

Shakespeare in 30 →

MACBETH & THE WITCHES



A 30-MINUTE ADAPTATION FOR TEENS



Bring more drama into your ELA classroom with these adaptations!

*Reader's Theatre *Staged Readings *Full Productions

Carved out his passage till he faced the slave
And he unseamed him from the nave to the chops
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

BANQUO steps down and meets MACBETH as after the battle.

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

Exit MACBETH and BANQUO.

SCENE 3. Upon the heath. *Enter the THREE WITCHES from different directions.*

FIRST WITCH
Look we but see the weird

SECOND WITCH
Show me, show me!

FIRST WITCH
Here I have a plot's begun
Wracked as homeward he did come.

THIRD WITCH
A drum! A drum! Macbeth doth come!

ALL WITCHES (dancing in a circle)
The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and barren land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine
And thrice again to make up nine.
Peace, the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO. The THREE WITCHES fall to their knees in supplication.

MACBETH
So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO (seeing the witches)
What are these, so withered and so wild in attire?
Live you? You should be women, and yet your beards
Forbid me to interpret that you are so.

BANQUO (to Macbeth)

Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear things that do sound so fair?
(to the Witches) In the name of truth, if you can look into the seeds of time
And say which grain will grow and which will not
Speak, then, to me.

FIRST WITCH
Hail!

SECOND WITCH
Hail!

THIRD WITCH
Hail!

FIRST WITCH
Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH
Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH
Thou shalt get kings though thou be none.
So all hail Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH
Banquo, Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH
By Sinel's death, I know I am Thane of Glamis, but how of Cawdor?
The Thane of Cawdor lives,
And to be king stands not within the prospect of belief.
Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence.
Speak, I charge you.

The WITCHES vanish.

BANQUO
Wither are they vanished?

MACBETH
Into the air. Your children shall be kings.

Abridged to focus on Macbeth, Lady
Macbeth, Banquo, and the witches

7 Roles + 11 Extras/Flexible Casting

Teaching Drama

IN THE ELA CLASSROOM

Drama is such a valuable addition to any ELA curriculum because students can get so much out of it at any level. It doesn't have to take a lot of time or space, either! One of our goals in bringing you these 30-minute scripts is to give you space to deep dive into the experience without having to devote two or three months to a show.

Lessons learned

- ❑ **Adaptability** – “the show must go on!”, no matter what happens.
- ❑ **Articulation** – you learn to communicate clearly
- ❑ **Situational Awareness** – others are counting on you to move to the same position every time (without bumping into anyone!)
- ❑ **Reliability** – you need to be present (physically and mentally) to act your part!
- ❑ **Team work** – a great show only happens when everyone works together.
- ❑ **Constructive criticism** – to improve and help others improve, you need to give and receive feedback graciously.
- ❑ **Preparation** – to be ready for a good rehearsal, you must prepare your lines and set goals.
- ❑ **Active listening/observation** – you must be aware of the actions and intentions of your castmates, so you must listen carefully.
- ❑ **Self-confidence** – as you work and receive feedback from your peers and audience, your self-confidence increases.
- ❑ **Empathy** – As you put yourself in the shoes of a wide range of characters, you develop empathy for other worldviews.

The most obvious benefit to using drama in ELA is building students' communication skills, particularly public speaking. Students learn to ease their worries about public speaking through preparation, practice, and multiple opportunities for success.

Students also learn a range of **soft skills**, some of which are outlined here to the left. These are the things that are hardest for teachers to grade, and thus get overlooked in today's high-stakes educational environment. Nevertheless, these are truly the skills that propel students to success in all of their future endeavors.

3 WARM-UPS

Stretching – Have students stretch in a circle, and make sure to include some stretches that cross the midline. This gets those synapses firing and energizes us. :)

Vocal Rollercoasters – Warm up the voice by moving up and down the vocal register, sliding

Questions to Consider

WHEN USING THESE SCRIPTS

These scripts have been abridged in order to be performed in thirty minutes or less. At times, they tell a different story than the original play, and at others, they tell a more straight-forward version without the subplots. **The intent is to provide students with an access point to Shakespeare's language and characters.** Here are some considerations as your students mount their production.

1. How much time can you commit?

How long will you spend on this project? We place value on learning opportunities when we designate time for them in our classroom. How many class days can you consecrate for rehearsals? When will your final performance be? **We recommend at least fifteen hours of rehearsal for an off-book show.** (And memorization is homework.) You can add more hours in your unit if you want to do additional mini-lessons or writing assignments. For a one-week adventure, read the **Staged Reading** page.

2. How will you cast the show(s)?

Each of these scripts varies largely in the number of characters involved. Some scripts have a couple of minor characters. Will you have your students divide into three or four separate groups and each work on one show? Will you have two or three very flexible students pick up more than one minor role?

How will you choose performance groups? Student ownership is important, but students may worry about taking on large roles because they're afraid of disappointing their cast members. You'll probably need to encourage some leaders to step up. ☺

3. How will you start things off on the right foot?

At the beginning of this endeavor, you'll want to fill your students' toolkit. Even if you choose to let students direct their own rehearsals later on, you can start with some common work and mini-lessons. Each cast should do a **read-through**, which is simply reading the lines without any mention of blocking. Additionally, this is a good time to model **table work**. There are a million opinions on this, but let's stick to a simple take away here: **students should work together to figure out their characters' intentions throughout the script before they ever start moving around (blocking).** Blocking is such an exciting time for students, but the most important aspect of the show is characters' intentions. Devote at least one class period to this alone.

4. Where will your students rehearse?

Resource includes a full Teacher's Guide with practical options and time commitments for using this script:

- *Informal Reader's Theatre (1-2 hrs)*
- *A Staged Reading with scripts in hand (1 wk)*
- *A full production (3-4 wks)*

Evaluating Drama

You may have a lot of enthusiasm for integrating drama in ELA, but you may be wondering **how to assess** it. If your students are working on these short plays for 2-3 weeks, how will you keep your gradebook up-to-date? You can provide several opportunities for formative and summative assessment along the way.

Split the grading into three parts:

1. **Objective** grading of vocabulary, blocking, and parts of the stage quizzes
2. **Semi-subjective** grading of practice logs (largely focused on grading ideas and content) and lines test
3. **Subjective** assessment of student reflection on soft skills.

Included in this resource is an editable rubric with descriptors about attitude, focus, problem-solving, and engagement. As they wrap up practices and performances, students have to self-assess by writing justifications for each score using concrete examples. For example, to get a "10" on problem-solving, a student has to describe a problem that s/he actually solved.

Whatever grading strategy you use, make sure that your students know how it's going to work before starting rehearsals. Our students need to know that they are expected to solve their own problems, and we have to brainstorm what focus looks like.

PRACTICE LOGS

Engage
Date: 1/14/16
Goal: Organize the busy scene, energy, fun, focus, and outcomes

What I did: I ran stage lines and practiced scenes with Jason, Jerry and Paul organized their entrance. It was so much fun being interactive, I created a story and my own scenes? I asked us up to help me use the physical notes.

Date: 2/10/16
Goal: Run lines with Oben & Paul to see how they're doing with their lines, help them practice.

What I did: Run lines with Oben & Paul. After 15 min and talk to Oben on how the play is coming. The lines were hard and it was to be good during with.

Focus
Date: 2/10/16
Goal: Finish the busy scene

What I did: Run lines with Oben & Paul. After 15 min and talk to Oben on how the play is coming. The lines were hard and it was to be good during with.

These could use more reflection on what are you enjoying? What could be improved?

➤ Which part of rehearsal was most fun today, and why?
➤ What is one problem you encountered today, and how did you fix it?
➤ How was your focus today? Did you

Iambic Pentameter

THE RHYTHM

Read the following sentence out loud:

"We hope that we may one day live the dream."

Certain syllables jump out at you and create the rhythm of the sentence. This is stress. Here's another example. Compare the word "record" in the following sentences.

He's going to record an album.
His record label isn't well-known yet.

You can hear the stressed and unstressed syllables in the word "record", and in English, this impacts which meaning we understand.

Iambic Pentameter is one type of rhythm (or "meter") Shakespeare uses in his work. It consists of a line of ten syllables, alternating stressed and unstressed.

We'll use this symbol to show stress

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

Mark the stressed and unstressed syllables in the following sentences. Which ones are in iambic pentameter? Put a star next to those.

1. Our home is just a distant memory.
2. She stuck out her tongue and it stayed there, it froze.
3. Beverly, can I get you some ice cream?
4. Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.
5. His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy.

WHO USES IAMBIC PENTAMETER & WHY?

Wondering how to evaluate drama in the ELA classroom? You'll get rationale, ideas, student samples, and rubrics based on classroom experience.

Rubrics are 100% editable

Director's Notes

Macbeth

SUMMARY

This adaptation focuses on Macbeth and his interactions with the witches.

Three Witches, who for whatever reason do not like Macbeth, decide to cause his downfall. Macbeth is a loyal soldier to the king and a fierce warrior, but in his secret heart, he wishes to be king himself. The Witches manipulate him by planting the idea in his head that he is, in fact, destined to be king. They are hoping that he takes matters into his own bloody hands, and he does. With the help of his wife, he kills King Duncan and ascends the throne.

Fearing that Banquo will figure out what he has done, and resentful that the Witches prophesied that Banquo's sons would be kings but not Macbeth's, Macbeth has Banquo killed. At supper that night, Banquo's ghost appears and scares Macbeth into seeking out the Witches for more fortune telling. In their cave, they make him drink a vile potion that causes him to see a series of apparitions (ghosts). They speak in "double tongue," and Macbeth is reassured by what they say. However, by the final scene, Lady Macbeth is dead, his castle is under siege, and Macbeth understands how he has been misled. The Witches have used him for their plaything, and he dies, not a loyal warrior, but a hated tyrant and murderer.

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD WITCH

All three are very present in the play, with a good amount of lines. Much sing-songiness and chanting.

HECATE – The ruler of the three witches. Appears twice with two monologues.

MACBETH – a Scottish general and the thane of Glamis.

BANQUO – brave and noble; a general whose children, according to the Witches,

PROPS

WITCHES:

- Cauldron
- Ladle and Cup
- Poppet of Macbeth
- Various Ingredients

MACBETH:

- Sword
- Two Bloody Daggers

LADY MACBETH:

- Mirror
- Sword
- Letter
- Candle
- Washcloth

DIRECTOR'S Vision

Macbeth and the Witches

Adapted by Michelle Hancock

Cast:
First Witch
Second Witch
Third Witch
Hecate
Macbeth
Banquo
Lady Macbeth
Three Apparitions
Eight Kings
18/flexible casting

SCENE 1. Upon a blasted heath. Enter THREE WITCHES. They perform some sort of weird spell-casting dance and then speak to each other as they prepare to leave.

FIRST WITCH

When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

SECOND WITCH

When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

THIRD WITCH

That will be ere the set of sun.

FIRST WITCH

Where the place?

SECOND WITCH

Upon the heath.

THIRD WITCH

There to meet with Macbeth.

ALL WITCHES

Characters

You also get a full summary page of the play for quick reference - or distribute a blank version to your students for them to create!

Scripts are 100% editable

Your resource ALSO
Includes:

Close Reading scene

- * "Deep dive" into a scene for character and conflict
- * Connect the literature to the acting choices
- * Edit to suit your classroom's needs and learning targets

Close Reading *Macbeth and the Witches*

SCENE 7. A hall in Macbeth's castle. Enter BANQUO alone.

BANQUO

Thou hast it now – King, Cawdor, Glamis –
All as the weird women promised,
And I fear thou played'st most foully for it.

Enter MACBETH and LADY MACBETH

MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.
Tonight we hold a solemn supper, sir, and I'll request your presence.

BANQUO

Let your Highness command upon me, to the which my duties are forever knit.

MACBETH

Ride you this afternoon?

BANQUO

Ay, my good lord.

MACBETH

Is it far you ride?

BANQUO

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time 'twixt this and supper.

MACBETH

Fail not our feast.

BANQUO

My lord, I will not.

MACBETH

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot. Farewell.
Exit BANQUO

MACBETH

To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus.
There is none but Banquo whose being I do fear.
He chid the sisters and bade them speak to him.
Then, they hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head, they placed a fruitless crown –
No son of mine succeeding.

LADY MACBETH

Naught's had, all's spent where our desire is got without content.
Come on, gentle my lord, be bright and jovial among your guests tonight.

MACBETH

Thou knowest Banquo and his son live.
There's comfort yet. They are assailable.

LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

MACBETH

Be innocent of the knowledge 'til thou applaud the deed.

FIRST READING

Each of the three characters in the scene is worried about something different. What?

Second Reading

Divide the scene into three parts. How do the characters change their behavior in each part, and why?

THIRD READING

Macbeth and Banquo are enemies and friends. How do the events leading up to this dialogue change their relationship? Share examples of having to interact with a friend whom you felt you could no longer trust and how it made you feel.

**CLICK TO TRY THE TEMPEST CLOSE
READING FOR FREE**

Shakespeare's Language THOU & YOU

In Shakespeare's England class and station, known as **peerage**, were very important. This is how the system breaks down:

- Nobility**
- Highest rank: Duke, Duche
 - 2nd highest r
 - 3rd highest r
 - 4th highest r
 - 5th highest r

WHO USES

- "you"**
People of e
People of k
- "Thou"**
People of r
People of
People of
People of

Insult!

ANTONIC
Boatswai

GONZA!

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Iambic Pentameter

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3. Beverly, can I get you some ice cream?
4. Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.
5. His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy.

WHY DOES IAMBIC PENTAMETER & WHY NOT?

Not all of Shakespeare's characters speak in iambic pentameter. Some characters speak in prose, which is unrhymed, unrhymed, and imperfectly so.

Your resource ALSO Includes:

Shakespeare's Language worksheets

- * Study iambic pentameter and find it in your play
- * Clarify usage of Thou & You and the impact of this choice on your scenes

Your resource ALSO
Includes:

Writing Extensions

*Character Analysis
paragraph

*Performance Review to
promote audience engagement

*Fully editable

**INCLUDES DIGITAL VERSIONS OF ALL
WORKSHEETS**

A Stellar Performance A REVIEW

Write a paragraph about one classmate you thought performed well. What did this person do to help the audience connect to their character? Use specific moments from the play to support your opinion.

4	3	2	1
Considers the performance from multiple angles.	Considers the		

Character

QUICK LOOK

Write a paragraph analyzing one trait from your character or another character in your play. How is this trait developed over the course of the play? Use specific moments as evidence of this character trait. Please write your paragraph on the back of this rubric.

4	3	2	1
Considers the trait from multiple angles. Uses insightful and relevant evidence to support claims.	Considers the trait from one angle. Uses relevant evidence to support claims.	Identifies a trait. Uses somewhat relevant evidence to support claims.	Does not identify a trait. Little to no evidence to support claims.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this adaptation retain Shakespeare's language?

Yes! Most of the plays in this series retain Shakespeare's original language; they've just been cut down for length, number of roles, and scene manageability. [The exception is *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is a minimalist adaptation with each character only speaking one word at a time.]

Can I teach this with a class of thirty students? It doesn't have enough roles.

Yes! This resource includes ideas for addressing this concern. Generally, you'll either have multiple versions of the same play performed or you'll choose two or three plays to perform together.

Can I adapt this for younger students?

Yes! These plays have been performed with students as young as 6th grade. Students may need more coaching on word meaning and more time to gain fluency, but they will amaze and astound you.

Is this script editable?

Yes. All of the scripts and rubrics are 100% editable. We believe that you know your students best, so you can add back in lines from the original (if you have a favorite monologue, for example), or further pare down parts if you want.

Break a leg!