



QUEENSLAND
SHAKESPEARE
ENSEMBLE

MACBETH

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY ANGELA WITCHER



ABOUT THE COMPANY	2
THE PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE	3
CAST AND CREATIVES	4
PLAYGOING IN THE ELIZABETHAN STYLE	5
DIRECTOR'S NOTES	6
PLAY SYNOPSIS	7
PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION	9
ADVICE FOR LISTENING TO SHAKESPEAREAN LANGUAGE	10
PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: NARRATIVE TABLEAU	11
CHARACTER MAP	17
PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: CHARACTER CONNECTIONS	18
KEY CHARACTERS	19
CONVENTIONS OF ELIZABETHAN THEATRE	22
ADVICE FOR INTERPRETING SHAKESPEARE	24
BACKSTAGE PASS	25
PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE	27
PRACTICAL EXERCISES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM	28
PREPARATION FOR PRESENTING	32
PREPARATION FOR RESPONDING	34
RESPONDING SCAFFOLDING TABLE	36
STRUCTURING A SENIOR DRAMA RESPONDING ESSAY	37

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble - Who are we?

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) was founded in 2001. Since its inception, the Ensemble has gained a reputation for energetic, accessible and unique productions of Shakespeare's plays. We use Shakespeare as a platform for positive change, via our ongoing programs. These include:

- ❖ Mainstage performances for the general public
- ❖ The Apprenticeship program, supporting emerging artists by offering a 6 month training program
- ❖ *Dare to Share* showing of company training
- ❖ *Shakespeare's Shorts*, touring to schools, festivals, markets and other events
- ❖ The Shakespeare Prison Project
- ❖ Our Shakespeare Beyond program, which includes A Night at the Theatre, Relaxed Performances, and Youth Justice workshops
- ❖ In-School Workshops in voice, Forum Theatre, and performing Shakespeare
- ❖ Actor training, including: Linklater Voice Work, Speaking Shakespeare in Your Own Voice, Theatre of the Oppressed, Shakespeare Scene Study, and the Young Actors Shakespeare Intensive

QSE exists to:

- ❖ Powerfully share epic stories with live audiences
- ❖ Provide world class training opportunities to actors and non-actors
- ❖ Support creativity in contexts and communities where it has been historically excluded
- ❖ Nurture an ensemble of artists managers that drive the company's activities and works together to develop their skills on stage and off

We believe that performing Shakespeare demands the cultivation of the whole self in the service of the communal enterprise, and as such is the ideal vehicle for this exploration. Although the Ensemble performs the works of other playwrights and authors, Shakespeare will always be the home from which we travel.

The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work, play and perform - the Jagera, Turrbal and Quandamooka peoples. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

THE PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Power hungry warrior and Machiavellian murderess or grief-stricken parents with a painful void to fill? Returning home from a bloody but victorious battle, Macbeth is met by the Weird Sisters who foretell that he will become King of Scotland. Emboldened by this prediction, the Macbeths take fate into their own hands, murder King Duncan and take the crown.

But the crown sits uneasily and their initial act of ambition and unquenchable desire for power set off a catastrophic series of events that once in motion, cannot be stopped.

Performance Season:	November 11 th – 27 th
Location:	Fringe Brisbane Hub, 23 Manning Street South Brisbane
Length:	2 hours and 30 minutes (including 20 minute interval)
Suitability:	Years 9-12
Key Themes:	Ambition; Power; Murder; Guilt; Fate vs Free Will; The Supernatural

CAST AND CREATIVES

Cast:

<i>Witch / Murderer / Doctor</i>	Crystal Arons
<i>Hecate / Lennox</i>	Meg Bennet
<i>Banquo / Lady Macduff / Caithness</i>	Joanna Booth
<i>Duncan / Menteith / Messenger / Murderer</i>	Mikala Crawley
<i>Malcolm</i>	Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn
<i>Witch</i>	Ellen Hardisty
<i>Lady Macbeth</i>	Rebecca Murphy
<i>Witch / Child</i>	Leah Mustard
<i>Macbeth</i>	Rob Pensalfini
<i>Fleance / Sergeant / Porter / Soldier</i>	Tenielle Plunkett
<i>Ross</i>	Rebekah Schmidt
<i>Macduff</i>	Angus Thorburn

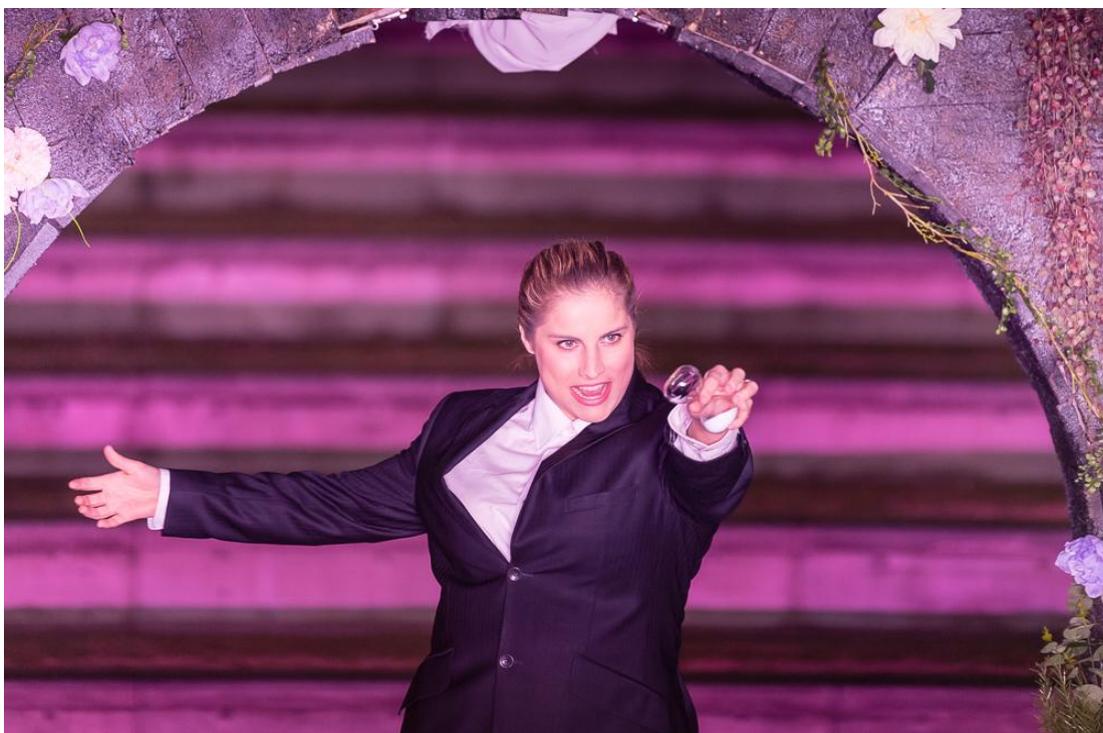
Creatives:

Director	Angela Witcher
Production Manager	Willem Whitfield
Production Designer	Leah Fitzgerald-Quinn
Music Director	Rob Pensalfini
Stage Manager	Jordan Ferguson
Assistant Stage Manager	Loretta Donnelley
Assistant Director	Lilliana Macarone
Fight / Dance Captain	Meg Bennet

PLAYGOING IN THE ELIZABETHAN STYLE

We'd like to welcome you to the experience of attending a live performance in a non-traditional setting. Just like in any theatre, there are most of the usual expectations – and while we know you get all the etiquette stuff, here's a reminder of some simple information you can pass on to your students.

- ❖ We would love you to get involved in the performances by applauding and laughing at appropriate moments. If you have a specific question – ask your teacher at the interval/end of the show or ask one of the cast, if you have a chance for a Question & Answer session (which can be held with prior arrangement after any show within the season).
- ❖ You are welcome to eat during the show, but please be mindful of other patrons. Snacks and drinks (including water) can be purchased at the front-of-house prior to the show and during interval, and you are welcome to take these back to the audience space with you. Please be mindful of the placement of drinks, and keep all bottles closed when not being used.
- ❖ Live theatre is different to TV – the actors on stage can hear and see you and there are other members of the audience to think about. If you need to leave the performance for any reason, please ensure this is done quickly and quietly and at an appropriate break in the action
- ❖ Please ensure that you switch off your mobile phone (not just to 'silent') and leave it in your bag before the performance begins; and if you wear a smart-watch and are not wearing long sleeves to cover this, consider removing it also. The glow of the iPhone screen and even a watch (which can be set off whenever you shift your arm) is obvious to others and can be very distracting!



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Angela Witcher, Director of QSE's Macbeth.

I last played with Macbeth in the early 1990s at an all boy's school in a very disadvantaged area of England. My actors and collaborators were 15 and 16 year old boys, some with shaved heads and tattoos, some already fathers, most with a maturity far beyond their years. Of course, they enjoyed the blood and gore. But they were also intrigued by the Macbeths' motives and the underlying themes within the text.

For this production I have chosen to focus on the Macbeths' relationship and the consequential pain and trauma the couple are living through as a result of the death of their child. As a stoic warrior in a bleak land (Northern Scotland) and turbulent times (the Middle Ages) Macbeth's emotions would have been suppressed and his bedside manner somewhat rough around the edges. Lady Macbeth's support network would undoubtedly have been lacking leading to internalisation of grief. Both suffering in isolation from such heart-rending trauma, Macbeth's grief plays out on the battlefield, while Lady Macbeth, with nothing to lose, turns to more Machiavellian manoeuvres.

Macbeth's somewhat meteoric rise to the top is countermanded by his equally fast descent into 'madness' as paranoia takes hold and his actions become more erratic and dangerous. Lady Macbeth's battle with her mental health slides as she struggles to justify the growing body count in the wake of her husband's rampage.

Enter the demons in the form of Hecate, the Weird Sisters and loosely, in this production, Ross. When Shakespeare wrote Macbeth it was for The King's Men under the patronage of King James I. The King's obsession with evil and possession resulting in the publication of his book 'Demonology' is strongly evident in the play. The witches relish their role, pitting Macbeth against Banquo and with Hecate's powerful direction are instrumental in orchestrating Macbeth's meteoric rise to power and his subsequent fall. In this adaptation, Ross is strategically aligned with Hecate and is ever watchful as he dips in and out of the action.

Shakespeare's shortest play tackles some weighty and still very topical themes. Immerse yourself in the darkness but enjoy the brief moments of light as you journey into the high Middle Ages.

I have relished this opportunity and every moment of collaboration with such a talented team.



PLAY SYNOPSIS

Macbeth in one sentence:

Macbeth hears that he is going to be king; he and Lady Macbeth kill people so he can become king; both of them die.

The 'elevator pitch' (a little bit more...):

Three witches tell the Scottish general Macbeth that he will be King of Scotland. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth kills the king, becomes the new king, and kills more people out of paranoia. Civil war erupts to overthrow Macbeth, resulting in more death.

The full run-down:

Act I

On a bleak Scottish moorland, Macbeth and Banquo, two of King Duncan's generals, discover three strange women (witches). The witches prophecy that Macbeth will be promoted twice: to Thane of Cawdor (a rank of the aristocracy bestowed by grateful kings) and King of Scotland. Banquo's descendants will be kings, but Banquo isn't promised any kingdom himself. The generals want to hear more, but the "weird sisters" disappear.



Soon afterwards, King Duncan names Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as a reward for his success in the recent battles. The promotion seems to support the prophecy. The King then proposes to make a brief visit that night to Macbeth's castle at Inverness. Lady Macbeth receives news from her husband about the prophecy and his new title. She vows to help him become king by whatever means are necessary (*cue ominous music*).

Act II

Macbeth returns to his castle, followed almost immediately by King Duncan. The Macbeth's plot together to kill Duncan and wait until everyone is asleep. At the appointed time, Lady Macbeth gives the guards drugged wine so Macbeth can enter and kill the King. He regrets this almost immediately, but his wife reassures him. She leaves the bloody daggers by the dead king just before Macduff, a nobleman, arrives. When Macduff discovers the murder, Macbeth kills the drunken guards in a show of rage and retribution. Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, flee, fearing for their own lives; but they are, nevertheless, blamed for the murder.

Act III

Macbeth becomes King of Scotland but is plagued by feelings of insecurity. He remembers the prophecy that Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne and arranges for Banquo and his son Fleance to be killed. In the darkness, Banquo is murdered, but his son escapes the assassins. At his state banquet that night, Macbeth sees the ghost of Banquo and worries the courtiers with his mad response. Lady Macbeth dismisses the court and unsuccessfully tries to calm her husband.

Act IV

Macbeth seeks out the witches who say that he will be safe until a local forest, Birnam Wood, marches into battle against him. He also need not fear anyone born of woman (that sounds secure, no loop-holes here). They also prophesy that the Scottish succession will still come from Banquo's son. Macbeth embarks on a reign of terror, slaughtering many, including Macduff's family. Macduff had gone to seek Malcolm (one of Duncan's sons who fled) at the court of the English king. Malcolm is young and unsure of himself, but Macduff, pained with grief, persuades him to lead an army against Macbeth.



Act V

Macbeth feels safe in his remote castle at Dunsinane until he is told that Birnam Wood is moving towards him. Malcolm's army is carrying branches from the forest as camouflage for their assault on Macbeth's stronghold. Meanwhile, an overwrought and conscience-ridden Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and tells her secrets to her doctor. She commits suicide. As the final battle commences, Macbeth hears of

Lady Macbeth's suicide and mourns.

In the midst of a losing battle, Macduff challenges Macbeth. Macbeth learns Macduff is the child of a caesarean birth (loophole!), realises he is doomed, and submits to his enemy. Macduff triumphs and brings the head of the traitor Macbeth to Malcolm. Malcolm declares peace and goes to Scone to be crowned king.

Sourced from Shakespeare.org.uk

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

- ❖ Do you think Macbeth always wanted to be King?
- ❖ Can you think of a time when you have desperately wanted something that you also knew was not within your right to have?
- ❖ Does Macbeth conceive of the plan to kill King Duncan prior to arriving back at his castle, where Lady Macbeth greets him with the plan?
- ❖ Have you ever convinced someone else to join you in an action that was morally questionable, perhaps because it gave you greater permission to commit to the act yourself (and / or because there's comfort – and power – in numbers)?
- ❖ Why does Macbeth decide he must kill Duncan himself, to fulfill the Witches' prophecy, when Thane of Cawdor 'falls into his lap' without actions of his own?
- ❖ How much do you believe in preordained fate, versus being able to choose (and take responsibility for) one's actions and their consequences?
- ❖ Who are the three Weird Sisters? What force do they represent? Are they malevolent or ambivalent?
- ❖ Do you believe in the possibility or influence of the supernatural? Witches, magic, spirits?
- ❖ Have you ever experienced being 'taken in' by someone who tells or shows you something that is true (or provable) in order to convince you that something questionable is also true? (In the modern day, we might call these kinds of people 'con-men'?)
- ❖ What is the change in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship, and/or in Macbeth himself, that motivates him to keep involvement in Banquo's death from Lady Macbeth?
- ❖ What do you think happens to Fleance (Banquo's son)? How do his descendants 'become kings'?

ADVICE FOR LISTENING TO SHAKESPEAREAN LANGUAGE

When watching a production of Shakespeare's work, there are a few things to keep in mind to get the most out of the experience:

If you walk away feeling like you didn't understand what was happening, or who was generally doing what to who and more or less why, rest assured that the fault lies not in you, but (most probably) in the production.

Don't seek to understand every word - there will be words that you probably don't understand. If it's true that Shakespeare invented a lot of words, then there are words that his audience would not have understood in isolation either. But the words are never in isolation: the context, the sound of the word, the action, and the actor's intonation and intention will, in a good production of a Shakespearean play, allow you to glean what the word is doing. Seek to understand the gist.

Let the words wash over you and into you. Don't focus so hard on the meaning that you miss the images, the thoughts and mental pictures that your own mind makes out of them, the things they remind you of. Let the rhythms and sounds of the language in. The play is every bit as much yours as it is Shakespeare's or the actors'.



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: NARRATIVE TABLEAU

Materials: *Plot-points and associated quotes (below) printed on individual slips of paper*
Blue tack

Arrange students in groups of 4 – 5. Divide below plot points among groups and have them devise a freeze-frame to represent each plot point. Encourage them to have an engaging use of proxemics / spatial relationships and a heightened use of shape to portray the characters and action of each 'scene'.

Extension: The freeze-frame must animate for 5 – 10 seconds, during which time the relevant lines will be delivered. Encourage students to consider the use of their voice and movement to create the atmosphere of the scene, and to clearly demonstrate relationships and characters' relative status.

Have the class perform their tableau in order (either provide them with the order, or get them to work out as a whole group what the correct order is, by arranging the slips of paper in the designated order on the ground or a wall). You could have one student read all the narration (in bold), or a student from each group could do this from within the tableau.

Macbeth is a brave Scottish nobleman / warlord (known as thanes) who is returning victorious from a battle (fought for the king of Scotland, King Duncan). His friend Banquo, another nobleman, is with him.

On his journey home, he meets three wizened old women, who say they can see the future. They prophesy that Macbeth will soon become thane of Cawdor (as well as being the thane of Glamis, a title he currently holds), and eventually King of Scotland.

Witch 1: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
Witch 2: All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!
Witch 3: All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

The witches also predict that Macbeth's companion Banquo will become father to a line of future Scottish kings.

Witch 1: Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
Witch 2: Not so happy, yet much happier.
Witch 3: Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.

As soon as the witches disappear, the noblemen Ross and Angus arrive to tell Macbeth that Duncan has just granted him the title of Thane of Cawdor (just like the witches said he would be!).

Angus: We are sent
 To give thee from our royal master thanks...

Ross: And for an earnest of a greater honour
 He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor.

Macbeth sends a letter to his wife, Lady Macbeth, telling her of the witches' prophecy. Lady Macbeth is the first to articulate the plan to take destiny into their own hands, and kill the current king, King Duncan, in order to ensure that Macbeth will become King.

Lady Macbeth : Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
 What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature;
 It is too full o'th' milk of human kindness
 ... Thou wouldst be great
 Art not without ambition, but without
 The illness should attend it
 ... The raven himself is hoarse
 That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
 Under my battlements.

As Macbeth arrives home, the news arrives that King Duncan will visit their castle that evening. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth discuss their plans to murder Duncan.

Macbeth: My dearest love,
 Duncan comes here tonight.

Lady Macbeth: And when goes hence?

Macbeth: Tomorrow, as he purposes.

Lady Macbeth: O never
 Shall sun that morrow see!

During the banquet held to entertain King Duncan that evening, Macbeth has second thoughts. Lady Macbeth convinces Macbeth to stick to their plan.

Macbeth: If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
 It were done quickly....
 If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth: We fail.
 But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
 And we'll not fail.

Later that evening, Lady Macbeth drugs King Duncan's attendants / bodyguards. Macbeth sneaks into King Duncan's bedroom and stabs him to death. He is so unsettled by the act that he forgets to leave the bloodied dagger with the bodyguards. Lady Macbeth has to return it in order to frame Duncan's attendants. Both express their horror and guilt at their own deed.

Lady Macbeth: Had he not resembled
 My father as he slept, I had done't.

Macbeth: Is this a dagger which I see before me,
 This handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
 I have thee not, and yet I see thee still...
 Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand?

The next morning, the nobleman Macduff arrives, and discovers King Duncan's body. Macbeth acts as if enraged at King Duncan's bloodied (and still drugged) attendants, and so has them killed. King Duncan's son, Malcolm, senses something is not right, and so flees to England.

Macduff: O horror, horror, horror!
 Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee!
 Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
 The Lord's anointed temple and stole thence
 The life o'th' building!

Macbeth is crowned King, but he cannot be content. He remembers what the witch said about his friend Banquo's children becoming Kings. He hires 2 assassins to kill Banquo and his son Fleance. Banquo dies, but his son Fleance escapes.

Macbeth: To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus.
... For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered.

Banquo: O treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou may'st revenge!

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth hold a royal banquet (as part of their show that everything is well). During the feast, the Ghost of Banquo appears to only Macbeth, and he appears disturbed in front of the court. Lady Macbeth attempts to dismiss and cover up his imbalance.

Macbeth: Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

... It will have blood, they say. Blood will have blood.

Macbeth knows that he is losing the court's trust, and so visits the witches again to ask for help. The witches tell him to be afraid of a man called Macduff. The witch also tells him that his castle will not be defeated unless the forest moves, and that any man born of woman cannot hurt him.

Witch 2: By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Macbeth: Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

Macbeth discovers that Macduff has fled to England to join Malcolm (old King Duncan's son). Macbeth is enraged and sends assassins to Macduff's castle, and has Macduff's wife and children killed.

Murderer: Where is your husband?

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

Murderer: He's a traitor.

In England, Macduff hears this news and is heartbroken. He plans to get revenge by helping Malcolm become King. Their army prepares to march on Scotland to fight Macbeth.

Macduff: What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?
... Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee.

At the same time, in Scotland, Lady Macbeth is increasingly guilty and disturbed. She has started sleepwalking, and having nightmares about the King's murder. She thinks her hands are still covered in his blood.

Lady Macbeth: Out, damned spot! Out, I say!...
Yet who would have thought the old man
To have had so much blood in him.

As the battle against Malcolm and Macduff begins, Macbeth gets a message saying the Lady Macbeth is dead. He is numb.

Macbeth: She should have died hereafter.
... Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time.

The battle is not going well for Macbeth, but he is sure it will turn in his favour – until he receives word that it looks like the forest around the castle is advancing. It is revealed that Macduff has ordered his forces to sneak up on the castle and ambush it, using branches cut from the trees to hide them.

Macbeth: Bring me no more reports. Let them fly all.
Til Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear.

Macduff confronts Macbeth inside the castle, and they fight. Macbeth boasts that he is not afraid, because he knows no one “born of woman” can hurt him. Macduff reveals he was not technically born of a woman, and so has the power to defeat Macbeth.

Macduff: Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.

Macbeth realizes all is lost, but decides to fight to the end. Macduff wins the fight, and cuts off Macbeth's head! Prince Malcolm is finally crowned the King of Scotland. It is inferred that peace and prosperity will then return to the country.

Macduff: Hail, king! For so thou art. Behold where stands,
The usurper's cursed head. The time is free.

Malcolm: So thanks to all at once, and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone



PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

Materials:

Character cards & glue (optional)

Poster-sized sheets of paper (or work as a whole class on the whiteboard)

Markers

Once students are familiar with *Macbeth*'s narrative, have them work in groups of 3 – 4. Rather than (or before) giving them the character map, have them create their own. Provide them with a list of the key characters and ask them to draw the relationship connections between the characters.

KEY CHARACTERS

SYNOPSIS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Character summaries below are sourced from the websites:

Shakespeare.org.au

[Cliffnotes](#)

Questions listed below each character may provide stimulus for discussion either pre or post-show viewing. They may be useful for students to consider if completing a forming task inspired by or presenting task based on extracts from the script.

Macbeth

Macbeth, Thane of Glamis, is a brave Scottish general in King Duncan's army. However, upon hearing the three witches' prophecy that he would become King of Scotland, he becomes tyrannical. With his wife's help and encouragement he kills King Duncan, but this fills him with deep regret and guilt. Plagued by insecurities and the witches' prophecy that Banquo's descendants would be kings, he keeps spies on all the noblemen and arranges for Banquo and his son to be murdered, although he hides this from his wife. Banquo's ghost haunts him and he suffers from insanity and insomnia. He seeks out the witches again, who still affirm the prophecy, and he goes on a murderous rampage. He mourns his wife's death and contemplates killing himself too as Malcolm's army approaches him. However, Macduff challenges him and he decides to die fighting.

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *How do you think Macbeth has managed to gain such a 'golden' reputation (towards the start of the play), while privately harboring such over-developed ambition?*
- ❖ *Do you think Macbeth has always coveted kingship, or are his actions motivated by 'opportunity'?*
- ❖ *Does Macbeth (consciously) conceive of the plan to kill King Duncan prior to arriving back at his castle, where Lady Macbeth greets him with the plan?*
- ❖ *Why does Macbeth decide he must kill Duncan himself, to fulfill the Witches' prophecy, when Thane of Cawdor 'falls into his lap' without actions of his own?*
- ❖ *How has Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship developed to the point where she can goad him into murdering his King by openly mocking his manliness?*
- ❖ *Does Macbeth love Lady Macbeth? What kind of love is it?*
- ❖ *What is the process of inheriting kingship, that permits Macbeth to usurp the throne?*
- ❖ *What is the change in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's relationship, and/or in Macbeth himself, that motivates him to keep involvement in Banquo's death from Lady Macbeth?*
- ❖ *What brings Macbeth to the state of hubris in which he can believe without question – or thought that it may not be helpful – the Witches' prophecy that he is invincible?*

Lady Macbeth

Even more ambitious and ruthless than her husband Macbeth, Lady Macbeth plots to murder King Duncan upon hearing of the witches' prophecy. She goads Macbeth into the evil deed despite his hesitance; gives the guards drugged wine, and lays out the bloody daggers. She comforts her husband in his guilt afterwards. When Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost, Lady Macbeth nervously tries to calm him down and dismisses their guests. However, her guilt soon turns her mad as well and, tormented by nightmares, she sleepwalks as she tries to wash out the invisible bloodstains on her hands. She dies offstage in the final act, a supposed suicide.

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *What is Lady Macbeth's personal history, that she is willing (the first time we meet her in the play) to request the 'spirits that tend on mortal thoughts' to remove her femininity all together?*
- ❖ *How has she developed her perception of her husband, whom she describes as 'too full o'th' milk of human kindness'?*
- ❖ *Has Lady Macbeth had, and lost, a child? How might this have affected her?*
- ❖ *What has happened between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, to allow such a complex power dynamic between them (especially in this historical and cultural period – when women were generally supposed to be much more submissive)?*
- ❖ *What makes Lady Macbeth able to be such a good manipulator and conniver, capable of ruthlessly goading her husband into killing the king, while acting the consummate hostess to him?*
- ❖ *What then pushes Lady Macbeth over the edge, through guilt and into hallucination, insanity and suicide?*

Macduff

Macduff, Thane of Fife, is loyal to King Duncan. He is the first to discover Duncan's dead body and never believes it was the servants who killed him. Macduff flees to England, trying to find King Duncan's son Malcolm (who, in the original play, fled when his father was murdered) and restore him as rightful king but meanwhile, Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children murdered. Full of grief and revenge, he persuades Malcolm to lead an army against Macbeth, challenges Macbeth one-to-one and slays him. A child of a caesarean birth, he thus fulfills the witches' prophecy that no man of woman born would harm Macbeth.

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *Why does Macduff choose to stay loyal to Duncan and Malcolm?*
- ❖ *Why does Macduff leave his wife and children behind, vulnerable to Macbeth's revenge?*
- ❖ *Identify the point in the play when our sympathy (as audience) moves from Macbeth to Macduff. What dramatic meaning is being reinforced through this re-framing?*

The three Witches

The Three Witches, or Three Weird Sisters, are the morally ambiguous characters whose prophecies drive Macbeth to his tyrannical desire for power. When the witches first meet Macbeth and Banquo, they prophesy that Macbeth will become King of Scotland and that Banquo's descendants will be kings. When Macbeth seeks them out again, they produce apparitions of his downfall while delivering three more

prophecies to him: beware Macduff, none of woman born will harm him, and he will be safe until a local wood, Birnam Wood, marches into battle against him. They leave the audience questioning whether they are agents of fate or independent agents manipulating humans' lives.

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *Who are the three weird sisters? What force do they represent?*
- ❖ *Are they malevolent or ambivalent?*
- ❖ *What drives them to interact with Macbeth?*
- ❖ *Are they 'real' women with supernatural powers, or spirits who 'bubble up' from the earth?*
- ❖ *Who is Hecate? Why do they do her bidding?*

Duncan

Duncan is the King of Scotland - the representative of God on earth, ruling by divine right (ordained by God), a feature of kingship strongly endorsed by King James I, for whom the original play was performed in 1606. This "divinity" of the king is made clear on several occasions in the play, most notably when Macbeth talks of the murdered Duncan as having "silver skin lac'd with . . . golden blood" (Act II, Scene 3). The importance of royal blood, that is, the inheritance of the divine right to rule, is emphasized when, in the final scene, Duncan's son Malcolm takes the title of king, with the words "by the grace of Grace / We will perform."

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *How symbolic is it for Duncan to have bestowed a second title on Macbeth?*
- ❖ *Why does Duncan favour Macbeth over any other general (including Banquo)?*
- ❖ *Why is Duncan not able to foresee a hint of his betrayal?*
- ❖ *What does Duncan's death represent in the play?*

Banquo

Banquo, Thane of Lochaber, is a Scottish general known for his bravery like his friend Macbeth. They meet the witches together upon returning from battle, and Banquo is also eager to know what their prophecy is for him. They tell him that he will not be king, but that his descendants will inherit the throne. Banquo is sceptical of the prophecy and resists the temptation of power that Macbeth gives into. When Macbeth takes the throne, Banquo pledges loyalty to him despite his suspicions, but Macbeth has him murdered, seeking to secure his position as king. Banquo's ghost appears and haunts Macbeth at the banquet that night, as well as later in a vision from the witches.

Questions to consider:

- ❖ *Why does Macbeth stop confiding in Banquo?*
- ❖ *How has their friendship been changed by the meeting with the three weird sisters? What was it before this point?*
- ❖ *How do Banquo's offspring become kings? What happens to Fleance?*

CONVENTIONS OF ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

A brief summary, drawn from the website:

<http://www.thedramateacher.com/elizabethan-theatre-conventions/>

with examples from *Macbeth* referenced below.

Soliloquy

This popular Elizabethan convention is a literary or dramatic technique in which a single character talks aloud inner thoughts to him or herself, but not within earshot of another character. Typically, a soliloquy is lengthy with a dramatic tone.

There are many good examples of soliloquies within *Macbeth*, but arguably some of the most famous belong to Lady Macbeth, one of Shakespeare's most complex female characters –

consider her soliloquy in **Act 1, Scene 5**: “Come you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe top-full of direst cruelty.”



Aside

The aside existed in Shakespeare's times, and continued into the melodramas of the 19th century many years later. An aside is a convention that usually involves one character addressing the audience “on the side”, offering them valuable information in relation to the plot or characters that only the audience is privy to. The audience now feels empowered, knowing more about the events on stage than most of the characters do.

One of the notable asides in *Macbeth* occurs in **Act 1 Scene 3**, when Macbeth observes to the audience, “If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me without my stir.” If only Macbeth had stuck with this thought... the dramatic irony should not be wasted on any audience.

Poetic Language

Elizabethan plays commonly consisted of dialogue that was poetic, dramatic and heightened beyond that of the vernacular of the day. Shakespeare took great care in composing dialogue that was sometimes prose but and sometimes verse – either blank (unrhymed) or rhyming (couplets) and generally using five stressed syllables in a line of dialogue (iambic pentameter).

QSE approaches Shakespeare's text using the guidelines that verse indicates heightened emotion, while the use of prose may suggest more ‘every-day’ dialogue, a character losing their wits (as when Lady Macbeth sleepwalks in **Act 5 Scene 1**) or

even a certain craftiness (as in Hamlet's speech, "I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth", *Hamlet*, Act 2 Scene 2). There are many examples of beautifully crafted verse in *Macbeth*, such as Macbeth's existential soliloquy in **Act 5, Scene 5**:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time...*

Boys performing female roles

Acting in Elizabeth's England was frowned upon by many in society as a profession unsuitable for women, as it was rough and rowdy instead of genteel. As a result, Shakespeare and his contemporaries cast boys and younger men in the roles of women.

QSE holds gender parity as one of its core values (both on and off stage), and casts characters across gender. Given the majority of roles in *Macbeth* (like most Shakespearean plays) are male, this more commonly means that female actors play traditionally male roles in the company's productions (although the company has also had male actors play female roles - for example, in the schools touring production of *Instant Romeo and Juliet*, the actor playing Romeo also plays Lady Capulet (Juliet's mother). In this production of *Express Macbeth*, female actors often play male characters, including Malcolm (King Duncan's son), Donalbain, Lennox and Ross. In a contemporary reference to Elizabethan traditions, rather than changing the gender of the characters (and the language of the original text), these characters are all still identified as male.



Stagecraft

In terms of stagecraft, Elizabethan dramas used elaborate costumes, yet quite the opposite for scenery. Acting spaces were largely empty (bare stage) with symbolic and isolated set pieces and minimal use of props (a single tree equalled a forest, a throne for a King's palace). This explains the use of rich dialogue full of imagery, as there was no set on stage to designate the scene's location. However, Elizabethan costumes were often rich and colourful, with a

character's status in society being denoted by their costume alone. There were no stage lights of any kind, with plays strictly performed during daylight hours. A simple balcony at the rear of the stage could be used for scenes involving fantastical beings, Gods or Heaven, while a trap door in the stage floor could also be used to drop characters into Hell or raise characters up from beneath. Entrances and exits were at two doors at the rear (tiring house) and not the side wings, as is the case in modern theatre. An Elizabethan actor exiting side stage may well have landed in the groundings after falling off the edge of the (three-sided) thrust stage that jutted out into the audience!

ADVICE FOR INTERPRETING SHAKESPEARE

Rob Pensalfini, Artistic Director of QSE, says:



1. Read the play aloud!

These plays were written down only in order to be spoken, not to be read silently from a page. There is no evidence that Shakespeare ever sought to have his plays published – and were it not for two actors from his company scrounging together all the papers they could, half of his plays would have been lost.

Speak the words – it makes it much easier to understand. Ideally, get a bunch of people together and share out the parts.

Stop and help each other understand what's going on, but don't get bogged down in detail too much on a first read out loud.

2. Enjoy the physicality of the language

Once you read Shakespeare aloud, you will find that the physical stuff of speaking, the sounds and rhythms, often convey as much as the meaning of the words themselves. When you get a line like Hamlet's "to live in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed", enjoy all those 's' sounds and the pops of the 'k', 't', 'b', and 'd'.

Enjoy the energy of the rhythms, which demand a certain degree of quickness and lightness, and carry the argument forward in terms of energy and intention.

3. Literalise the images

We all know that Shakespeare's plays are loaded with metaphors. Every situation, every relationship, every feeling, is likened to this or that natural phenomenon, commercial enterprise, plant, or animal. Rather than rushing to translate the images into what they stand for, take time to imagine the images as literally true. For example, don't replace the phrase "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" with the thought 'unpredictable disasters'. Instead, imagine being pelted with actual sling stones and arrows, ideally fired by the goddess Fortune (look her up if you have no idea what she looks like), and what the word 'outrageous' does to this image.

One way in to this is to actually physicalise the images, make your body into the shapes of the images, as you speak the words. I mean in the early stages of getting to know the text, not in performance.

4. Keep an eye out for in-text stage directions

Shakespeare often gave his actors stage directions within the words their characters spoke. If your character says, for example, "Bow, stubborn knees..." (Claudius, Act IV Sc I) that is Shakespeare giving the actor playing Claudius the instruction to kneel as he speaks the lines that follow! Do not let your character just describe an action that they are doing – incorporate this into your blocking or movement score for the scene.

BACKSTAGE PASS

INTERVIEW WITH THE ACTORS

Rob Pensalfini - Macbeth



Q: What has helped you to empathise with and inhabit your character?

A: The language. Opening up to it, not shying away from it, letting it affect me as I speak it. Of course there was 20 years of training first to get me to the point where that happens.

I was drawn by two aspects of the portrayal of Macbeth in particular: the portrayal of anxiety and PTSD (though they didn't call it that, or much at all, when it was written), and the impact of patriarchal values.

On the first, I've lived with anxiety since 1997, and apparently with PTSD too – though that was only officially diagnosed last week. It's the cause of the anxiety. One of the challenges with PTSD, and with trauma processing and memory in general, is that traumatic memory relives, rather than recalls, and that in that state of limbic arousal, words are difficult to

produce and process. Shakespeare has written scenes of traumatic memory brilliantly, but he gives Macbeth explicit and powerful language to describe the experience.

With regards to patriarchal values, it really drove home for me that patriarchy is a sociopolitical imbalance that is perpetuated by all people (not just men), and which diminishes and dehumanises everyone under it (including men).

Q: What would you consider your character's greatest strengths and weaknesses?

A: Depending which way you look at it, the strengths could be weaknesses and vice versa. So I'll mention two and you can decide which is which...

- ❖ Macbeth has a deep sense of fairness and honour, which he sets aside (with a little convincing) to pursue his ambition. And a kind streak (Lady M describes him as "too full of the milk of human kindness"). We see this in some surprising places in our production, but no spoilers here.
- ❖ Once he decides to do something, he commits to it 110%. He does consider the implications, the pros and cons, and his wife might say he does altogether too much of that. He does listen to advice (arguably not the best advice), and once he decides on a course of action, he keeps going.

Q: Why are you looking forward to sharing this production with audiences?

A: It ain't theatre (at least this kind) until there's an audience! I'm looking forward to hearing and seeing the audience respond to the characters, the words, the themes, the sounds, the smells.... Hopefully not so much the smells.

Also the venue. QSE has a long history of performing in non-traditional spaces, but this is the first time we've performed in an unreconstructed hair salon! But above all, this group of artists doing this text at this time in this part of the world. The cast and other creatives are across the board capable, committed, energetic, and passionate. It will crackle.

Q: What is your favourite line from the play?

A: "Twas a rough night."

Rebecca Murphy - Lady Macbeth



Q: What has helped you to empathise with and inhabit your character?

A: I found it disturbingly easy to empathise with Lady M! I always start by looking for/ being open to finding similarities between myself and the character no matter how unflattering they may be. The first few that jumped out to me with this role were her stubbornness, her unwavering belief in Macbeth, and her outrage at being let down when it seems that he is backing out of their plan. Early in the rehearsal process the theme of isolation came up and I found that a useful thing to tap into at the top of each run of the show.

Leah's amazing costumes really helped add another layer and I love getting to play in the atmosphere that she has managed to create in this unusual performance space.

Q: What would you consider your character's greatest strengths and weaknesses?

A: She is a genuinely supportive partner who believes that her husband deserves more than he currently has. She wields language very powerfully - its emotionality, the structure of her arguments and choice of tactics. She is ambitious and focused I think this list probably answers both parts of that question!

Q: Why are you looking forward to sharing this production with audiences?

A: Rehearsals are fun but the process is never complete until there is an audience there. I love the way that Shakespeare's plays pose big questions rather than specific lessons or answers and really expect an audience to think for themselves - I'm hoping I get to overhear some juicy conversations in the foyer!

Q: What is your favourite line from the play?

A: "But screw your courage to the sticking place
And we'll not fail"

Obviously she's convincing Macbeth to go ahead with murder which isn't ideal but as a sentiment I find it quite beautiful. It always feels like a real turning point in the scene.

PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE

AN ACTOR'S WARMUP

Rob Pensalfini, Artistic Director of QSE, says:

Warm up together as a cast. Let the warm up be a way to connect to your fellow performers so that you are all inhabiting the same world even before the performance begins.

A warm up should bring you gradually from everyday energy to performance energy. Begin with observation of how you feel (physically, mentally, emotionally), and work to free yourself of physical tension and vocal inhibition. Include plenty of yawning and humming, increasing in range and power.



Never move or make sound mechanically. You are not warming up an instrument; you are warming up the connection between your body, your thoughts, your feelings, your intentions, and your voice. Every sound you make is a release of thought, some part of your psyche speaking.

A short group warm up may include activities to:

- ❖ Facilitate self-observation (e.g. a 'body scan' visualisation; or neutral walking through the space, observing weight placement, tension points, and movement of breath)
- ❖ Connect out to members of your ensemble (e.g. Salute to the Sun, or similar repetitive movement sequences that the group works to perform simultaneously)
- ❖ Connect to the space and build energy (e.g. the 'bomb and shield' drama game)
- ❖ Activate your voice, such as:
 - Gentle yawning, sighing and humming through your range (can be done in combination with spinal rolls)
 - Massaging the jaw and the sinuses
 - Stretching the lips, tongue (roll it out over your bottom teeth), and soft palate (create an unvoiced 'k' sound on both in and out breath)
 - Stretching the ribs (can also use gentle massage / vibration on the chest)
 - A vocal scale - working through combinations of vowels and consonants at varying pitches
 - Tongue twisters (to activate articulators)

PRACTICAL EXERCISES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

1. Geography of Thought (Literalising the Image)

Elements of Drama: Exploring Language, Space, and Movement

Rob Pensalfini encourages actors to physicalise the literal images their characters are describing as they speak the words in early rehearsals. This can be a very useful way of creating personalised connections with the character's words and with their emotional state, as well as bringing the symbolic imagery to life. The below monologue could be explored by one actor with the whole class assisting or audiencing, or the activity could be undertaken in small groups, as a practical exploration of this rehearsal technique.

Suggested classroom activity:

Have one actor read through Lady Macbeth's monologue (below).

As a class / group, work through the images in the monologue, discussing briefly what they entail (it can even be very useful to research or print out images that relate to those described, especially for specific mythical references such as "spirits").

Have the actor read through the monologue again, this time standing on a 'stage' space; as the actor names each new image, invite other group members to enter the stage and create a freeze-frame of that image (if using a larger group, each image can stay; if smaller groups of 4 – 5, the 3 – 4 non-speaking actors will need to create a simple choreography, moving from one freeze-frame to the next, as appropriate). Encourage large, heightened shapes, incorporating levels, and using the full breadth of the stage space available.

Have the actor playing Lady Macbeth speak the speech a third time, this time directly to the relevant images created by their peers. Encourage him or her to move freely among, towards or away from the images / freeze-frames. Invite them to respond with movement if Lady Macbeth's words or actions invite this.

Finally, have the image-actors return to the audience and invite the actor playing Juliet to share the speech with the audience one more time, allowing the literalised imagery to colour their movement and vocal delivery.

Discuss with the class whether (and where) this increased the clarity (and their understanding) of the speech, and how it changed their perception of Lady Macbeth's emotional state and / or the scene's mood.

Macbeth – Act 1 scene 5

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, unsex me here,
 And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
 Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;
 Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
 That no compunctious visitings of nature
 Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
 The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
 And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
 To cry 'Hold, hold!'

2. Scene in Gibberish

*Elements of Drama: Exploring **Language** (verbal and non-verbal), **Tension** and **Mood***

Shakespeare's language is powerful and specific, but it is also visceral – the whole being speaks. These days our experience of language tends to be more disembodied, and actors approaching Shakespeare sometimes leave behind their non-textual communication skills like body language, gesture, and tone – which convey the stakes and urgency of what they are saying.

The actors in the scene play out the scene in gibberish, a made-up (on the spot) babble which sounds like language, but sounds like no specific language. They shouldn't try to replicate the scene line by line, but essentially play out the intentions and ideas and actions in the scene. They will be forced to rely on all of these non-verbal strategies to communicate and get their needs met.

Then, immediately go back and play the written scene, this time **adding** language to the non-verbal expression they have discovered. Keep encouraging them to find the level of intensity and energy they had in the gibberish version of the scene, with the mere addition of the text to further support it, not replace it.

Suggested classroom activity:

As a group, have students read **Act 5 Scene 6** – Malcolm and Macduff's advance on Dunsinane. Ensure that they understand the meaning of the words. A modern translation is provided below, drawn from:

<https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/macbeth>

Workshop the scene as a class by having pairs 'present' the scene. The first pair should attempt the scene using the original text; following pairs will attempt the scene using only gibberish (there is no need to hold the script or follow the intent of each line exactly – but they should be attempting to recreate as much of the intention of the original as possible, without sensible dialogue).

After each gibberish performance, elicit feedback on which sections of the scene were clearest, and what gestures, movements, or vocal intonation assisted this. For every two or three gibberish performances, have a pair return to using the original text, incorporating as much of the useful gestures, movement and intonation as they are able.

Discuss as a class how the performance of the scene has changed through the focus on communication of dramatic meaning through non-verbal language and vocal intonation (rather than just through the meaning of the words themselves).

ORIGINAL TEXT	MODERN TEXT
<p><i>Drum and colours.</i> <i>Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their army, with boughs</i></p>	<p>MALCOLM, old SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their army enter carrying branches, with a drummer and flag.</p>
<p>MALCOLM Now near enough. Your leafy screens throw down, And show like those you are.—You, worthy uncle, Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son, Lead our first battle. Worthy Macduff and we Shall take upon 's what else remains to do, According to our order.</p>	<p>MALCOLM We're close enough now. Throw down these branches and show them who you really are. Uncle Siward, you and your son will lead the first battle. Brave Macduff and I will do the rest, according to our battle plan.</p>
<p>SIWARD Fare you well. Do we but find the tyrant's power tonight, Let us be beaten if we cannot fight.</p>	<p>SIWARD Good luck. If we meet Macbeth's army tonight, let us be beaten if we cannot fight.</p>
<p>MACDUFF Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath, Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.</p>	<p>MACDUFF Blow all the trumpets. They loudly announce the news of blood and death.</p>
<p><i>Exeunt</i></p>	<p><i>They exit.</i></p>

PREPARATION FOR PRESENTING

In groups of 5 – 7, using minimal props and costume items to suggest characters, have students rehearse and perform for each other the following excerpt from QSE's *Express Macbeth* (one of QSE's touring [Shakespeare's Shorts](#) shows, available in-schools on a by-request basis).

A note on Express Macbeth: The play is a 30-minute version of Macbeth, designed to be performed by four actors (playing multiple roles). Each Encore is a more contracted version. By Encore 2, the actors are dashing around the stage in circles, throwing bits of costume on and off, to create general hilarity (and to contrast the original tragedy of the play). You may choose to direct students to enhance the comedy of their work in this, or another, manner; or to devise stylized movement sequences between the short lines to create a piece of physical theatre that encapsulates the main story-points of the play.

Express Macbeth – Encore 2

All entrances stage right (SR), all exits stage left (SL) (unless otherwise stated).

Enter (2) Witches (SR)

BOTH Double double, toil and trouble,

Drum within

Macbeth doth come!

Enter Macbeth and Banquo (SR)

First Witch Glamis

Second Witch Cawdor!

(sock puppet) King!

GASP! Exit Witches

Enter LADY MAC (C)

LADY MAC Worthy Cawdor!

MACBETH Duncan...

A dagger appears

MACBETH Is this a dagger?

Enter LADY MAC (C); MACDUFF (SR)

MACDUFF Murder

Exit MACDUFF; ENTER MURDERER

MACBETH (to murderer) Banquo

MACBETH (to 'gueste') Hearty welcome!

Enter BANQUO's Ghost (C)

I will to the weird sisters

Exit BANQUO's Ghost (C)

Enter the Witches

MACBETH Midnight hags!

First Witch Beware Macduff!

Second Witch None of woman born!

(sock puppet) Birnam Wood to Dunsinane.

GASP! Exit Witches; Exit MACBETH

Enter MACDUFF; followed by ROSS

ROSS Your wife and babes slaughtered.

Exit ROSS

MACDUFF Chickens!

Exit MACDUFF

Enter LADY MAC (with stuffed dog)

LADY MAC Out damned spot! *(throws dog)*

Exit LADY MAC

Enter MACBETH, followed by Messenger 2

Messenger 2 The queen, is dead.

Enter MACDUFF

MACDUFF Turn hellhound!

MACBETH I bear a charmed life

MACDUFF Macduff was untimely ripp'd!

MACBETH I will not yield!

They fight

MACBETH dies

MACDUFF takes the crown off his head.

MACDUFF So thanks to all to see us crowned at Scone!

PREPARATION FOR RESPONDING

Responding requires students to:

- ❖ *analyse the use of the Dramatic Languages within a production to create dramatic action and dramatic meaning*
- ❖ *evaluate the success of this creation of dramatic meaning for the audience*
- ❖ *synthesise their understanding of how the use of the Dramatic Languages worked to engage the audience.*

The Dramatic Languages include:

Elements of Drama	Skills of Drama	Conventions of Elizabethan Theatre
Characters / Roles Relationships Situation / Context Place Space Movement Language Symbol Mood Dramatic focus Dramatic tension Contrast	Acting (voice & movement) Directing (responsible for dramatic meaning) Design / Stage craft (set, lighting, costume, sound)	Poetic language Blank verse (Iambic pentameter) Rhyming couplets Prose (often used in less emotionally charged scenes) Presentational acting style Soliloquies Asides Eavesdropping Play within a play Elaborate costumes Symbolic (minimal) scenery

Students' process for planning a Responding essay may include these steps:

1. Decide what the overall dramatic meaning of the production was (this may change as you analyse the production further).
2. Decide on the key Dramatic Languages that effectively contributed to the creation of dramatic action and meaning throughout the production.
3. For each body paragraph - choose a moment within the play that contributed significantly to the creation of this dramatic meaning (a moment that made an impact!)
4. Analyse which of the key Dramatic Languages have been used to create this impact
5. Connect (synthesise) the use of element(s) of drama with skill(s) of drama and/or convention(s) of form and style within the chosen moment
 - ❖ You could link a key convention that was present in the chosen moment with an element of drama that has also been effectively used
 - ❖ You could link two elements of drama together where one element impacts on another e.g. dramatic tension often enhances mood
 - ❖ You could link a convention with one of the skills of drama
 - ❖ You could link an element of drama with one of the skills of drama
6. Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the creation of dramatic action and meaning within the chosen moment.
 - ❖ Evaluative words could include:
 - Successful
 - Effective
 - Engaging
 - Disjointed
 - Confusing
 - Heightened
 - Enhanced
 - Confronting
 - Well-developed

RESPONDING SCAFFOLDING TABLE

Your students may use a table similar to this one to link their notes around the use of the dramatic languages within QSE's production of Romeo and Juliet.

Elements of Drama	Conventions of Style	Skills of Drama	Purpose / Meaning	Examples in the production	Topic Sentence
Dramatic Meaning:					

STRUCTURING A SENIOR DRAMA RESPONDING ESSAY

A Responding essay is not a review. There is no obligation to include plot or character summaries (beyond what may be necessary within the analysis of the use of the Dramatic Languages), and evaluation of the production is focused on how effectively the Dramatic Languages were used to create dramatic action and dramatic meaning (rather than on whether the show was well-received / liked).

The structure of a Responding essay may include:

1. Introduction

- ❖ Introduce the text (*Instant Romeo and Juliet*) and the style (Elizabethan Theatre)
- ❖ Frame the key question of the Responding task as a statement – form a ‘hypothesis’ that takes a position (one way or the other) on answering the key question, which will be supported with evidence throughout the essay.

2. Body Paragraph - each paragraph may focus on a single key moment from the production, and will include:

- ❖ Topic sentence – introducing the focus ‘moment’ and key Dramatic Languages used within that moment
- ❖ Evidence – describe how these Dramatic Languages were used within the focus moment to create dramatic action and meaning.
- ❖ Evaluate – was the moment effectively realised, referring to the Dramatic Languages
- ❖ Link – back to your hypothesis and / or Dramatic Meaning

3. Conclusion

- ❖ Refer to each of the key points within your body paragraphs.
- ❖ Summarise your analysis with a final evaluation

