

Macbeth Study Questions

Act I

1. What is the point of the first scene, literally and in reference to the whole play?
2. What does Duncan call Macbeth when he hears Macbeth has defeated Macdonwald?
3. Who is sentenced to death?
4. What do the witches predict in I.iii for Macbeth? For Banquo?
5. What news does Ross bring Macbeth?
6. Banquo, like Macbeth, is surprised that the witches have predicted Macbeth's new title. He is, however, leery. What does he say about the motives of the "instruments of darkness"?
7. Malcolm describes Cawdor's last moments before execution. What is Duncan's reply?
8. Macbeth says, "Stars, hide your fires, Let not light see my black and deep desires." What are Macbeth's desires?
9. After Lady Macbeth reads the letter, what does she tell us is her opinion of Macbeth, and how does she plan to help him?
10. What is Lady Macbeth's "prayer" to the spirits after she learns Duncan is coming?"
11. What advice does Lady Macbeth give Macbeth when he arrives home?
12. What are Macbeth's arguments to himself against killing Duncan?
13. What arguments does Lady Macbeth use to convince Macbeth to commit the murder?
14. What is Lady Macbeth's plan?



Act II

1. What is Macbeth's lie to Banquo about the witches' predictions?
2. What is the signal Lady Macbeth is to give Macbeth to let him know that she has taken care of the guards (grooms)?
3. What excuse does Lady Macbeth give for not killing Duncan herself?
4. After Macbeth kills Duncan, he goes to Lady Macbeth and is concerned about not being able to say "Amen." What is her advice to him?
5. Then, Macbeth is worried about hearing a voice saying, "Macbeth does murder sleep." What does Lady Macbeth then tell him to do?



6. Why won't Macbeth take the daggers back to the scene of the crime?
7. Who was knocking?
8. What three things does drinking provoke?
9. How does Lennox describe the night, and what is Macbeth's response?
10. What did Macduff discover?
11. Macduff says, "Oh, gentle lady, 'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak. The repetition, in a woman's ear, Would murder as it fell." What is ironic about this?
12. What excuse or explanation did Macbeth give for killing the guards (grooms)? What is his real reason?
13. Why do Malcolm and Donalbain leave?
14. Why does Ross not believe Malcolm and Donalbain were responsible for Duncan's murder?

Act III

1. Why does Macbeth want Banquo and Fleance dead?
2. What is Macbeth's plan for killing Banquo and Fleance? Does it work?
3. Macbeth says, "The worm that's fled Hath nature that in time will venom breed, No teeth for the present." What does that mean?
4. Who (what) did Macbeth see at the banquet table?
5. How does Lady Macbeth cover for Macbeth at the banquet? What excuses does she give for his wild talk?
6. Who else was missing from the banquet table (besides Banquo)?
7. Macbeth says, "I am in blood Stopped in so far that should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er." What does he mean?
8. What does Hecate want the witches to do?
9. What does Lennox think about Macbeth, Fleance, and Duncan's sons?

Act IV

1. Witch 2 says, "By the pricking of my thumb, Something wicked this way comes." Who comes?
2. What is Macbeth's attitude towards the witches this time?
3. What four things did the witches show

Macbeth? What does each show/say? What is Macbeth's reaction?

4. Macbeth says (about the witches), "Infected be the air whereon they ride, And damned all those that trust them!" What is Macbeth, in effect, saying about himself?
5. Where is Macduff?
6. Why does Macbeth have Macduff's family and servants killed?
7. Why does Lady Macduff's son say liars and swearers are fools?
8. Malcolm says, "Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell. Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace, Yet grace must still look so." What does that mean?
9. Macduff says, "Oh, Scotland, Scotland!" Why?
10. What news does Ross bring to Macduff?

Act V

1. What do the doctor and gentlewoman see

Lady Macbeth doing? What do they decide to do about it?

2. What does Macbeth want the doctor to do for his wife?
3. What trick does Malcolm use to hide the number of men in his army?
4. Malcolm says, "And none serve with him but constrained things Whose hearts are absent, too." What does that mean?
5. What is Macbeth's reaction to Lady Macbeth's death?
6. What is Macbeth's reaction to the news that Birnam Wood is moving?
7. Who first fights Macbeth? What happens?
8. Macbeth says to Macduff, "But get thee back, my soul is too much charged With blood of thine already." To what is he referring?
9. When does Macbeth know he's in trouble?
10. How does Macbeth die?
11. Who will be King of Scotland?

Macbeth Vocabulary

Act I

1. Like valor's minion carved out his passage
2. Into the air, and what seemed corporal melted
3. Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mold
4. I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful the hearing of my wife with your approach
5. And chastise with the valor of my tongue
6. To beguile the time, look like the time, bear welcome in your eye
7. Upon the sightless couriers of the air

- ___ 1. minion
___ 2. corporal
___ 3. cleave
___ 4. harbinger
___ 5. chastise
___ 6. beguile
___ 7. couriers

- A. of or relating to the body
B. one that indicates or foreshadows what is to come
C. to punish
D. to pass time pleasantly
E. messengers
F. to adhere, cling, or stick fast
G. an obsequious follower or dependent

Act II

1. I see thee yet, in form as palpable.
2. How is't with me when every noise appalls me?
3. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock.
4. ...equivocates him in a sleep and giving him the lie, leaves him.
5. Fears and scruples shake us.
6. What good could they pretend? They were suborned.

- ___ 1. palpable
___ 2. appalls

- A. Fills with dismay
B. Avoids making an explicit statement

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ___ 3. carousing | C. Conscience; morals |
| ___ 4. equivocates | D. Easily perceived |
| ___ 5. scruples | E. Induced to commit an unlawful act |
| ___ 6. suborned | F. Drunken merrymaking |

Act III

1. Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers with strange invention.
2. She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice remains in danger
3. And make our faces vizards to our hearts.
4. Aye, my good lord. Safe in a ditch he bides, with twenty trenched gashes on his head.
5. Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal -
6. Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends.
7. Do faithful homage and receive free honors.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ___ 1. parricide | A. special honor expressed publicly |
| ___ 2. malice | B. freed from impurities |
| ___ 3. vizards | C. to consider |
| ___ 4. bides | D. the murdering of one's parent(s) |
| ___ 5. purged | E. masks |
| ___ 6. muse | F. waits |
| ___ 7. homage | G. extreme ill-will or spite |

Act IV

1. Double, double toil and trouble, Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
2. Let this pernicious hour stand aye accursed in the calendar!
3. The most diminutive of birds, will fight, her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
4. You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom to offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb to appease an angry god.
5. I grant him bloody, luxurious, avaricious false, deceitful, sudden, malicious, smaking of every sin that has a name.
6. By his own interdiction stands accursed, and does blaspheme his breed?
7. Child of integrity, hath from my soul wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts to thy good truth and honor.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 1. caldron | A. evil; wicked |
| ___ 2. pernicious | B. to humor; make peace with |
| ___ 3. diminutive | C. something authoritatively forbidden |
| ___ 4. appease | D. a large vessel |
| ___ 5. avaricious | E. adherence to a strict moral code |
| ___ 6. interdiction | F. extremely small in size |
| ___ 7. integrity | G. having an immoderate desire for wealth |

Act V

1. Let our just censures attend the true event, and put we on industrious soldiership.
2. Till famine and the ague eat them up.
3. But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn, brandished by man that's of a woman born.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ 1. censures | A. waved or flourished |
| ___ 2. ague | B. harsh criticisms |
| ___ 3. brandished | C. a chill or fit of shivering |