

# Macbeth

## Close Reading Packet

### Questions and Answer Key by Act

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## ACT I

### Prophecy, Ambition, and Temptation

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#### Part I – Comprehension

1. What do the witches predict about Macbeth?
  2. What do the witches predict about Banquo?
  3. How does Macbeth initially react to the prophecy?
  4. Why does Duncan decide to make Malcolm the Prince of Cumberland?
  5. Why is Lady Macbeth worried about Macbeth's character?
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#### Part II – Language and Literary Devices

6. What does the phrase “**Fair is foul, and foul is fair**” suggest about the play's themes?
  7. Why does Lady Macbeth ask the spirits to “unsex” her?
  8. What does Macbeth mean when he says, “Stars, hide your fires”?
  9. How does Shakespeare use darkness imagery in Act I?
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#### Part III – Theme and Analysis

10. Do the witches control Macbeth's fate, or do they only influence him?
  11. What arguments does Lady Macbeth use to convince Macbeth to kill Duncan?
  12. What reasons does Macbeth give for not wanting to commit the murder?
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## ACT I – ANSWERS

1. They predict he will become Thane of Cawdor and eventually king.
  2. Banquo will not be king, but his descendants will become kings.
  3. He is intrigued and begins thinking about the possibility of becoming king.
  4. Duncan names Malcolm his heir, strengthening the royal line.
  5. She fears he is too kind and morally hesitant to seize power.
  6. It suggests that appearances can be deceptive and that good and evil may be reversed.
  7. She wants to remove feminine compassion so she can pursue ruthless ambition.
  8. He wants to hide his dark thoughts and ambitions.
  9. Darkness symbolizes evil, secrecy, and moral corruption.
  10. The witches plant the idea, but Macbeth chooses to act.
  11. She questions his masculinity and ambition.
  12. Duncan is a good king, Macbeth is his loyal subject, and the murder would be morally wrong.
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## ACT II

### Murder and Guilt

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#### Part I – Comprehension

1. What vision does Macbeth see before killing Duncan?
  2. Why does Macbeth say he could not say “Amen”?
  3. Why does Lady Macbeth not kill Duncan herself?
  4. What do Duncan’s sons decide after the murder?
  5. Why does Macduff become suspicious?
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#### Part II – Language and Literary Devices

6. What might the floating dagger symbolize?
  7. What does the line “**Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep**” mean?
  8. How does Shakespeare use blood imagery in this act?
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#### Part III – Theme and Analysis

9. How do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth react differently to the murder?
  10. What does this act suggest about the psychological consequences of guilt?
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## **ACT II – ANSWERS**

1. He sees a hallucinated dagger leading him toward Duncan’s chamber.
  2. His guilt prevents him from feeling spiritually connected.
  3. Duncan resembles her father while sleeping.
  4. Malcolm flees to England and Donalbain flees to Ireland.
  5. Their sudden flight makes them appear guilty.
  6. It represents Macbeth’s ambition and guilt guiding him toward murder.
  7. Macbeth believes he has destroyed his own peace and innocence.
  8. Blood represents guilt that cannot be easily washed away.
  9. Macbeth is overwhelmed with guilt, while Lady Macbeth remains practical and calm.
  10. The act shows guilt immediately affecting Macbeth’s mind.
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## **ACT III**

### **Power, Fear, and Tyranny**

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#### **Part I – Comprehension**

1. Why does Macbeth fear Banquo?
  2. What plan does Macbeth create to deal with Banquo?
  3. What happens during Banquo’s murder?
  4. What happens at the royal banquet?
  5. Why does Macbeth decide to visit the witches again?
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#### **Part II – Language and Literary Devices**

6. What does Banquo mean when he says Macbeth “played most foully”?
  7. What does the ghost of Banquo symbolize?
  8. How does Shakespeare show Macbeth’s mental deterioration?
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## **Part III – Theme and Analysis**

9. How has Macbeth changed since Act I?
  10. What does the banquet scene reveal about Macbeth's leadership?
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## **ACT III – ANSWERS**

1. The witches predicted Banquo's descendants would become kings.
  2. He hires murderers to kill Banquo and Banquo's son Fleance.
  3. Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes.
  4. Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost and reacts with terror.
  5. He wants reassurance about his future.
  6. He suspects Macbeth gained power through wrongdoing.
  7. It represents Macbeth's guilt and fear.
  8. Macbeth becomes increasingly paranoid and unstable.
  9. He transforms from hesitant nobleman to ruthless tyrant.
  10. His erratic behavior weakens his authority.
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## **ACT IV**

### **Prophecy and False Confidence**

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#### **Part I – Comprehension**

1. What three warnings do the witches give Macbeth?
  2. Why does Macbeth feel invincible?
  3. What terrible act does Macbeth commit against Macduff?
  4. Where does Macduff go after learning about the murders?
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#### **Part II – Language and Literary Devices**

5. How are the witches' prophecies misleading?
  6. What does the apparition of the child crowned with a tree symbolize?
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## Part III – Theme and Analysis

7. How does Macbeth respond to fear in this act?
  8. What does this act suggest about the dangers of overconfidence?
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## ACT IV – ANSWERS

1. Beware Macduff, no man born of woman shall harm Macbeth, and Macbeth will not fall until Birnam Wood moves.
  2. He believes the prophecies make him unstoppable.
  3. He orders the murder of Macduff's wife and children.
  4. He joins Malcolm in England to plan rebellion.
  5. They appear literal but contain hidden meanings.
  6. It symbolizes Malcolm's army using branches from Birnam Wood.
  7. He responds with extreme violence and cruelty.
  8. Misinterpreting prophecy leads to arrogance.
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## ACT V

### Downfall and Justice

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#### Part I – Comprehension

1. What strange behavior does Lady Macbeth show?
  2. What does the doctor conclude about her condition?
  3. What strategy does Malcolm's army use to approach Macbeth's castle?
  4. What news does Macbeth receive about Lady Macbeth?
  5. Who ultimately kills Macbeth?
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#### Part II – Language and Literary Devices

6. What does Lady Macbeth mean when she says “**Out, damned spot!**”?
7. What does Macbeth mean in the “**Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow**” speech?
8. How does Shakespeare resolve the witches' prophecies?

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## Part III – Theme and Analysis

9. What causes Macbeth's downfall?
10. What lesson does the play offer about ambition and power?

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## ACT V – ANSWERS

1. She sleepwalks and tries to wash imagined blood from her hands.
2. Her illness is psychological rather than physical.
3. Soldiers carry branches from Birnam Wood to hide their numbers.
4. Lady Macbeth has died.
5. Macduff kills Macbeth.
6. She is hallucinating blood representing guilt.
7. Life feels meaningless and empty to Macbeth.
8. Macduff reveals he was born by Caesarean section, fulfilling the prophecy.
9. His ambition, tyranny, and misinterpretation of prophecy lead to defeat.
10. Uncontrolled ambition can destroy both individuals and societies.

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## Final Analytical Writing Prompt

Using evidence from multiple acts, respond to the following:

**Is Macbeth more responsible for his downfall, or are the witches responsible?**

Support your argument with textual evidence.