her knees than on her feet,
Died³⁶ every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat’st upon thyself
Hath banished me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
115 Child of **integrity**, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honor. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these **trains**³⁷ hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest wisdom³⁸ plucks me

120 From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! For even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction,³⁹ here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
125 For⁴⁰ strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to woman, never was forsown,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight

130 No less in truth than life. My first false speaking
Was this upon myself. What I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country’s to command:
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,

135 Already at a point,⁴¹ was setting forth.
Now we’ll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel!⁴² Why are you silent?

Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
‘Tis hard to reconcile.

[Enter a Doctor.]

140 **Malcolm.** Well, more anon. Comes the King forth, I pray you?

Doctor. Ay, sir. There are a crew of wretched souls
That stay⁴³ his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art;⁴⁴ but at his touch,
Such **sanctity** hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.⁴⁵

145 **Malcolm.** I thank you, doctor.

[Exit Doctor.]

Macduff. What’s the disease he means?

Malcolm. ‘Tis called the evil.⁴⁶
A most miraculous work in this good King,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,

150 Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
 All swell'n and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
 The mere⁴⁷ despair of surgery, he cures,
 Hanging a golden stamp⁴⁸ about their necks,
 Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
 155 To the succeeding royalty he leaves
 The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
 He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
 And sundry blessings hang about his throne
 That speak him full of grace.

[Enter Ross.]

Macduff. See, who comes here?

160 **Malcolm.** My countryman; but yet I know him not.

Macduff. My ever gentle⁴⁹ cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now: good God, betimes⁵⁰ remove
 The means that makes us strangers!

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross. Alas, poor country!

165 Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
 Be called our mother but our grave, where nothing⁵¹
 But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;
 Where sighs and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,
 Are made, not marked, where violent sorrow seems

170 A modern ecstasy.⁵² The dead man's knell
 Is there scarce asked for who,⁵³ and good men's lives
 Expire before the flowers in their caps.
 Dying or ere they sicken.

Macduff. O, relation
 Too nice,⁵⁴ and yet too true!

Malcolm. What's the newest grief?

175 **Ross.** That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker,⁵⁵
 Each minute teems⁵⁶ a new one.

Macduff. How does my wife?

Ross. Why, well.

Macduff. And all my children?

Ross. Well too.

Macduff. The tyrant has not battered at their peace?

Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

180 **Macduff.** Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?

Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
 Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumor

NOTES

47. **mere** utter.

48. **stamp** coin.

49. **gentle** noble.

50. **betimes** quickly.

51. **nothing** no one.

52. **modern ecstasy** ordinary emotion.

53. **The dead . . . who** People can no longer keep track of Macbeth's victims.

54. **nice** exact.

55. **That . . . speaker** Report of the grief of an hour ago is hissed as stale news.

56. **teems** gives birth to.



NOTES

57. **out** in rebellion.

58. **witnessed** confirmed.

59. **power** army.

60. **doff** put off.

61. **latch** catch.

62. **fee-grief** personal grief.

63. **quarry** heap of game slain in a hunt.

64. **o'er-fraught** overburdened.

Of many worthy fellows that were out,⁵⁷
Which was to my belief witnessed⁵⁸ the rather,
185 For that I saw the tyrant's power⁵⁹ afoot.
Now is the time of help. Your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff⁶⁰ their dire distresses.

Malcolm. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither. Gracious England hath
190 Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howled out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch⁶¹ them.

195 **Macduff.** What concern they?
The general cause or is it a fee-grief⁶²
Due to some single breast?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

200 **Macduff.** If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.

205 **Ross.** Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry⁶³ of these murdered deer,
To add the death of you.

Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak
210 Whispers the o'er-fraught⁶⁴ heart and bids it break.

Macduff. My children too?

Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

Macduff. And I must be from thence!
My wife killed too?

Ross. I have said.

Malcolm. Be comforted.
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
215 To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite!⁶⁵ All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

Malcolm. Dispute it⁶⁶ like a man.

220 **Macduff.** I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man.
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,

225 They were all struck for thee! Naught⁶⁷ that I am.
Not for their own demerits but for mine
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!

Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword. Let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

230 **Macduff.** O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front⁶⁸
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him. If he 'scape,
235 Heaven forgive him too!

Malcolm. This time goes manly.
Come, go we to the King. Our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave.⁶⁹ Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the pow'rs above
Put on their instruments.⁷⁰ Receive what cheer you may.
240 The night is long that never finds the day. [Exit.]

NOTES

CLOSE READ

ANNOTATE: Mark the word that Macduff repeats in lines 216–219.

QUESTION: Why does he repeat the word?

CONCLUDE: How does this repetition suggest the intensity of both Macduff's disbelief and his grief?

65. hell-kite hellish bird of prey.

66. Dispute it Counter your grief.

67. Naught wicked.

68. front to front face to face.

69. Our . . . leave We need only to take our leave.

70. Put . . . instruments urge us onward as their agents.

Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. As the witches complete their brew, how do they know that someone is coming?
 2. Why is Lady Macduff angry with her husband?
 3. What do Macduff and Malcolm resolve to do at the end of Act IV?

4.  **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the text by writing a summary of

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the play?

Research to Explore Find out more about weapons and armaments used in Scotland and the rest of Europe during the eleventh century, which is the time setting for *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.



Close Read the Text

Reread Act IV, Scene i, of the play. Find and mark the prophecies that you think are most reassuring to Macbeth. Do you think Macbeth is wise to trust the witches?



THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH,
ACT IV

Analyze the Text

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

Notebook Respond to these questions.

1. (a) What resolution does Macbeth make in Scene i, lines 151–153?
(b) **Interpret** What change does this resolution indicate in the way Macbeth will handle decisions in the future?
2. (a) What idea is Ross expressing in Scene ii, lines 18–22?
(b) **Make Inferences** Does Ross believe what he tells Lady Macduff? Explain.
3. (a) How does Malcolm test Macduff? (b) **Analyze** What does this test reveal about them both?

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Vocabulary

pernicious	treacherous	integrity
laudable	avaricious	sanctity

Why These Words? Use a print or online dictionary to confirm your understanding of each concept vocabulary word and the word's pronunciation. These concept words relate to the ideas of right and wrong. For example, Lady Macbeth remarks on the irony that in this world committing evil acts may be *laudable*, or worthy of praise. Find two other words in Act IV that relate to the concept of right and wrong.

Word Study

Antonyms Shakespeare uses **antonyms**, words with opposing meanings, to indicate character traits. In Scene iii, Malcolm confesses to being *avaricious* and to lacking "king-becoming graces." He places himself in contrast with Macduff, who is a "child of *integrity*," or a morally upright man. The scene proceeds with Malcolm recanting his previous self-criticism. The entire scene is a compilation of synonyms and antonyms, as Malcolm embraces virtue, having previously accused himself of being steeped in vice.

Reread Act IV, Scene iii, and note three other adjectives Shakespeare uses. Use a thesaurus to research their connotations and denotations. Write the words here, as well as an antonym for each of them.

WORD NETWORK

Add interesting words related to time from the text to your Word Network.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

11-12.RL.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing and synthesizing relevant textual evidence from multiple sources.

Language

11-12.L.VAU.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on 11th -12th grade-level text by choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

c. Consult reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or phrase.

11-12.L.VAU.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings in grades 11-12 reading and content; interpret figures of speech in context and analyze their role in a text; analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH,
ACT IV STANDARDS

Reading Literature

11-12.RL.KID.3 Analyze how an author's choices regarding the development and interaction of characters, events, and ideas over the course of a text impact meaning.

Analyze Craft and Structure

Imagery and Archetypes **Imagery** is the language that writers use to capture sensory experiences and stimulate emotions. It is what helps readers experience events—to see, hear, feel, smell, and taste, them—rather than just read or listen to words. Shakespeare uses imagery to pack sensory experiences and strong emotions into almost every line. In *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, he returns to certain images repeatedly throughout the play. These include the following broad categories:

- blood
- ill-fitting clothes
- babies and children, who may be Macbeth's victims or figures he finds threatening

This repeated imagery reinforces important themes in the play. The last group of images suggests that Macbeth is in some way warring against the future, which babies and children represent.

Some images are powerful because they are **archetypal**. They relate to ideas and emotions expressed by people in all times and cultures. In Act IV, for example, images of banishment from the world of the living—shrieking, groaning, and bleeding—indicate that Macbeth's Scotland represents an underworld region where the dead are punished.

Characters are often archetypes, as well. The witches are archetypes of evil, since they have no redeeming features. They are hideous inside and out. Macduff is another archetype—the avenging hero who vows to defeat the flawed protagonist, Macbeth.

Practice

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers. **Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. (a) In what way is Banquo an archetype? (b) Why is Macbeth so upset at the image of Banquo shown to him by the witches?
2. (a) In Act IV, Scene iii, identify two archetypal images of banishment from an ideal world. (b) Which image do you find more compelling? Why?
3. (a) Use the chart to record at least two examples of each type of imagery in Act IV. (b) Explain how each pattern of imagery you identified relates to a thematic idea—a message or insight into life or the human condition that the play conveys.

IMAGERY	EXAMPLE FROM MACBETH	CONNECTION TO THEME
Blood		
Children		
Darkness		
Weeping		



Conventions and Style

Exclamatory Phrases Shakespeare uses exclamatory phrases throughout the play. Phrases like “Woe, alas” and “Fie, for shame!” express strong emotion and call attention to significant moments in the play. They are extreme reactions to extreme events, and they are usually indicated by the presence of an exclamation mark. Act IV abounds in heartfelt expressions of emotion that convey fear and horror. Note Macduff’s speech in Act IV, Scene iii, when he exclaims, “Fit to govern! / No, not to live. O nation miserable!” The words burst out, almost as if Macduff cannot control his tongue.

Look for these exclamatory phrases in Act IV. Use this chart to indicate the reason for each exclamation.

SCENE AND LINE	EXCLAMATION	REASON
Scene i, line 112	“Down!”	
Scene ii, line 80	“Thou li’st, thou shag-eared villain!”	
Scene iii, line 31	“Bleed, bleed, poor country: . . .”	
Scene iii, line 100	“O Scotland. Scotland!”	

Read It

1. Reread Scene iii. Look for exclamation marks that indicate possible exclamatory phrases. Note the situation in which the exclamation is made.
2. **Connect to Style** Choose a line from Scene iv that contains an exclamation. Rewrite the line as an ordinary statement that expresses the same thought. What effect is created by the rewrite? Is it more effective or less effective than the original? Explain.

Write It

 **Notebook** Write some lines of verse that contain exclamatory phrases. Experiment with using iambic pentameter. Your verse may be original or retell a moment from the play from a different character’s point of view.

STANDARDS

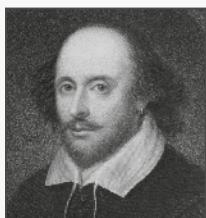
Reading Literature

11-12.RL.KID.3 Analyze how an author’s choices regarding the development and interaction of characters, events, and ideas over the course of a text impact meaning. Language

11-12.L.KL.3 Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening; consult references for guidance, and apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.



Playwright



William Shakespeare

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act V

Concept Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words as you read Act V of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (6).

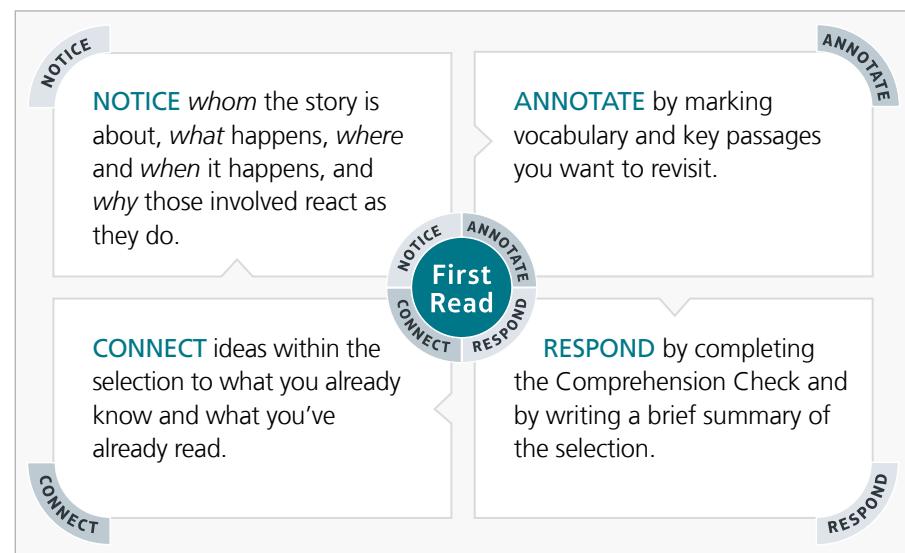
WORD	YOUR RANKING
perturbation	
agitation	
purge	
antidote	
pristine	
usurper	

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read DRAMA

Tool Kit

First-Read Guide and Model Annotation



STANDARDS

Reading Literature

12.RL.RRTC.10 Read and comprehend a variety of literature throughout the grades 11-12 text complexity band proficiently, with a gradual release of scaffolding at the higher end as needed.