A Cabined, Cribbed, Confined Canon: Making Shakespeare's Macbeth Accessible to ELLs

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A Cabined, Cribbed, Confined Canon: Making Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* Accessible to ELLs

Darya Kostikina

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For English speakers, it is difficult to imagine a world without Shakespeare. The plots of his plays feel as familiar to us as folk tales, his phrases pepper our speech, and his status as the greatest writer in history has gone uncontested for centuries. Shakespeare and his works remain a mainstay of English literature today, even after the language’s spread and evolution. All of this is surprising, considering the four hundred years which have passed since Shakespeare first wrote his famous plays. Tension between reader and playwright is often caused by the resulting barrier between his writing and our understanding of archaic language and concepts. This tension can be even greater when the reader is not a native English speaker.

English-Language Learners

English-language learners, or ELLs, are students who cannot communicate or learn effectively in English, as they typically come from non-English-speaking backgrounds. For this reason, ELLs require specialized support and assistance in the classroom. ELLs generally struggle most with acquiring academic language, which may hinder their progress in English-only learning environments.¹ Shakespeare—with a richly distinctive language all his own—would thus prove to be an additional challenge for this population of students.

ELLs are one of the fastest growing groups among students in the U.S. today. Schools are faced with pressure to ensure that ELLs “demonstrate satisfactory progress in learning English and in attaining English proficiency” on a yearly basis as the number of students without English-language proficiency increases. As a result, many different instructional models and supports exist in place which allow teachers to make academic content accessible to this population of students. I argue that with the help of such supports, it is not only possible, but also beneficial to teach Shakespeare to English-language learners.

The playwright Ben Jonson’s (1572-1637) appraisal of Shakespeare was that “He was not of an age but for all time.” Shakespeare’s plays have earned themselves an uncontested spot within the canon of English literature taught at the middle and high school levels in the United States due to the universality and timelessness of their themes. They teach countless students important lessons about the human condition, and have had an immense influence on English-speaking literatures and cultures. Shakespeare’s work remains culturally relevant today—even to students whose first language may not be English.

The task of increasing the accessibility of Shakespeare’s work to ESL students appears rife with challenges and barriers. Much of the audience members’ appreciation of these plays depends heavily on the irony and humor they contain; appreciation of these devices is made possible through an understanding of Shakespeare’s clever use of wordplay, which in turn

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3 Ibid.
depends on a full understanding of the English language. As a result, some aspects of Shakespeare’s work might lose their intended effect on a population that does not yet have a full mastery of English. The major concern is that these challenges outweigh the benefits of looking at Shakespeare with ELL students. However, the cross-cultural importance of Shakespeare cannot be stressed enough: even those without English-language fluency have something to gain from examining the characters and themes found in his work. Despite language barriers, anyone can connect in some way to the content of Shakespeare’s plays. In addition, many of the words used in the English language can trace their origins to his works. Shakespeare—a great coiner of words—has as much to do with the future of the English language as he does with its Elizabethan past. For these reasons, more and more teachers are seeking out ways to help introduce Shakespeare to their ESL students. It is important to continue searching for ways to make Shakespeare’s plays more accessible, despite the many barriers that might prevent students from moving past simple decoding of Elizabethan English to actual comprehension. By recognizing the weaknesses and playing to the strengths of this ever-growing population of students, teachers can give ELLs access to a rich literary experience that continues to remain relevant today.

*Macbeth*

I have chosen to create a framework for how to teach Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* to a classroom of English-language learners. *Macbeth*’s dynamic plot is easy to follow, and it offers relatable themes. Although four centuries have passed since the time Shakespeare’s England was
initially fascinated with all things Scottish, the play continues to draw readers and audiences who care very little about Scottish history. This is because, in its depiction of a man consumed and destroyed by his desires, Macbeth elicits major questions from its audience. Among them, why do people do evil knowing that it is evil? because of fate? ambition? the influence of others? Murder, fate, persuasion—these are all topics that remain relevant to our lives today, regardless of what language we speak.

As Ben Jonson claims, Shakespeare was not just for an age. Each new generation of readers reacts differently to Macbeth's many themes. Where before a London audience was enthralled by the play's violent history and elements of the supernatural, modern-day readers analyze aspects of the corrupting power of ambition and questions of gender. It has been adapted multiple times and made suitable for various forms of media. A wealth of resources exist which would help bring Macbeth to a non-English-speaking audience without compromising Shakespeare's original messages. Its pervasive presence in our culture speaks to the relevance of Macbeth, and marks it as an excellent play to explore with students who are trying to learn and adapt to both the English language and culture.

Idiosyncrasies in Language

For modern-day readers, Shakespeare's unusual sentence structures and poetic devices require a certain set of skills to aid with the deciphering and understanding of his plays. His

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language was difficult to comprehend even during his own time, and thus is even trickier for readers today. Reading Shakespeare effectively becomes reading in a different language. This can prove to be just as rewarding as it is challenging; effort and concentration can bring out the hidden poetry behind the playwright’s words, creating connections that are rewarding and memorable. For readers to be able to read Shakespeare in this way, they must carefully consider the changes in life and language of the past four hundred years.

Many of the words used by Shakespeare are as unfamiliar to modern readers as words in a foreign language. Some of the unfamiliarity arises from the centuries that have passed since the playwright first put these words on the page. Words such as *aroint thee* (begone), *anon* (immediately), *alarum* (a call to arms), and others no longer have a place in the modern English language, though they were common and well-understood by audiences during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is possible for modern audiences to familiarize themselves with these words and their meanings as well by reading Shakespeare’s plays. Other words which are still commonly used today might trick English speakers due to their changed meanings. For example, *present* (immediate) and *addition* (title) no longer mean what they once did, which may cause confusion for readers of the play who assume these words carry the same meaning as in the modern language.

Shakespeare bends the rules of the English language for a variety of purposes. He is able to carefully craft rhythms, emphasize certain words, and create character-specific speech.

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6 Mowat and Werstine, xv.
patterns.\textsuperscript{7} At the same time that it adds artistry, however, this unusual arrangement of the language makes the plays more difficult for modern audiences to read with complete fluency.

The meaning of an English sentence depends heavily on word order. Shakespeare often does not follow conventional word order, making it challenging to derive the correct meaning from his sentences. For example, he may rearrange subjects and verbs; “Do you live?” becomes “Live you?” (Shakespeare 1.3.44) and “you would” becomes “wouldst thou” (1.5.20). He also may place the object of a sentence before the subject and verb. An example of this is Banquo’s remark to the Weird Sisters that “My noble partner / You greet” (1.3.57-58) which is the inverted form of “you greet my noble partner.” While Shakespeare uses these constructions throughout his plays, in \textit{Macbeth} specifically he also separates subjects from verbs and verbs from objects with long delays or interruptions. Though this allows Shakespeare to generate a rhythm and place emphasis on certain words, it makes it difficult to discern which words belong together.

For \textit{brave Macbeth} (well he deserves that name),

Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel,

Which smoked with bloody execution,

Like Valor’s minion, \textit{carved out his passage}… (1.2.18-21)

The interruptions in this passage add detail to the description of Macbeth in battle. The aside allows Shakespeare to emphasize Macbeth’s perceived heroism, but it might also make it more difficult for readers to keep track of the action.

\textsuperscript{7} Ib\textsuperscript{id}, xix.
Shakespeare also makes use of omission as a device to compress speech and speed up the language in his plays. During Lady Macbeth’s first appearance, she says of her husband “Thou wouldst be great, / Art not without ambition, but without / The illness should attend it” (1.5.18-20). With all the words in place, her speech would read “Thou wouldst be great, / [thou] Art not without ambition, / but [thou art] without/ The illness [which] should attend it.” Although the added words increase clarity, they slow down the speech and lessen the dramatic effect. It is important to look out for omitted words and piece them together mentally while reading in order to ensure complete understanding of Shakespeare’s plays.

Another critical omission to consider is that of implied stage action. Because Shakespeare’s works are plays, they are meant to take place on the stage, with actors not only reading out the dialogue but also acting out the tacit signals behind the words. Though the playwright includes a few stage directions, much of the action is implied and left up to the imagination. For example, when Macbeth says to Banquo’s ghost, “Never shake / Thy gory locks at me,” readers are meant to picture the ghost shaking its bloody head at Macbeth (3.4.61-62). Following that, when Macbeth requests his company, “Pray you sit still,” his guests must be getting up to leave from the table (3.4.131). Noticing such implied action allows readers to envision the play as Shakespeare did, and may vitally affect their response to the play as a whole.

In all of his works, Shakespeare manipulates the English language. He frequently includes wordplay—specifically words with double meanings and metaphors—in his plays. Doubled meanings throughout Macbeth add another dimension to many of the lines and require special attention on the part of the reader. When Lady Macbeth is plotting the murder of King
Duncan, she states: “If he do bleed, / I’ll gild the faces of the grooms withal. / For it must seem their guilt” (2.2.71-73). In this disturbing pun, Shakespeare plays with the double meaning of guilt and gilt, but complete understanding depends on prior knowledge of both words. Similes and metaphors can also be found throughout Macbeth. In a simile, two unlike ideas are explicitly compared using like or as. An example of this can be found in the second scene, when the Captain describes how he left the battle: “Doubtful it stood, / As two swimmers that do cling together / And choke their art” (1.2.9-11). The audience can feel the precariousness of the battle through this instance of figurative language; the soldiers are compared to swimmers, who prevent each other from using their skill in swimming because they are too close to each other. Similarly, when Lady Macbeth says “Hie thee hither, / That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,” she uses metaphor to compare her words to a liquid that can be poured into her husband’s ear (1.5.28-29). In a metaphor, an object or idea is expressed as if it were something else, and is compared to that other entity with which it shares common features. These plays on words artfully convey ideas that are hard for Shakespeare to express otherwise.

For the past four centuries, readers of Shakespeare have worked to decipher his language—words, sentence structure, omissions, and wordplay—so that they can obtain the most possible enjoyment out of his plays. Although it is difficult to keep all of these conventions in mind when reading a play like Macbeth, it is ultimately worth the effort to uncover the hidden meanings that make up Shakespeare’s text. But for someone who does not already have a

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8 Ibid, xxvi.
mastery of the English language to use to his or her advantage, deciphering Shakespeare can prove to be much more of a challenge. With the proper supports, those for whom English is not a first language can also become adept at reading his plays and can enjoy them as much as native English speakers.

Ultimately, it is my hope to develop a way to cover this already-challenging material with a group of students who, to quote Lady Macbeth, “Ar[e] not without ambition,” but simply require additional attention and supports in order to access a literary classic like Macbeth (1.5.19). Shakespeare’s work remains relevant to an amazingly wide variety of cultures, making it an important part of any classroom curriculum. His plays contain countless lessons about the human condition; the characters and themes within them are universal and could be culturally relevant even to students whose first language is not English. For this reason, a way to enhance how they are taught in ESL classrooms is not only relevant but also necessary in order to give ELL students access to the same literary canon as that encountered by their mainstream peers. The benefits of reading a play like Macbeth are twofold: a reading of the play by any student will generate meaningful connections with the material regardless of language ability, while also serving to improve this language ability by providing students with an engaging work of literature to study.

Although many barriers may prevent students for whom English is not a first language from being able to immediately comprehend Shakespeare’s work, these barriers can be overcome with advanced preparation and informed instruction, ultimately allowing ELL students to read and comprehend the same literature as mainstream students with time and effort. Through their
experience reading *Macbeth* students will hopefully expand their English language skills and gain the confidence they need to read complex material. Especially because Shakespeare was such a prolific writer, it can be expected that the skills students learn from reading *Macbeth*—deciphering the play’s various words, sentence structure, omissions, and wordplay—will allow them to delve deeper as they encounter and explore more of Shakespeare’s work. While there are a lot of challenges and full comprehension is not ensured, students always have something to gain from reading literary classics. With Shakespeare, ELL students will gain access to a complex literary history with an ever-present relevance, and will become more confident in their present-day English language skills as a result.

**Chapter 2: Supports for ELLs**

*Hie thee hither, / That I may pour my spirits in thine ear / And chastise with the valor of my tongue / All that impedes thee…*

——*Macbeth*, 1.5.27-31

Many English-language teachers prefer to give Shakespeare a wide berth instead of tackling it with students who struggle even with everyday English. But this ends up depriving their students of both a valuable learning tool as well as access to a highly relevant collection of works. In my thesis, I will outline both how to introduce *Macbeth*—a quintessential Shakespearean play—through a series of in-depth lesson plans, and why I believe it is important to do so. While Shakespeare’s texts may prove difficult for even the most experienced contemporary readers, supports and strategies already exist which reduce language barriers and
allow English language learners to access a variety of academic content. All that is left is to apply these tools to one of Shakespeare’s greatest works.

According to Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, editors of the 2013 Folger edition of *Macbeth* (the version of the play I will be using for the purposes of this thesis), “[t]hose who have studied Latin (or even French or German or Spanish) and those who are used to reading poetry will have little difficulty understanding the language of poetic drama.” It is clear that readers coming in with a background in a foreign language will be able to *activate prior knowledge* to aid their understanding of Shakespeare. Activating prior knowledge is just one of the many cognitive strategies which allows students to use their varied backgrounds as an advantage; effective teachers can help with the learning process by tapping into what students have previously learned, because “learning is relating the new information, or concepts, to what we already know.” Though ELLs come in with a deficit in English, their strengths in their own host language (referred to as an *L1*) can be applied to new content to help make it more comprehensible. Specifically with regards to Shakespeare, students’ previous familiarity with poetry—and modern languages such as French, German, or Spanish—gives them valuable skills in “untangling unusual sentence structures and of recognizing and understanding poetic compressions, omissions, and worldplay.” This can prove to be a valuable asset when encountering Shakespeare for the first time.

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9 Mowat and Werstine, xvii.
11 ESOL Online, n.p.
12 Mowat and Werstine, xvii.
To bridge gaps and teach background knowledge that is necessary but which students have not yet acquired, teachers can use two more instructional strategies: pre-teaching and mini-lessons. Pre-teaching is a method of introducing new vocabulary, which involves teaching a few selected terms that the teacher assumes students will not know and which are useful when reading the text in question; this strategy helps by anticipating which terms will disrupt the flow of students’ reading and remedying the situation before it occurs. Similarly, mini-lessons are an opportunity for a teacher to cover new knowledge or skills in a short, narrowly-focused lesson which then relates to the larger lesson that follows. I will use both of these strategies when teaching *Macbeth*.

Another method which can be applied to the study of a play like *Macbeth* is instructional scaffolding. This is the process by which a teacher adds supports for students to enhance learning and aid in the eventual mastery of material; supports are temporary and adjustable depending on understanding, and are gradually removed as students increase their mastery. An example of this would be providing simplified versions of Shakespeare’s plays alongside the originals when teaching them to students. Genevieve White, an experienced teacher and advocate of this strategy, believes that new sources which translate the plays into contemporary English are “a gift for the teacher who yearns to introduce Shakespearean dialogue to learners but fears being met by rows of blank and uncomprehending faces.” Contemporary translations allow key speeches and sections of the play to become more accessible to English language learners. Such

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resources would make it easier to introduce students to the plot and characters of the play, which are crucial to overall understanding, before tackling the finer points of language and literary device. The scaffolds can be slowly taken away as students become more and more comfortable with the basic concepts of the play.

The use of performance is another scaffold teachers can call upon to augment student understanding of Shakespeare’s plays. His works were meant to be staged, and seeing a live performance or film adaptation of one of his plays can serve to greatly increase comprehension for readers—both those who are native English speakers and ELLs. As Mowat and Werstine explain, “[m]ore than four hundred years of “static”—caused by changes in language and in life—intervene between [Shakespeare’s] speaking and our hearing.”15 However, “[i]n the theater, most of these difficulties are solved for us by actors who study the language and articulate it for us so that the essential meaning is heard—or, when combined with stage action, is at least felt.”16 For this reason, performances help bridge gaps in understanding caused by the four centuries which have passed since Shakespeare wrote his plays. Because taking students to see a live performance is not always realistic, it is also possible to use film adaptations of plays to help bridge the gap between language and comprehension. Many film versions of *Macbeth* exist which provide enlightening interpretations of the play. For my purposes, I have selected two films to supplement my lessons, the first of which is the BBC (1983) TV drama version of *Macbeth*. This film preserves the original text of Shakespeare’s play and will help students see

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15 Mowat and Werstine, xvii.
16 Ibid.
the emotion behind the lines acted out. Students will watch clips from this film in class as they are reading. In addition, I will use Akira Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (1957) as another version with which I would to supplement my teaching of *Macbeth* to ELL students. Students will view this film prior to reading the play.

**Throne of Blood**

Akira Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* is certainly “much more than a direct cinematic translation of a literary text.” Kurosawa combines his own culture’s history and aesthetic seamlessly with the narrative thread of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, producing a work which proves the relevance of his plays across language barriers. This film in particular speaks to the importance of the themes found in *Macbeth*, which remain as relevant today as Kurosawa, a director from a different culture altogether, found them many decades ago.

According to critics, “Kurosawa’s transposition of *Macbeth* points to the transcultural materials in the play—the common human experience that underlies it—but also vitiates the Shakespearean elements.” Though Shakespeare’s rich language is lost in this Japanese reimagining of the storyline, the film can nonetheless be used as a powerful teaching tool alongside the original play. In particular, this film is able to provide such a comprehensible medium for ELLs because of Kurosawa’s incorporation of elements from Noh theater. Much of

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18 Ibid.
the emphasis in Noh is on the action; “a mixture of different gestures and tones that can be seen in the acting throughout the film,” which, due to the actors’ artful performance, allow the essential meaning of Shakespeare’s original plotline to be felt—this fulfills Mowat’s and Werstine’s recommendation of using artful performance to help readers of the play. Kurosawa’s characters, with their exaggerated movements and expressions, lend a new meaning to Macbeth. As is characteristic of a Noh drama, they are not individualized but instead act as types: the warrior, the wife, the son, and so on. Because of this viewers feel that anyone could inhabit these roles. Though “[a]s a result, the film has a definite coldness; it keeps the viewer outside the world it depicts,” it ultimately conveys that “Kurosawa wants us to grasp the lesson, to see the folly of human behavior, rather than to identify or empathize with the characters.”  

“In Kurosawa’s film and worldview, the cycle of human violence never ends,” which is a view that can still be extended to the world as it is today. His work supports the assertion that Shakespeare was not simply of an age, but remains relevant for all time. It both helps ELL students understand the play, and offers them evidence that the play has already been found accessible and relevant by other non-English speakers. Throne of Blood is a stunning work of cinema, which is sure to captivate audiences from all cultures and get them interested in Shakespeare.

The aesthetics and philosophy of Throne of Blood take us well beyond Shakespeare, and that’s why this is a great film. Its accomplishments are not beholden to another medium or artist. Kurosawa gives us his own vision, expressed with ruthless, chilling power, and it’s the totality of that vision, its sweep and its uncompromising nature, that moves and terrifies us—and that we are so seldom privileged to see in cinema.

19 Ibid.  
20 Ibid.  
21 Ibid.  
22 Ibid.
Preliminary Considerations

In “The Folger Philosophy of Teaching and Learning,” the publishing company’s beliefs are outlined for teachers and students alike to read. Prominently featured is the assertion that students at all grades and levels of proficiency can and should engage “deeply” with “Shakespeare's rigorous texts and compelling ideas.”23 According to this stance, it is not just possible, but necessary for students of varying levels of English-language proficiency to read and learn from a play like Macbeth.

It’s all about the language. Approach, connect with, and befriend Shakespeare's language head on. Your students' direct connection with his language is the key to unlocking the plays—and everything in them... We mean THEM speaking and moving and figuring out HIM... words, lines, scenes, plays. His language in the mouths of your students is splendid and exciting all on its own. And it is the essential step that results in sending his ideas into their brains.24

It is important to honor this belief that reading Shakespeare is all about the language, while also keeping in mind the importance of preparing and supporting students who are not already fluent in English. A film like Throne of Blood, though it loses Shakespeare’s original tongue, primes students for reading Macbeth by giving them background information on plot and characters; this context later helps them better understand Shakespeare’s lines. But why is it important that we send Shakespeare’s ideas into the brains of our students, especially those who do not already have a firm grasp on the English language? Folger backs up its position with research which states that learning Shakespeare’s language head on helps students gain confidence “in their

24 Ibid.
ability to tackle something hard, to figure it out, to ‘own’ this playwright and his plays—and boosts their enthusiasm for learning the next hard thing,” whether it is another of Shakespeare’s plays, a challenging math concept, or a new language.\textsuperscript{25} This confidence would hopefully lead students to pick up more of Shakespeare’s works—and other literary classics—as well; by struggling with and eventually conquering the playwright’s challenging language through a stepwise process with supports and scaffolding, ELLs can gain the confidence to continue reading and learning on their own outside of the classroom. The ultimate goal of education should be to create life-long learners, and I believe Shakespeare can have a role in causing that to happen.

*Macbeth* also remains highly relevant to the lives of modern-day students. As Genevieve White puts it, “[i]n our world today, people do terrible things to achieve their ambition (as did Macbeth).”\textsuperscript{26} His experience as a character in a work of literature offers readers valuable insight and allows students to learn lessons about themselves and about humanity in general. Akira Kurosawa certainly saw value in the lessons *Macbeth* imparts on its audiences. It is in cases such as this that “Shakespeare can offer practical assistance in our everyday lives… Take Lady Macbeth, for example… Flattery and reassurance are Lady Macbeth’s favourite persuasive tools – and isn’t the art of persuasion one we would all like to master?”\textsuperscript{27} Similarly, *Macbeth* continues to leave readers with unanswered questions, opening up moral complexities and

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
mysteries which are interesting to ponder. Did Macbeth truly succumb to his own desires, or is Lady Macbeth’s power of persuasion responsible for Duncan’s murder? What is the role of gender in the play, and in society? What can we say about the opposition between public and private commitments? In “Macbeth: A Modern Perspective,” Susan Snyder claims that “the moral universe of Macbeth is not as uncomplicated as some critics have imagined.” These complications lend themselves to exploration by students of all backgrounds and language abilities. By exploring these questions and connecting to the characters, English language learners can gain a valuable learning opportunity despite their language limitations.

Through the use of supports and strategies—such as activating prior knowledge, utilizing scaffolding, and providing alternative forms of the play—all students can be taught to read and think critically about Shakespeare’s plays. Doing so can prove to be especially valuable to ELLs, as they can not only improve their confidence and English-language skills, but also make meaningful connections to material that lends itself to a variety of different readings and interpretations. In the next chapter of my thesis, I will begin to delve into Macbeth and my own plans for teaching the play to a group of students who are not native English speakers. Through the careful implementation of the strategies mentioned above (and more) I hope to make one of Shakespeare’s greatest works accessible to an often-overlooked population of students.

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Chapter 3: Methods and Materials

O, well done! I commend your pains, / And everyone shall share i’ th’ gains.

—Macbeth, 4.1.39-40

To fully cover Macbeth, I plan to create a unit of five weeks, with each class day being devoted to about one scene. Several days at the beginning of the unit will be used for viewing Akira Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood (1957) in class; following that, students will also need to be instructed in how to read Shakespeare—how to cite specific lines, make use of the Folger edition notes, and other general expectations for the course. Classes will be around 45 minutes each (similar to a regular high school’s schedule) and lesson plans must be tailored to cover a certain length of material, both time- and content-wise. Students will be speakers of a wide variety of languages, but will all be at the same level of English-language proficiency; ideally, I will begin teaching Shakespeare to ELLs at an ELD (English Language Development) level of 4 (Expanding) or 5 (Bridging).

According to Proficiency Level Descriptors, students at these levels will be able to participate actively in collaborative conversations in academic areas with support, read increasingly complex grade-level text while relying on context and prior knowledge, and express ideas through extended writing with support from structure and vocabulary.29 All of these skills will be necessary for beginning to engage with the text, but will also be further developed and

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improved throughout the unit in a series of lessons which focus specifically on the collaborative, interpretive, and productive aspects of English-language use. In addition, the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy states that all students must be held accountable to the same expectations outlined by the Common Core State Standards; this includes English language learners, though they are also subjected to additional standards for English language proficiency. As this system—both for ELLs and for the state as a whole—is already in place for teachers to follow, I will structure my lessons around the appropriate standards.

**WIDA ELP Standards**

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium has put together a widely-accepted system of standards and assessments used by teachers of ELL students. This system of practical tools helps teachers design and implement lessons, monitor student progress with regards to certain language proficiency levels, and construct a vocabulary for collaboration across programs and for conveying results to ELLs and their families. The WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards align with language proficiency standards with regards to Language Arts. It is this framework which I will be using to plan my lessons, ensuring that each day is spent meaningfully, and addresses a clear and specific standard.

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I expect to be teaching students at the Expanding (ELD level 4) and early Bridging (ELD level 5) stages of English-language development. According to the standards, students at the early stages of the Expanding level should be able to express themselves to others and respond to questions using short sentences (the collaborative mode of communication), comprehend a variety of information and topics through independent reading (the interpretive mode of communication), and produce writing which uses an expanded vocabulary to express academic ideas in contextualized settings (the productive mode of communication). In order to exit the Expanding level, students must demonstrate the ability to express themselves extensively through collaborative written and oral discourse, interpret detailed information and read increasingly complex text by relying on context and prior knowledge, and productively write and express ideas which meet social and academic needs. To exit the Bridging level, students must be able to participate fully in all collaborative conversations in both academic and non-academic settings, comprehend and interpret language subtleties in various communicative settings, and produce written and oral interactions to meet the demands of a variety of purposes and audiences. These proficiency level descriptors are necessary to keep in mind when tailoring lessons to the needs of students in an ESL class, as students are expected to make adequate progress throughout the course of the year to jump from one ELD level to the next. This puts the pressure on teachers to plan meaningful—and productive—lessons for each class.

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid, 11.
The WIDA standards, in addition to describing requirements for the three modes of communication (collaborative, interpretive, and productive), outline two necessary dimensions of language knowledge. These are the Metalinguistic Awareness and Accuracy of Production of the English language. To demonstrate Metalinguistic Awareness proficiency at the Expanding level for these dimensions, students need to be able to notice similarities and differences between English and their L1, and to exhibit self-monitoring with regards to error-making, vocabulary integration, and differences in language use based on purpose or audience; it is expected that the Accuracy of Production of students at this level allows them to be comprehensible, yet exhibit frequent errors which may sometimes impede meaning. To exit this level, students must also be able to engage in self-monitoring and adjust their oral and written language, as well as limit the number of errors they make which impede meaning. Upon exiting the Bridging level, students will be able to use their proficiency in Metalinguistic Awareness to extend and vary their discourse in conversations and writing using a range of lengths and complexities across the disciplines; they will also exhibit only minor errors in pronunciation, grammar, and writing conventions. It is important to note that, although it is a goal of ESL instruction to teach students academic language in addition to conversational English, good writing is continuous with good speaking, and the academic expressions which serve as goals in various lessons should be understood as ways to speak clearly about important matters and not as a specialized language that distinguishes paper-writing English from regular good English.

My lessons will each address a specific content objective with the overall goal of helping students make progress toward exiting their respective ELD levels. By the end of the 5-week unit on *Macbeth*, students will hopefully not only have made gains in their English-language proficiencies, but also have made their own connections to the text and learned to appreciate Shakespeare’s work—despite any initial struggles.

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*Throne of Blood* Day 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard</th>
<th>Curriculum Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>— Reading at the <em>Expanding</em> level:</td>
<td>— Speaking and Listening <em>Comprehension and Collaboration for Grades 11-12</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information.</td>
<td>Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to make informed decisions and solve problems.</td>
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</table>

By utilizing Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*, which visually supports the text of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, it is my hope that students will be able to integrate information presented in a different format to build vocabulary, reinforce content knowledge, and make informed assessments and predictions.

To introduce students loosely to the plot of *Macbeth*, two class days will be devoted to watching portions of Akira Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (1957). Because a great deal of the film strays from Shakespeare’s original plot, I have selected specific portions which highlight certain relevant details.

16:00 - 27:00

I will preface the first chosen scene by explaining that two warriors, coming home from battle, have stumbled upon a spirit in the forest. Taketoki Washizu (the Macbeth character) then receives a prophecy. Yoshiaki Miki (Banquo) also hears his destiny before the spirit disappears.
Several terms will require defining as they appear in the film:

1. **Sovereign** - the spirit says that Washizu will become a supreme ruler
2. **Cease your jesting** - Washizu does not believe the spirit, and tells it to stop joking
3. **Joyous tidings** - the spirit says that it has delivered good news to the two warriors
4. **Fatigue** - Washizu and Miki grow tired and decide to take a break
5. **Dreams manifest our basest desires** - the two warriors believe their encounter with the spirit to be a dream; this phrase reveals that, at some level, they both desire the things that were promised to them by the spirit and view them as “joyous tidings”

I will pause at 27:00 to ask several questions which would assess student understanding of the film. Why does the music become ominous when Miki is named commander? Why does he look so surprised? Why does Washizu look surprised? Students will need to understand that the prophecy is unfolding right before the two warriors’ eyes, and will make predictions as to what will happen next.

27:00 - 32:00

Washizu has arrived home and speaks with his wife, Asaji. She then manipulates him into believing he has no choice but to kill the Lord.

More terms will require explanation:

1. **Beguiled by a wicked spirit** - Washizu thinks that his encounter was an evil trick
2. **Preposterous** - Washizu thinks it is impossible that he will ever be Lord; Asaji does not think it is so impossible
3. **Hegemony** - Asaji convinces Washizu that he is a threat to the existing Lord’s power

4. **Treason** - killing the Lord would be a breach of trust

5. **Predecessor** - the Lord came into power because he killed the Lord who was in power before him

6. **Prophecy** - the predictions given to Washizu and Miki by the spirit

I will stop here to ask students: does Washizu only have “two paths”? Does he have any other options, or must he truly kill the Lord to avoid being killed himself, as Asaji says?

39:30 - 49:56

Asaji attempts to further convince Washizu that he must kill the Lord, this very night, as he has come to stay with the two of them. She begins to make a plan: they will put the Lord’s guards to sleep with a potion, then kill the Lord and blame the guards. Washizu then goes off to kill the Lord while Asaji waits.

Because there is very little dialogue, there are few confusing terms:

1. **Provision** - Asaji says each part of the prophecy is coming true, so it must all come true

2. **Ambition** - Asaji wants her husband to have desire and the determination to achieve it

There is very little dialogue in the scene, which adds to the drama of the characters’ actions and would make it easier for ELL students to understand. Following the scene, I would ask them: would you “risk the world,” as Washizu does? Do you think he wanted to, or did Asaji convince him to?

59:29 - 1:03:10
Miki comes to tell Washizu to be the next Lord. This is a good ending point for Day 1.

**Throne of Blood** Day 2

1:08:33 - 1:18:05

This scene is the dinner held in honor of Washizu becoming the new Lord. Miki is not in attendance because Washizu has ordered him killed; however, Miki’s ghost appears to Washizu. Asaji sends away the dinner guests after witnessing Washizu’s frantic behavior. After they leave, an assassin arrives to present Miki’s head to Washizu as proof of his death.

There are several terms which will be necessary to explain:

1. **Impudence** - Washizu’s compatriots are confused and believe Miki is being rude by not attending, though he is actually dead

2. **Imbibed** - Asaji blames Washizu’s strange behavior on his being too intoxicated

Before moving on to the next scene, I will ask students why they think the ghost of Miki appears to Washizu and not to anyone else. Is the ghost a manifestation of his guilt?

1:24:45 - 1:28:50

In this scene, Washizu sets out to find the spirit. When they meet, the spirit tells him another prophecy. There is no important vocabulary for this scene. However, I will ask students what they think of this new prophecy. Is it possible for Washizu to be defeated? I will take a poll of the class to see who thinks Washizu will survive the upcoming battle.

1:32:33 - 1:49:50 (end)
Washizu gives a speech which showcases his confidence. He tells his men that he is invincible, and that he cannot be defeated until the trees from the forest rise against him. Asaji, however, is behaving strangely and believes there is blood on her hands which will not wash away. Washizu goes outside to discover that his men are retreating in panic, as the attacking army is using trees as a defense, making it seem as if the forest is moving. Suddenly doubtful of Washizu’s command, his men refuse to listen to him and instead turn on Washizu. They fire arrows at Washizu until he is slain.

I will explain the following terms as they come up:

1. *Precisely* - the spirit was able to say with exact certainty what would happen to Washizu
2. *Fortifications* - Washizu believes his fortress is very well-protected against enemies
3. *Auspicious omen* - Washizu believes the birds to be a sign of luck and sure victory, whereas his men are flustered and concerned
4. *Delusion* - when one of Washizu’s men tells him the forest is moving, Washizu is certain the man is mad and imagining things

Upon finishing the film, I will ask students what their impressions of it were. Did they like it? Did they feel bad for Washizu at the end? It is my hope that questions like these will spark discussion, and that the film will have gotten students excited to start reading Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. 

28
Scavenger Hunt  Day 3

**ELP Standard** — Reading at the *Expanding* level:
1. Infer meaning from text
2. Match cause to effect

**Curriculum Framework** — Speaking and Listening
*Comprehension and Collaboration for Grades 11-12:*
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to make informed decisions and solve problems.

**Curriculum Framework** — Language
*Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for Grades 11-12:*
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown... words and phrases...
   a. Use context... as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase

Students will use the content knowledge they gained from watching *Throne of Blood* to make informed decisions about text from *Macbeth*, solving the problem of putting quotes into chronological order; this requires students to infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and speech patterns with help from the film, and match what they know of the plot to its effects on characters’ words and actions.

Before diving into *Macbeth* it will be important to address how students are meant to do so. Students will need to familiarize themselves with the different conventions of a Shakespearean play. I am hoping to handle this in a way that is both fun and informative for students—namely, through a scavenger hunt.

In pairs, students will complete a worksheet with several key lines from *Macbeth* and will need to use their background knowledge of the plot of *Throne of Blood* to put the lines in chronological order to the best of their ability. Next, students will be given a list of places in the Folger edition of the play (in the “Scene.Act.Line” format) where they will need to look to check and see if they got the lines in the correct order. Some questions may also ask students to use the notes on the left side of the text to define certain key words or phrases. The worksheet will look like this:
The following lines from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* are out of order! Luckily, the film we watched in class is based on *Macbeth*. Use what you remember from watching *Throne of Blood* to put them in the correct order.

1. Lady Macbeth—
   When in swinish sleep
   Their drenched natures lies as in a death,
   What cannot you and I perform upon
   Th’ unguarded Duncan? What not put upon
   His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
   Of our great quell?

2. Macbeth—
   *Avant,* and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.
   Thy bones are marrowless; thy blood is cold;
   Thou hast no *speculation* in those eyes
   Which thou dost glare with.

3. Lady Macbeth—
   Here’s the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

4. Messenger—
   As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
   I looked toward Birnam, and *anon* methought
   The Wood began to move.

   Macbeth—
   Liar and slave!

5. Macbeth—
   Say from whence you owe this strange intelligence or why
   Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
   With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.

6. Apparition—
   … Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
   Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane Hill
   Shall come against him.

   Macbeth—
   That will never be.
   What can *impress* the forest, bid the tree
   Unfix his earthbound root?

When you are finished, check the following sections to see if you are correct:

1.3.78-81  1.7.77-82  3.4.113-116  4.1.105-110  5.1.53-55  5.5.37-40
While you checking, please define the following words (definitions can be found to the left of the lines containing them):

quell -

Avaunt -

speculation -

anon -

impress -

Act 1 Scene 1 “Fair is foul, and foul is fair.” (1.1.12)

1. Lesson Objectives
   a. Content: students will be able to correctly identify the mood, tone, and theme introduced by Shakespeare, and will make predictions based on the information given to them by these literary techniques.
   b. Language: students will be able to recognize the rhyme scheme used by Shakespeare and will explain its effect on the mood, tone, and theme by using the following academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts: “Through the use of rhyme, the author was trying to teach us that…” “From the author’s use of rhyme, we can infer about the (mood, tone, or theme) that…” “The author’s (mood, tone, or theme) conveys to readers…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard — Speaking at the Bridging level:</th>
<th>Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will analyze the way in which Shakespeare introduces the main plot of *Macbeth*, as well as how he characterizes the three witches; through a class discussion, it is my hope that students will see the impact of Shakespeare’s choices with regards to mood, tone, and theme.

2. Vocabulary
   
a. **Literary terms**: rhyme, mood, tone, theme, prediction

   I will pre-teach these words to students because understanding them is critical to fulfilling the lesson objectives, as well as to future lessons. Prior to beginning the lesson, I will hand out a list of literary terms and have students write in the definitions themselves, with examples.

   b. **Key words**: heath (1.1.7)

   I will write the definition of this word on the board, as it is undefined in the Folger edition of *Macbeth*, and provide students with a visual image to cement their understanding of this geographic feature.

3. Background
   
a. **Background knowledge**: students will need to know what a witch is. It will be important to explain that witches have magical powers and “familiars” (in this case, Graymalkin and Paddock) before introducing the scene.

   b. **Prior knowledge**: students will need to activate prior knowledge about the difference between regular speech and rhyming. They will need to draw upon
previous familiarity with poetry to determine rhyme scheme, which is necessary
in understanding the impact of rhyme on tone, mood, and message.

4. Lesson

It would be important to spend an entire class period on Act 1 Scene 1 because,
though it is quite short, it sets the stage for the rest of the play and contains key concepts
important to student understanding moving forward. The lesson will also provide an
opportunity to get students engaged and excited about the rest of Macbeth. This will be
the first day that students are given the book. Finally, because it is so short and relatively
straightforward, Act 1 Scene 1 can also serve to build student confidence as they enter the
world of Shakespeare.

To start, students will be given a list of literary terms and will fill in definitions.
Next, I will build background knowledge by asking the class what a witch is, and
providing any information students do not know. Then students will silently read through
the scene on their own for five minutes; after they have gained familiarity with the text, I
will have volunteers read through the scene as the First Witch, Second Witch, and Third
Witch. I will then make sure that students understand the definition of heath (and show
an image on the board) as well as the concept of a witch’s familiar. For the rest of the
class period, I will discuss the concepts of rhyme, mood, tone, and message with
students.

First, I will ask students what they noticed about the witches’ speech. Can they
hear the rhyme? If there is confusion, I will read through the first four lines again,
emphasizing the last word of each. Why do they think the witches are rhyming? How does it affect how they perceive them? I will try to guide the conversation toward an understanding of the mood of magic and mystery. Students will also be asked what they think the witches’ tone is; how is it important that they seem to know what is going to happen? Next, they will focus on the line, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair” (1.1.12). How does this set the tone for the rest of the play? Do we see a theme arising? Throughout the discussion, I will monitor student understanding through their responses and use of the academic expressions previously outlined (which will be listed on the board prior to starting the lesson).

5. Assessment

Assessment will be carried out in the form of teacher observations of student contributions during class discussion, as well as through an exit ticket at the end of class. Before leaving the room, students will take five minutes to answer a question, which they will turn in at the door. The question will be: “Based on the mood, tone, or theme in Act 1 Scene 1, what do you predict will happen next? Use evidence to support your answer.” After collecting and examining the exit tickets, I will be able to assess which students are struggling to meet content and language objectives.

**Act 1 Scene 2** “What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.” (1.2.78)

1. Lesson Objectives
a. *Content:* students will be able to define *simile* and correctly identify the objects or ideas being compared in several examples.

b. *Language:* students will be able to paraphrase several examples of similes and explain, in their own words, the objects or concepts being compared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard — Reading at the Bridging level:</th>
<th>Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Infer meaning from text</td>
<td><em>Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpret grade-level literature</td>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they</td>
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<td></td>
<td>are used in the text, including figurative and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>connotative meanings…</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Curriculum Framework — Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for Grades 11-12:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Interpret figures of speech… in context and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>analyze their role in the text.</td>
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</table>

Through this activity, students will gain a deeper understanding of the text by putting several similes into their own words; they will need to infer which objects or concepts are being compared and interpret the meaning behind the figurative language.

2. **Vocabulary**

a. *Literary terms:* simile

I will pre-teach this word to students because understanding it is critical to fulfilling the lesson objectives, as well as to future lessons. Prior to beginning the lesson, I will have students take out their list of literary terms and write in the definition themselves, with an example.
b. **Key words**: ‘Gainst my captivity (1.2.6), Disdaining (1.2.19), Valor (1.2.21),

Dismayed (1.2.37), Curbing (1.2.65)

There are quite a few challenging words in this scene, which I will help students define by asking the class—when we get to the word in our read-aloud of the scene—if anyone already knows what it means, and providing the definitions myself if no one knows the answer. Students will be expected to keep new vocabulary in their notes to refer back to later.

3. **Background**

   a. **Background knowledge**: students will need to know that there is a battle going on in the background of the play, and that Macbeth has been fighting in it.

   b. **Prior knowledge**: students will recall that the previous scene was in rhyme; most of this scene (and the majority of the play) is not. It is important to note this and how it changes the tone.

4. **Lesson**

   Though students will have read this scene for homework, I will quickly read it aloud in class, pausing to define words and answer questions. After finishing the scene, students will get out their list of literary terms and write down the definition for simile. I
will then distribute the following worksheet and have them work on completing it in pairs for the rest of class:

**Recall** that a simile is a comparison of an object or idea with something of a different kind. Find the following similes in your book, then write down what two objects or ideas are being compared and **paraphrase** the simile in your own words!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simile</th>
<th>First object or idea?</th>
<th>Second object or idea?</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Doubtful it stood,/ As two spent swimmers that do cling together/ And choke their art.” (1.2.9-11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“And Fortune.../ Showed like a rebel’s whore.” (1.2.16-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“For brave Macbeth.../ Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel/ Which smoked with bloody execution/ Like Valor’s minion, carved out his passage” (1.2.18-21)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Yes, as sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.” (1.2.39)</td>
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</table>

5. **Assessment**

Throughout the class period, I will be circulating the room to answer questions and check for student understanding of the concepts and objectives I am assessing.
Before leaving, students will turn in their worksheets to me so that I can see how well they completed the content and language objectives.

**Act 1 Scene 3** “So foul and fair a day I have not seen.” (1.3.39)

1. **Lesson Objectives**

   a. *Content*: students will be able to determine the most important plot points and create a summary of the scene, as well as describe a visual source.

   b. *Language*: students will be able to create a summary of the events in the scene using the following transitional words and phrases: “First,” “Second,” “Then,” “Next,” “Afterwards”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Writing at the <em>Expanding</em> level:</th>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Writing Standards <em>Production and Distribution for Grades 11-12</em>:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text</td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Students will practice creating written summaries and will focus on not only determining which plot points are most important, but also correctly using transition words or phrases in their writing. This will hopefully cement their understanding of the plot of *Macbeth* while also allowing them to practice writing for this specific purpose.

2. **Vocabulary**

   a. *Literary terms*: There will be no new literary terms for this lesson.

   b. *Key words*: fantastical (1.3.56), corporal (1.3.84)

   Students will be focusing on the descriptions of the witches for the majority of the
lesson, and will thus be pre-taught the vocabulary which refers to these characters.

However, if questions or confusion arises with regards to other words or phrases, I will address these for the class.

3. **Background**

a. *Background knowledge*: students will need to know that Macbeth and Banquo are returning together from battle. They will also need to understand the definition of *a prophecy* in order to summarize the prophecy the Witches give to Macbeth. Finally, students will also need to know that a “Thane” is a high-ranking lord who owns land. All of this information can be covered in a mini-lesson.

b. *Prior knowledge*: students will need to recall that the witches speak in rhyme, and that this is different from the regular speech of characters like Macbeth and Banquo. Students will also need to activate prior knowledge about the form and function of a summary.

4. **Lesson**

I will begin the lesson by answering any lingering questions from students about the plot or meanings of words. Then I will go over the lesson objectives and distribute the following worksheet, which students will work on individually:
Recall that a **summary** is *a short statement or restatement of the most important points*. Please answer the questions below in **COMPLETE SENTENCES**. Make sure you use **transition words**!

Some examples of transition words: First, Second, Then, Next, Afterwards

1. What happens before Macbeth enters the scene? Summarize what the Witches say.

2. When Macbeth and Banquo enter, how do they describe the Witches? Bullet points are ok!

3. The Witches tell Macbeth and Banquo a **prophecy** (*prediction*). Summarize what the Witches think will happen to each of them.

4. Summarize what happens when Ross and Angus enter.
5. The woodcut above shows Macbeth and Banquo meeting the three Witches. How do the Witches here look different from the way they are described in the play? (Hint: how are they different from your answer to question 2?)

Please write 5-7 sentences describing the differences you notice!
5. Assessment

To assess student understanding, I will be circulating the room as they are working on the worksheet individually. Then, students will get in small groups for the last ten minutes of class to share their answers to the last question with their classmates, while I again circulate and listen to the discussions. Finally, students will turn in the worksheets before exiting the room.

Act 1 Scenes 4-5 “Look like th’ innocent flower,/ But be the serpent under ‘t.” (1.5.76-77)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. *Content:* students will be able to compare and contrast the tone of several different passages.

   b. *Language:* students will be able to compare and contrast several different passages by using the following academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts: “In contrast to…” “While,” “Whereas,” “The (tone or mood) in this passage is more/less…” “Similarly,” “On the other hand…”

| **ELP Standard** — Reading at the Expanding level: | **Curriculum Framework** — Reading Standards
| 1. Compare/contrast authors’ points of view, characters, information, or events | *Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12:* Determine the meaning of words and phrases, as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone...

Students will use their understanding of tone to compare and contrast several passages from *Macbeth*, using specific academic expressions to do so. They will rely on their analysis of Shakespeare’s word choice to
determine its impact on meaning and tone throughout this activity.

2. Vocabulary
   a. **Literary terms**: students will need to know how to compare two things (acknowledge their similarities) vs. contrast two things (acknowledge their differences). This will be taught as a mini-lesson to the class before they engage in pair work.
   
b. **Key words**: “th’ milk of human kindness” (1.5.17), “unsex” (1.5.48)
      Several key phrases might be confusing to students in the passages they will be examining. I will clarify their meanings after handing out a worksheet by calling attention to them and making sure the class writes down their meanings on the sheet.

3. Background
   a. **Background knowledge**: students will need to be aware that Duncan is Macbeth’s king. This means that Macbeth has vowed to serve him unconditionally, and is why murdering him is so unthinkable.
   
b. **Prior knowledge**: students will need to recall the definition of tone; they will also need to remember that a theme brought up by the Witches in Act 1 Scene 1 is the
interchangeability of fairness and foulness, as this theme reappears and will be focused on in these two scenes.

4. Lesson

After quickly introducing comparing and contrasting, I will distribute the following worksheet for students to work on in pairs for the remainder of class:

Recall that you compare two things that are similar, and contrast two things that are different. Please compare and contrast the following passages in COMPLETE SENTENCES.

Make sure you use the following academic expressions: “In contrast to…” “While,” “Whereas,” “The tone in this passage is more/less…” “Similarly,” “On the other hand…”

1. Macbeth—
   The service and the loyalty I owe
   In doing it pays itself. Your Highness’ part
   Is to receive our duties, and our duties
   Are to your throne and state children and servants,
   Which do but what they should be doing everything
   Safe toward your love and honor.
   (1.4.25-30)

2. Macbeth—
   The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step
   On which I must fall down or else o’erleap,
   For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
   Let not light see my black and deep desires.
   The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be
   Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.
   (1.4.55-60)

What is Macbeth’s tone in the passage 1? What is Macbeth’s tone in passage 2?

What is different about the passages? What is similar? Compare and contrast them in 3-4 sentences, using the academic expressions!
3. Lady Macbeth—
   … Yet do I fear thy nature;
   It is too full o’ the’ milk of human kindness
   To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
   Art not without ambition, but without
   The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
   That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false
   And yet wouldst wrongly win.
   (1.5.16-22)

4. Lady Macbeth—
   The raven himself is hoarse
   That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
   Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
   That tend on mortal thoughts, unsexme here,
   And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
   Of direst cruelty.
   (1.5.45-50)

What is Lady Macbeth’s tone in the passage 3?  What is Lady Macbeth’s tone in passage 4?

What is different about the passages? What is similar? Compare and contrast them in 3-4 sentences, using the academic expressions!

5. Lady Macbeth—
   O, never
   Shall sun that morrow see!
   Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
   May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
   Look like the time. Bear welcome in your eye,
   Your hand, your tongue. Look like th’ innocent flower,
   But be the serpent under ’t.
   (1.5.71-78)

What is Lady Macbeth’s tone in the passage 5?

What is similar about this passage and what the Witches say in Act 1 Scene 1: “Fair is foul, and foul is fair”? What is different? Compare and contrast them in 5-7 sentences, using academic expressions!
5. Assessment

To assess student understanding, I will be circulating the room as they are working on the worksheet in pairs to listen to their conversations and clear up any confusion. Students will also turn in the worksheets before exiting the room. My hope is that students will recognize that Macbeth starts out submissive, then gains direction; Lady Macbeth refers to her husband scathingly then channels her cruelty into passion. Finally, Lady Macbeth’s speech develops the theme of “fair is foul and foul is fair,” by adopting a deceptive, beguiling tone. I will look for all of this in my students’ responses.

**Act 1 Scenes 6-7** “False face must hide what false heart doth know.” (1.7.95)

1. **Lesson Objectives**

   a. *Content*: students will be able to read Act 1 Scene 7 of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* with the proper rhythm, tone, and expression.

   b. *Language*: students will be able to compare and contrast their own performances of Act 1 Scene 7 with what they noticed in a film version by using the following academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts: “In contrast to…” “While,” “Whereas,” “The film is more/less…” “Similarly,” “On the other hand…”
**ELP Standard** — Reading at the *Expanding* level:

1. Compare/contrast authors’ points of view, characters, information, or events

**Curriculum Framework** — Reading Standards

*Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12:*

Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Students will need to determine how Shakespeare’s choices might impact the decisions of actors playing the parts of his characters; through their own experience staging a scene from *Macbeth* and then seeing it staged by actors, students will compare and contrast the different ways in which the drama can develop onstage.

2. **Vocabulary**

   a. *Literary terms:* rhythm, tone, expression

      I will pre-teach these words to students by modeling their proper use myself (most likely by reading through Act 1 Scene 6 and emphasizing instances of each). I will then check understanding when circulating the room.

   b. *Key words:* none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. **Background**

   a. *Background knowledge:* students will need to know that Duncan is on his way to stay with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth (his hosts) and that they are responsible for his safety.

   b. *Prior knowledge:* students will need to activate prior knowledge about comparing and contrasting.
4. Lesson

After reading through Act 1 Scene 6 and setting the scene for the next portion of the play, I will pair off students and have them spread out around the room to practice performing Act 1 Scene 7. Students will read for either Macbeth or Lady Macbeth, with rhythm, tone, and expression. If time allows, they can switch roles. In the last 15 minutes of class, I will call students back to their seats and put on the BBC TV drama version of Shakespeare’s Macbeth (from 27:30 to 33:15) so that students can watch the exchange between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth that they had just been practicing.

5. Assessment

I will assess the rhythm, tone, and expression of students as I am circulating the room and watching pairs perform Act 1 Scene 7. At the end of class, students will fill out an exit ticket before leaving the room. The question will be: “In 5-7 sentences, compare and contrast (using academic expressions) what you saw in the film with your own performance of Macbeth. What did you do similarly? What was different?” After collecting and examining the exit tickets, I will be able to assess which students are struggling to meet language objectives.

Act 2 Scene 1 “Is this a dagger which I see before me, / The handle toward my hand?” (2.1.44)
1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the meaning, tone, and expressions used in Macbeth’s soliloquy.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to paraphrase Macbeth’s soliloquy, putting it into their own words without changing the underlying meaning.

| **ELP Standard** — Reading at the Bridging level: | **Curriculum Framework** — Reading Standards
Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12: |
---|---|
1. Infer meaning from text | Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings…

| **Curriculum Framework** — Language |
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for Grades 11-12: |
---|---|
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. | b. Interpret figures of speech… in context and analyze their role in the text.

2. Students will need to determine the meaning of Shakespeare’s words and phrases (including several instances of personification) in order to infer the meaning of, interpret, and ultimately paraphrase Macbeth’s soliloquy.

2. Vocabulary

   a. **Literary words**: personification

   I will pre-teach this word to students and have them record it in their list of literary terms, along with an example. Macbeth uses personification several times throughout his soliloquy: dreams abuse sleep and stones prate. Students will need to understand this type of figurative language in order to successfully paraphrase the passage.
b. *Key terms:* palpable (2.1.52), instrument (2.1.55), curtained (2.1.63), sentinel (2.1.65), design (2.1.67), prate (2.1.71)

There are several new and challenging words in this section, which I will point out and define for students at the beginning of the lesson. I will make sure students write down the definitions somewhere where they will be easily accessible while they are paraphrasing.

3. Background

a. *Background knowledge:* students will recall Macbeth’s mental and emotional states at the conclusion of the previous act—he was “settled and ben[t] up / Each corporal agent to this terrible feat” (1.7.92-93). This is Macbeth’s final soliloquy before he murders Duncan, and is thus critical to understanding him as a character.

b. *Prior knowledge:* students will need to recall the definition of tone to ensure that their paraphrases preserve the original tone of Macbeth’s soliloquy.

4. Lesson

After quickly summarizing the interaction between Macbeth and Banquo which occurs at the beginning of the scene, I will launch into a more in-depth lesson on Macbeth’s soliloquy. Students will be asked to paraphrase the soliloquy, with scaffolding being provided in the form of a mini-lesson on personification and an explanation of any challenging vocabulary. Then, upon finishing their paraphrases, students will get in pairs and recite their speeches to each other with the proper tone and expression. Once they
have each recited their paraphrases, students will take turns reciting Shakespeare’s original text, taking care to make use of the same tone and expression they previously used with their own speeches. Finally, I will end class by showing the BBC TV drama version of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (from 36:00 to 40:14) so that students have another interpretation of the play to respond to. Before leaving, the class will discuss any striking similarities or differences they noticed between their own performances and that of the actor in the film.

5. Assessment

   Students will pass in their paraphrases before leaving the room so that I can examine how well they were able to comprehend the meaning, tone, and expressions in Macbeth’s soliloquy.

**Act 2 Scene 2** “These deeds must not be thought / After these ways; so, it will make us mad.” (2.2.45-46)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to compare and contrast the tones of several passages, as well as how these tones affect the actions of actors in two different filmed versions of *Macbeth*.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to compare and contrast several different passages by using the following academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts: “In contrast to…” “While,” “Whereas,” “The *tone* in this passage is more/less…” “Similarly,” “On the other hand…”

| ELP Standard — Reading at the Expanding level: | Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards |
1. Compare/contrast authors’ points of view, characters, information, or events

Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12: Determine the meaning of words and phrases, as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone...

Students will use their understanding of tone to compare and contrast several passages from Macbeth, using specific academic expressions to do so. They will rely on their analysis of Shakespeare’s word choice to determine its impact on meaning and tone—including the tone of actors in two different filmed versions of the play—throughout this activity.

2. Vocabulary
   a. Literary words: none, as students should already be familiar with tone.
   b. Key terms: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. Background
   a. Background knowledge: students will need to know that this is the scene during which Duncan’s murder takes place.
   b. Prior knowledge: students will recall the meaning of tone; they will also need to use the same academic expressions for comparing and contrasting that they have already learned; finally, they will need to think back to Throne of Blood in order to contextualize the scene which they will be viewing in class.

4. Lesson

To start class, I will let students know that I will be showing two different film versions of the same scene, and that they will need to pay attention to any similarities and differences they see (specifically the actors’ emotions and actions). Students will first watch the BBC TV drama version of Shakespeare’s Macbeth (from 40:15 to 46:15), and
then will rewatch Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (from 42:00 to 49:56). These two interpretations of the same scene are vastly different from each other, and it will be important for students to notice that, although the actors in *Throne of Blood* do not speak during Duncan’s murder, they successfully convey the mood of the situation and the characters’ respective emotions. Next, students will be given the following worksheet, which they will work on individually until the end of class:

Using what you read, as well as what you saw in the two films, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is Lady Macbeth’s **tone** in the following lines?

   **Lady Macbeth**—
   Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
   And ‘tis not done. Th’ attempt and not the deed
   Confounds us. Hark!—I laid their daggers ready;
   He could not miss ‘em. Had he not resembled
   My father as he slept, I had done ‘t.
   (2.2.13-17)

   What emotions was Lady Macbeth showing while saying these lines in the **first** (BBC) film?

   Does Lady Macbeth act similarly in the **second** (Japanese) film? **Compare** and **contrast** her reaction using **academic expressions**!

2. How does Lady Macbeth change when Macbeth enters? **Compare** and **contrast** her actions and emotions before and after Macbeth enters in the **first** film.
3. What is Macbeth’s **tone** in the following lines?

Macbeth—
Methought I heard a voice cry “Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep”—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleave of care,
The death of each day’s life, sore labor’s bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course,
Chief nourisher in life’s feast.
(2.2.47-52)

What emotions was Macbeth showing while saying these lines in the **first** (BBC) film?

Does Macbeth act similarly in the **second** (Japanese) film? **Compare and contrast** his reaction using **academic expressions**!

4. Which film did you prefer? Do you think the actors were able to show the same emotions in the **second** film, even though they didn’t speak?

5. **Assessment**

I will collect the worksheets at the end of class to assess students’ completion of the content and language goals.
Act 2 Scenes 3-4 “This murderous shaft that’s shot / Hath not yet lighted.” (2.3.167-168)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to demonstrate understanding of a central theme in *Macbeth*, The Great Chain of Being, and explain in their own words why Shakespeare chose to incorporate it into the play.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to use academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts to convey their thoughts on why Shakespeare incorporated The Great Chain of Being as a theme in *Macbeth*; these expressions include, “Through the use of this **theme**, the author was trying to teach us that…” “From the author’s use of **The Great Chain of Being**, we can infer that…” “The **theme** conveys to readers…”

| ELP Standard — Reading at the Bridging level: | Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards

| 1. Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text | Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12:

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

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It is my hope that students will understand the topical importance of the Great Chain of Being at the time Shakespeare was writing *Macbeth*, and how this theme relates to the plot of the play. Students will draw their own conclusions on why Shakespeare chose to include this theme, and will create summaries based on their analysis.

2. Vocabulary

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with theme.
b. **Key terms**: lamentings (2.3.64), clamored (2.3.68), feverous (2.3.69), beauteous (2.4.19), contending (2.4.21)

There are several challenging words in the passages that students will be examining; I will define these words before students tackle the passages.

3. Background

a. **Background knowledge**: students will need to understand The Great Chain of Being, which will be explained to them in a mini-lesson.

b. **Prior knowledge**: students will already be familiar with the concept of theme.

4. Lesson

To begin the lesson, I will ask for volunteers to act out the last two scenes of Act 2 in front of the class, starting with Macbeth’s entrance in line 46 of Act 2 Scene 3 until the end of Scene 4. There are many different roles in these two scenes, which should ideally get the majority of the class participating and practicing their speaking skills.

Next, I will check for understanding by asking students to summarize the events of the two scenes. What is going on in the background, in nature? Once students understand that there are unnatural events occurring, I will launch into an explanation of The Great Chain of Being and distribute the following sheet:
The Great Chain of Being

During Shakespeare’s time, some people believed in The Great Chain of Being. This idea brought order to the world. God, who was the most important, sat at the top of the chain; directly below him was the King followed by his human servants. The rest of the structure looked like this:

```
    God
     |
   King
     |
   Men
     |
 Women
     |
 Animals
     |
   Plants
```

Kings (like Duncan) were the highest-ranking humans, because they were picked directly by God and were thus closest to him. For this reason, the murder of a king (regicide) would disrupt the natural order of the world and create chaos. In this way, the actions of humans on earth could influence the heavens. This happens in Macbeth, too!

← 1579 woodcut of the great chain of being from Didacus Valades, Rhetorica Christiana
The following lines show us what happens after Macbeth murders King Duncan. **Explain** in your own words why each example is unnatural or shows chaos in some way. (Use complete sentences!)

1. **Lennox**—
   The night has been unruly. Where we lay,  
   Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say,  
   Lamentings heard i’ th’ air, strange screams of death  
   And prophesying, with accents terrible,  
   Of dire combustion and confused events  
   New hatched to th’ woeful time. The obscure bird  
   Clamored the livelong night. Some say the Earth  
   Was feverous and did shake.  
   (2.3.61-69)

2. **Ross**—
   Ha, good father;  
   Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man’s act,  
   Threatens his bloody stage. By th’ clock ‘tis day,  
   And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.  
   Is ‘t night’s predominance or the day’s shame  
   That darkness does the face of earth entomb  
   When living light should kiss it?  
   (2.4.6-12)

3. **Ross**—
   And Duncan’s horses (a thing most strange and certain),  
   Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
   Turned violent in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
   Contending ‘gainst obedience, as they would  
   Make war with mankind.  
   Old Man—  
   ‘Tis said they eat each other.  
   (2.4.17-23)

4. Why do you think Shakespeare chooses to introduce The Great Chain of Being as a theme in *Macbeth*? What does it show about Macbeth’s decision to kill Duncan?

Furthermore, do you think these examples from nature are exaggerated at all? Do you think Shakespeare doubts the existence of the Chain of Being in any way?

**Explain** your thoughts in 7-8 sentences, using **academic expressions** for interpretation!
5. **Assessment**

To assess student understanding, I will collect the worksheets at the end of class and examine them for proper use of the academic phrases and understanding of the new concepts introduced in the lesson.

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**Act 3 Scene 1** “Banquo, thy soul’s flight, / If it find heaven, must find it out tonight.” (3.1.161-162)

1. **Lesson Objectives**
   
   a. **Content**: students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the meaning of several of the speeches in this scene.
   
   b. **Language**: students will be able to paraphrase characters’ speeches, putting several passages into their own words without changing the underlying meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Reading at the Bridging level:</th>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Reading Standards <em>Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12</em>: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Infer meaning from text</td>
<td><em>Curriculum Framework</em> — Language <em>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for Grades 11-12</em>: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpret grade-level literature</td>
<td>c. Interpret figures of speech… in context and analyze their role in the text.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students will need to determine the meaning of Shakespeare’s words and phrases in order to infer the meaning of, interpret, and ultimately paraphrase several of Macbeth’s speeches in this scene—all of which are key to understanding his motivations and how they affect the plot.

2. **Vocabulary**
a. *Literary words*: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

b. *Key terms*: posterity (3.1.4), verities (3.1.8), rebuked (3.1.61), sundry (3.1.142)

There are several challenging words in the passages that students will be examining; I will define these words before students tackle the passages, as their definitions are crucial to successful paraphrasing.

3. **Background**

   a. *Background knowledge*: students will need to understand the context of this scene, which will be accomplished prior to the lesson in a short class discussion. Where are Macduff and Ross? Who is Macbeth speaking to later in the scene? Why does he want to kill Banquo?

   b. *Prior knowledge*: students will need to recall that paraphrases preserve the original meaning of a passage.

4. **Lesson**

   After answering a few background questions as a class to clarify the context of the scene, students will break off into pairs to complete the following worksheet:

   **Paraphrase** the following passages (put them into your own words). Make sure your paraphrase of each of Macbeth’s speeches preserves the meaning of the original! Define any **bolded** words before starting your paraphrase.

   1. Banquo—
      Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
      As the weird women promised, and I fear
      Thou played’st most fouly for ’t. Yet it was said
      It should not stand in thy **posterity**.
      But that myself should be the root and father
      Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
      As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
      Why, by the **verities** on thee made good,
      May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.  
(3.1.1-10)

2. Macbeth—  
To be thus is nothing,  
But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep, and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be feared. 'Tis much he dares,  
And to that dauntless temper of his mind  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear, and under him  
My genius is rebuked, as it is said  
Mark Antony’s was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me  
And bade them speak to him. Then, prophetlike,  
They hailed him father to a line of kings.  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown  
And put a barren scepter in my grip,  
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If ’t be so,  
For Banquo’s issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;  
Put rancors in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list,  
And champion me to th’ utterance. Who’s there?  
(3.1.52-77)

3. Macbeth—  
Well then, now  
Have you considered of my speeches? Know  
That it was he, in the times past, which held you  
So under fortune, which you thought had been  
Our innocent self. This I made good to you  
In our last conference, passed in probation with you,  
How you were borne in hand, how crossed, the instruments,  
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might  
To half a soul and to a notion crazed  
Say, “Thus did Banquo.”  
(3.1.82-92)

4. Macbeth—  
Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,  
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,  
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept  
All by the name of dogs. The valued file  
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike. And so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not i’ th’ worst rank of manhood, say ’t,
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.
(3.1.103-120)

5. Macbeth—
So is he mine; and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near’st of life. And though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down. And thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.
(3.1.132-142)

6. Macbeth—
Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o’ th’ time,
The moment on ’t; for ’t must be done tonight,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness. And with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
Fleance, his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father’s, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart.
I’ll come to you anon.
(3.1.146-158)
5. Assessment

As I do not anticipate that there will be time for students to share these aloud in class, I will assess successful completion of the lesson objectives by collecting the worksheet at the end of class.

Act 3 Scene 2 “Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.” (3.2.62)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to demonstrate understanding of change in both Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s tones in this scene.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to use a combination of visual and textual sources to form an argument about tone using the following academic expressions for interpretation in Language Arts: “In contrast to…” “While,” “Whereas,” “The tone in this passage is more/less…” “Similarly,” “On the other hand…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard</th>
<th>— Reading at the Expanding level:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Compare/contrast authors’ points of view, characters, information, or events</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Curriculum Framework</th>
<th>— Reading Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12:</em> Determine the meaning of words and phrases, as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will use their understanding of tone to compare and contrast the tones of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth with regards to each other and to their tones in previous scenes. They will rely on their analysis of Shakespeare’s word choice, as well as of a film version, to determine its impact on meaning and tone throughout this activity.

2. Vocabulary

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with tone.

   b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.
3. Background
   
a. **Background knowledge:** I will reiterate the importance of paying attention to the tones character use in this scene, so students are prepared to analyze the shift in tone at the end of the lesson.

   b. **Prior knowledge:** students will need to recall the meaning of tone.

4. Lesson
   
   To begin the lesson, students will pair off and take turns reading the scene aloud as both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. I will then ask the class what they noticed. What do they think Lady Macbeth’s emotions are during this conversation with her husband? What about Macbeth’s? Students will then be shown the BBC TV drama version of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (from 1:06:45 to 1:11:25) to aid them in understand the emotion behind the characters’ words, and the tones they use throughout the conversation. Then, prior to leaving class, students will spend some time answering the following question in a well-formed paragraph (5-6 sentences): **How has Lady Macbeth’s tone changed from her previous conversations with her husband?** **How has Macbeth’s tone changed?**

5. Assessment
   
   I will assess student learning by circulating throughout the room as students are reciting lines, and also by collecting their paragraphs at the end of class to check for proper writing conventions and understanding of tone.

**Act 3 Scenes 3 & 4** “This is the very painting of your fear.” (3.4.74)
a. **Content**: students will be able to analyze the choices made by filmmakers, specifically with regards to the absence of a ghost in the BBC TV drama versus its appearance in Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*.

b. **Language**: students will be able form a coherent argument for their position on an issue and use evidence from the text/films as support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Speaking at the Expanding level:</th>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Reading Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Compare and contrast points of view</td>
<td><em>Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Analyze and share pros and cons of choices</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Take a stance and use evidence to defend it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will use their reactions to two different filmed versions of *Macbeth* to take a stance and use their analysis of both author and filmmaker choices to defend their argument.

2. **Vocabulary**

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

   b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. **Background**

   a. **Background knowledge**: prior to showing students the film versions, I will ask the class to summarize the scenes that they read for homework (Act 3 scenes 3 and 4) to check for understanding before moving forward.

   b. **Prior knowledge**: students will need to recall the dinner scene they have previously watched from *Throne of Blood*.

4. **Lesson**

   After quickly going over background knowledge, I will play for students the BBC
TV drama version of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (from 1:13:30 to 1:24:20). Immediately following this, they will rewatch Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* (the dinner scene from 1:08:33 to 1:24:20). I will then ask students if they noticed any differences, with the hope of launching straight into a discussion on why *Throne of Blood* shows an actor playing Banquo’s ghost whereas the BBC version does not. I will ask students to take a stance and reflect quickly on a sheet of paper which version they prefer. Then, students will raise their hands depending on which stance they chose and share their responses, using evidence to defend whichever film version they think did a better job with the scene.

5. Assessment

I will assess student learning by monitoring the discussion and keeping track of which students participate; I will push students to use evidence to support their opinions, as well as proper sentence structure and argument formation.

*Act 3 Scenes 5 & 6* “And you all know, security / Is mortals’ chiefest enemy.” (3.5.32-33)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. *Content*: students will be able to analyze Act 3 scenes 5 and 6 for meaning and plot progression.

   b. *Language*: students will be able to provide written answers to a series of comprehension questions using complete sentences and proper grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard — Writing at the Expanding level:</th>
<th>Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards <em>Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12:</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Justify or defend ideas and opinions</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered,</td>
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</table>

66
how the characters are introduced and developed).

Students will produce written responses to a series of comprehension questions which will require them to analyze Shakespeare’s choices in developing elements of the play.

2. Vocabulary
   a. *Literary words*: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.
   b. *Key terms*: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. Background
   a. *Background knowledge*: students will be introduced to the character of Hecate, and will need to know that she is a goddess and leader of the witches.

4. Lesson
   After clearing up any confusion and answering questions about the reading, I will pass out the following worksheet for students to complete individually in class:

   Answer the following questions in well-formed paragraphs of 5-7 complete sentences!

**Act 3 Scene 5**

1. Who is Hecate? Why does she “look angrily” (3.5.1)?

2. How does Hecate characterize Macbeth?
3. Make a prediction about how Macbeth will “spurn fate, scorn death, and bear / His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear” (3.5.31-32). You can use what you know from watching Throne of Blood!

4. Explain the following quote: “And you all know, security / Is mortals’ chiefest enemy” (3.5.32-33).

Act 3 Scene 6

5. How does Lennox say Macbeth reacts to Duncan’s death?

6. Why does the Lord call Macbeth a “tyrant” (3.6.29)? Think about The Great Chain of Being!

7. Do you think Macbeth is “accursed,” (3.6.55) as Lennox says?
5. Assessment

Students will pass in their completed worksheets at the end of class so that I can assess their understanding of the scenes, as well as the grammatical correctness of their responses.

Act 4 Scenes 1 & 2 “...to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good.../ Accounted dangerous folly.” (4.2.83-85)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to read through Act 4 scenes 1 and 2 aloud with fluency and proper emotion.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to determine cause and effect relationships from the text and will be able to verbally answer several guiding questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard</th>
<th>— Listening at the Bridging level: Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong></td>
<td>— Language Standards Knowledge of Language for Grades 11-12: 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. a. Vary syntax for effect...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Vocabulary

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

   b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. Background
a. **Background knowledge**: students will recall that, in *Throne of Blood*, Macbeth seeks out the spirit following the appearance of Miki’s ghost. Similarly, Macbeth seeks out the witches after seeing Banquo’s ghost to hear further prophecies.

b. **Prior knowledge**: students will need to be familiar with the concept of cause and effect. Specifically, students will think about how Macbeth’s thoughts and actions are affected by what he hears the witches say.

4. **Lesson**

These scenes provide an opportunity for most of the students in the class to get up and recite lines from the play, as there are many parts; the witches’ lyrical language throughout scene 1 also demands to be heard instead of simply read. Roles will be assigned at the start of class and students will proceed to act out Act 4 scenes 1 and 2. Ideally, I would also have props for each of the Apparitions to use during their dialogues. Following each Apparition’s prophecy, I would pause and ask students to summarize what was said and Macbeth’s reaction to it (cause and effect) and then quickly write down their responses on the board for future reference.

Following scene 1, I will ask students a few questions before having them move on to the next scene. First, what was different about these prophecies from what students saw in *Throne of Blood*? What does Macbeth mean when he says “The very firstlings of my heart shall be / The firstlings of my hand”? (4.1.167-168). What is the immediate effect of Macbeth making up his mind in this way? After this short discussion, students acting out the next scene will replace those already at the front of the room and we will
continue with Act 4 scene 2. Prior to leaving class, students will return to their seats and take some time to answer the following question in writing: **Do you agree with Macbeth’s actions (primarily his decision to kill Macduff’s family) after he hears the prophecies? What would you have done with this information if you were Macbeth?**

5. Assessment

I will assess students through their fluency in reading the scenes, participation and responses to questions, and finally their written answers to the final question which will be turned in as they exit the room.

**Act 4 Scene 3** “The night is long that never finds the day.” (4.3.281)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to analyze Act 3 scenes 5 and 6 for meaning and plot progression.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to provide written answers to a series of comprehension questions using complete sentences and proper grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Writing at the Expanding level</th>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Reading Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Justify or defend ideas and opinions</td>
<td>1. Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12: Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Students will produce written responses to a series of comprehension questions which will require them to analyze Shakespeare’s choices in developing elements of the play.

2. Vocabulary
a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. **Background**

   a. **Background knowledge**: students will need to recall that Macduff’s entire family has just been murdered by Macbeth, though Macduff does not know it yet. They will also need to know that Malcolm is Duncan’s eldest son, and therefore the rightful heir to the throne.

   b. **Prior knowledge**: students have previously dealt with personification, and will need to remember its definition for the purposes of this scene.

4. **Lesson**

   After clearing up any confusion and answering questions about the reading, I will pass out the following worksheet for students to complete individually in class:

   Answer the following questions in well-formed paragraphs of **3-5 complete sentences**!

**Act 4 Scene 3**

1. What do Malcolm and Macduff meet to discuss?

2. **How** and **why** is Scotland (the country) personified?
3. What does Malcolm say his sins are? (Make sure you include all of them!)

4. **How and why** does Macduff try to reassure him?

5. Why does Malcolm lie? What does he actually admit?

6. What does Ross reveal when he enters?

7. What does Malcolm mean when he says “Let’s make us med’cines of our great revenge / To cure this deadly grief” (4.3.253-254)?

What about when he says “Let grief / Convert to anger. Blunt not the heart; enrage it” (4.3.268-269)?
5. **Assessment**

Students will pass in their completed worksheets at the end of class so that I can assess their understanding of the scene, as well as the grammatical correctness of their responses.

---

**Act 5 Scenes 1-3** “Unnatural deeds / Do breed unnatural troubles.” (5.2.75-76)

1. **Lesson Objectives**

   a. **Content**: students will be able to examine and cite evidence for the mental decline of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

   b. **Language**: students will be able to form a written argument about the mental decline of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth using evidence from the text, as well as from a film version of the play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standard — Writing at the Expanding level:</th>
<th>Curriculum Framework — Reading Standards Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Justify or defend ideas and opinions</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will produce written responses to the question about Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s declining mental states, using evidence from both the written text of *Macbeth* and a film version of the play.

2. **Vocabulary**

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

   b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.
3. Background

   a. **Background knowledge:** students will need to be made aware of the background
      for scene 2, in which a Scottish force (including the new characters Menteith,
      Caithness, and Angus) are planning a rebellion against Macbeth. Though the
      focus of this lesson will be on Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, it will be important
      for students to keep this rising action in the backs of their minds for future
      lessons.

   b. **Prior knowledge:** none.

4. Lesson

   I will begin class by giving students the background knowledge they need in the
   form of a summary of scene 2; I will emphasize the importance of paying attention to the
   emotions the actors playing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth exhibit during their
   performances. How is their acting indicative of Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s
   emotional states during these scenes? Students will watch the BBC TV drama version of
   scenes 1-3 (from 1:57:13 to 2:08:30) to start. Following this, I will divide students into
   pairs; one person from each will be focusing on Lady Macbeth, and the other will look at
   Macbeth. Students will be asked to use evidence from both the text of *Macbeth*
   (contrasting character behaviors/ emotions from earlier in the play with their mental states
   in Act 5) and from the scenes they just watched to argue for the mental decline of both
   characters. After working independently, pairs will share with each other what they
   found, and then move into a class discussion.
5. Assessment

I will monitor student progress toward lesson objectives by circulating the room during each step of the process (individual and pair work) and then assessing the responses as they are shared during the class discussion.

**Act 5 Scenes 4-7** “I have almost forgot the taste of fears.” (5.5.11)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. *Content*: students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the meaning of several of the speeches in this scene.

   b. *Language*: students will be able to paraphrase characters’ speeches, putting several passages into their own words without changing the underlying meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Reading at the Bridging level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Infer meaning from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interpret grade-level literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Reading Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Craft and Structure for Grades 11-12</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for Grades 11-12</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Interpret figures of speech… in context and analyze their role in the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will need to determine the meaning of Shakespeare’s words and phrases in order to infer the meaning of, interpret, and ultimately paraphrase several of Macbeth’s speeches in this scene—all of which are key to understanding his shifting tone as he begins to face his demise.

2. Vocabulary

   a. *Literary words*: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.
b. **Key terms**: rouse (5.5.14), supped (5.5.15), slaughterous (5.5.16), syllable (5.5.24), struts (5.5.28), frets (5.5.28), equivocation (5.5.49), avouches (5.5.53), tarrying (5.5.54), aweary (5.5.55)

There are several challenging words in the passages that students will be examining; I will define these words before students tackle the passages, as their definitions are crucial to students paraphrasing successfully.

3. **Background**
   a. **Background knowledge**: none.
   b. **Prior knowledge**: students will need to recall that paraphrases preserve the original meaning of a passage.

4. **Lesson**

   I will begin class by showing scenes 4-7 to students from the BBC TV drama version of *Macbeth* (from 2:08:32 to 2:17:22). After answering any questions students may have and going over the vocabulary, I will distribute the following worksheet for students to complete:

   **Paraphrase** the following passages (put them into your own words). Make sure your paraphrase of each of Macbeth’s speeches preserves the meaning of the original! Define any **bolded** words before starting your paraphrase.

1. **Macbeth**—
   I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
   The time has been my senses would have cooled
   To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
   Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
   As life were in ‘t. I have supped full with horrors.
   Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
   Cannot once start me.
   (5.5.9-15)
What is Macbeth’s **tone** in these lines?

2. **Macbeth**—
   She should have died hereafter.
   There would have been a time for such a word.
   Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
   Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
   To the last **syllable** of recorded time,
   And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
   The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
   Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
   That **struts** and **frets** his hour upon the stage
   And then is heard no more. It is a tale
   Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
   **Signifying nothing.**
   (5.5.20-31)

What is Macbeth’s **tone** in these lines?

3. **Macbeth**—
   If thou speak’st false,
   Upon the next tree shall thou hang alive
   Till famine cling thee. If thy speech be sooth,
   I care not if thou dost for me as much.
   I pull in resolution and begin
   To doubt th’ **equivocation** of the fiend
   That lies like truth. “Fear not, till Bimam wood
   Do come to Dunsinane”; and now a wood
   Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
   If this which he **avouches** does appear,
   There is nor flying hence nor **tarrying** here.
   I ’gin to be **aweary** of the sun,
   And wish th’ estate o’ th’ world were now undone.—
   Ring the alarum-bell!—Blow, wind! Come, wrack!
   At least we’ll die with harness on our back.
   (5.5.44-58)

What is Macbeth’s **tone** in these lines?

5. **Assessment**

   As I do not anticipate that there will be time for students to share these aloud in class, I will assess successful completion of the lesson objectives by collecting the worksheet at the end of class.
Act 5 Scene 8 “Behold where stands / Th’ usurper’s cursed head.” (5.8.65-66)

1. Lesson Objectives

   a. **Content**: students will be able to think critically about plot elements to take a position on an issue.

   b. **Language**: students will be able form a coherent argument for their position on an issue and use evidence from the text/films as support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ELP Standard</strong> — Speaking at the Expanding level:</th>
<th><strong>Curriculum Framework</strong> — Reading Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Compare and contrast points of view</td>
<td><strong>Key Ideas and Details for Grades 11-12</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Analyze and share pros and cons of choices</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Take a stance and use evidence to defend it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will use their reactions to *Macbeth* to take a stance and use their analysis of the text (specifically Shakespeare’s choices regarding plot elements) to defend their argument.

2. Vocabulary

   a. **Literary words**: none, as students will already be familiar with the topics covered.

   b. **Key terms**: none, but I will clarify and answer questions as they arise.

3. Background

   a. **Background knowledge**: none.

   b. **Prior knowledge**: none.

4. Lesson

   I will begin class by showing the final portion of the BBC TV drama version of *Macbeth* (from 2:17:22 to 2:25:30). Afterwards, I will ask students what they thought of
the play overall. After a short discussion, students will be asked the following question: who, or what, is most responsible for Macbeth’s ultimate demise? Is it Macbeth himself? The pressure Lady Macbeth exerted on him? Or perhaps the Witches (and, by extension, fate) bear the responsibility? Although it cannot be said that any one person or force is completely responsible for Macbeth’s demise, I would want students to practice taking a stance and finding evidence to defend their arguments. Students will be given some time to independently work on gathering evidence (in the form of quotes from the text, or examples from the films) and strengthening their arguments before launching into a class discussion on the topic. If students are hesitant to volunteer their answers, I will ask for a show of hands for who picked each of the different forces (Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, the Witches, or other) and call on students from each group to voice their arguments. I anticipate that the discussion will take up the majority of class time.

5. Assessment

Assessment will take place in the form of teacher observations during the discussion, as well as observations made while circulating the room during independent work. Students will all be encouraged to participate in the discussion and voice their opinions, as they will be assessed on the basis of speaking skills and argument formation. However, I plan on also collecting their written notes at the end of the class to examine their critical thinking (particularly for those students who did not get a chance to speak).

Macbeth Final Assignment
Several days at the end of the unit will be devoted to a final assignment. Students will receive the following prompt (preferably prior to a weekend so they have an opportunity to work on it for an extended period of time outside of class) and will have a day of class which will be devoted to brainstorming and clarifying any questions.

**Final Assignment:** Pick **10-12** consecutive lines from the play (from a speech or soliloquy) to memorize and perform in front of the class. Have fun with this! You are encouraged to wear a costume, bring props, and make use of inflection and tone to carry the meaning of the dialogue.

**In addition,** you must turn in a copy of your selected lines, along with a **paraphrase** of them and a paragraph of **8-10** well-formed sentences explaining why you chose those specific lines. Do they explain a theme? Are they important to the development of the plot? Do they reveal a character’s emotions, or growth? Be specific, and explain your choice thoroughly!

Students will be graded on their performances as well as on their written explanations. It is my hope that this assignment will require the simultaneous use of speaking skills, analysis of the text, and the development of a written argument. Class time will be devoted to brainstorming themes and approving student selections of lines. Then, students will have a few days at home to work on the assignment independently before performing their lines to the class.

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**Chapter 4: Conclusion**

But screw your courage to the sticking-place, / And we'll not fail.

—*Macbeth*, 1.7.70-71

Upon concluding this thesis—devising a method by which I would teach *Macbeth* to a classroom of English Language Learners—I was able to have the serendipitous experience of
watching a high-school English teacher begin reading the play with her own class. Though there are many differences in class composition (specifically, her students are juniors at a prestigious exam school in Boston with near-perfect command over the English language) it was still helpful to see the way she approached this task; similarities between her method and my own strengthened my conviction in my approach, while differences allowed me to re-evaluate and add things I would not have previously considered. Most important, however, I witnessed the relevance of using scaffolding strategies to teach Shakespeare, even to native English speakers.

It was a relief to see that the teacher I observed—without previously conversing with me on the topic—introduced *Macbeth* to her class in a very similar manner to my own theoretical approach. She started off by explaining to her students the background information for both the play and playwright, starting with the Scottish influence. Next, she asked students what a witch was, just as I would have done. Finally, she had three female students come to the front of the class to read out Act 1 scene 1 as the witches to demonstrate the eerie, supernatural tone of their rhyming speech. Reading aloud was an integral part of each lesson; even though students were adept at using the English language, they still needed practice reading Shakespeare’s verse. The teacher I observed focused heavily on close-reading of scenes to heighten student understanding at the beginning of the play. In later lessons, she showed Justin Kurzel’s 2015 version of *Macbeth*, as it was the most modern and exciting adaptation of Shakespeare’s play. I could also hear the teacher in the next room playing Roman Polanski’s 1971 version of *Macbeth*. While I am familiar with these versions and was debating whether or not to use them in my own lessons, I ended up deciding against them in favor of *Throne of Blood* and the BBC TV drama version.
However, I was still pleased that teachers were using visual aids in some capacity. While this may not be for the same purpose of scaffolding the text for non-native English speakers, the practice does allow students of all backgrounds to get a better sense of the emotion and movement of Shakespeare’s words.

The teacher I observed got her students interested in the play quickly through a strategy I had not considered before. When introducing scene 3, which she had students read aloud, the teacher asked the class which of their classmates they felt would make a good Macbeth, and who would make a good Banquo. She asked: “who do you guys think is the most gullible among you, the most likely to do what they are told?” for Macbeth and “who is a ‘man of science’ who is much more skeptical?” for Banquo. The class then collectively volunteered two students who they felt would fit these roles. This quick introduction gave students an idea of some of Macbeth and Banquo’s character traits while also getting them personally invested in the play as a class by creating this new connection between the play and the students. I definitely think this would be worth doing with my future classes, and will prove to be a beneficial practice when trying to get ELLs to see the relevance of Macbeth to their own lives.

Students in the class I observed seemed excited by and engaged in Macbeth; despite all coming from different cultures and language backgrounds, they talked about the themes energetically and discussed their thoughts on characters at length. My experience being a part of their class has strengthened my conviction that Shakespeare is still a relevant and worthwhile author to cover in the present day, even with increasingly-diverse classrooms. I think that this is ultimately the best way to determine whether or not it is important to teach Shakespeare’s work
in the present day: the degree of student enthusiasm and engaged feel of the classroom overall prove that *Macbeth* has an indisputable place in the modern English class, as do other Shakespeare plays. I can only hope that my own students—whether or not they are English Language Learners—will be just as motivated to interact with the play in this way. My ambitions will have been realized if there is a comparable level of enthusiasm, as this would indicate that students have made their own connections and become appreciative of Shakespeare’s work.

While I also hope to see improving ELD levels, as reflected by student work, I believe that this enthusiasm will have a much greater impact on students’ futures. According to the teacher I observed, students do not read Shakespeare to get it done—they read it to change their lives. By reading *Macbeth*, they can experience the achievement of having mastered something challenging, and the accompanying readiness to move on to the next challenge. In addition, they will have gained a deeper understanding of a piece of cultural capital, with insight into human nature. For ELLs especially, this can be a life-changing experience with lasting implications for their academic futures.

Throughout this process, I have seen how it is possible to create a method for accommodating ELL students when teaching Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. And, my experiences in an urban public school setting have strengthened my conviction that the playwright is still relevant to students from all backgrounds today. After seeing how engaged the students I observed were when reading the play, I am more confident that this body of literature is valuable to cover with all students. The experience these students had with the play must be made available—even to those whose first language is not English. With some advanced planning, teachers of ELLs can
work out a way to ensure their students are properly supported in this endeavor and have the best chance of being able to read and comprehend *Macbeth* successfully. By engaging with the text in a variety of different, carefully thought out ways, students of all levels can gain access to a highly-relevant literary classic while simultaneously practicing and improving their English-language skills. It is necessary for teachers to anticipate student limitations and plan lessons which assist and guide students from all backgrounds toward success. By planning a unit on Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* with the limitations of English Language Learners in mind, a teacher can ensure all of her students access to this literary classic, while creating a foundation for their future success as well. In an ever-modernizing society with increasingly diverse schools and classrooms, creating this kind of culturally-conscious curriculum is not only a necessity, but also a duty for all teachers who wish to allow their students access to the rich works of literature which have been an important mainstay in English classrooms for ages—and will continue to be for ages to come.

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**Works Cited:**


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