**MACBETH: Steps to understanding and writing about Macbeth:**

Macbeth is a complicated character who undergoes a dramatic transformation. He is introduced as a character we admire and then changes into a character for whom we’ve lost all respect. Throughout the unit, we will be looking closely at selected scenes from the play when the audience can observe Macbeth’s changes. Your task will be to understand and closely deconstruct key scenes that reveal Macbeth’s downfall and to then compose CLEAR paragraphs that analyze those scenes.

**Rewrite/paraphrase**

Directly on the text provided, rewrite each of Shakespeare’s lines using your own words. (Note: This can be fun. You can rewrite the lines in any voice you choose: academic language, playground jargon, hip-hop tone, texting, you decide.)

**Step 1: Background**

Set the stage for the scene by describing what has previously occurred in the play before the target scene.

**Step 2: Current Summary**

Now that you’ve studied the lines, in a few sentences summarize what is happening in the scene.

**Step 3: Setting**

Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage?

**Step 4: Characters**

Describe each of the characters and their emotions during the scene.

**Step 5: Prewriting**

Briefly answer the prompt and then collect evidence from the passage for the prompt provided to support your claim. You will eventually write a CLEAR paragraph for the passages.

**#1—Act 1, Scene 2: Text— “Brave Macbeth”**

**Next to the text, paraphrase Shakespeare’s language using modern English.**

***Prompt: How does Shakespeare introduce Macbeth? What can the audience conclude about his character?***

**MALCOLM**

1 This is the sergeant

Who like a good and hardy soldier fought

'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!

Say to the king the knowledge of the broil

5 As thou didst leave it.

**SERGEANT**

Doubtful it stood;

As two spent swimmers, that do cling together

And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald--

Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:

10 For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--

Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,

Which smoked with bloody execution,

Like valour's minion carved out his passage

Till he faced the slave;

15 Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,

And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

**DUNCAN**

O, valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!**#1—Act 1, Scene 2: Analysis— “Brave Macbeth”**

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| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: How does Shakespeare introduce Macbeth? What can the audience conclude about his character?*** | |

**#2—Act 1, Scene 3: Text— “Two Truths Are Told”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt:*** It is rare for a person to change in an instant from one type of behavior to another. Typically, significant changes occur over time and with intent and effort on the part of the individual doing the changing. *In this passage from the play, an attentive audience member could see perhaps the beginning of a change within Macbeth.* ***Based on your analysis of the text, is Macbeth displaying a more noble or more sinister nature, or are there signs of both?***

**Macbeth** (aside) Two truths are told,

As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme. (to the messengers-I thank you, gentlemen).

This supernatural soliciting

5 Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,

Why hath it given me earnest of success,

Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion

Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,

10 And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,

Against the use of nature? Present fears

Are less than horrible imaginings:

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man that function

15 Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is

But what is not.

**Banquo:** Look how our partner’s rapt.

**Macbeth:** (*Aside)* If chance will have me king, why,

chance may crown me,

20 Without my stir.

**#2—Act 1, Scene 3: Analysis—“Two Truths Are Told”**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Based on your analysis of the text, is Macbeth displaying a more noble or more sinister nature, or are there signs of both?*** | |

**# 3 Act 1, Scene 5: Text— “Unsex me here!”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: How does Shakespeare introduce Lady Macbeth? What can the audience conclude about her character?***

**Lady Macbeth:**

1 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,

5 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

10 The effect and it! Come to my woman’s breasts,

And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,

Wherever in your sightless substances

You wait on nature’s mischief. Come, thick night,

And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,

15 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,

Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark

To cry “Hold, hold!”

**# 3 Act 1, Scene 5: Analysis— “Unsex me here!”**

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| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt***: ***How does Shakespeare introduce Lady Macbeth? What can the audience conclude about her character?*** | |

**#4—Act 1, Scene 7: Text—“He is here in double trust”**

***Prompt: What dissuades Macbeth from killing Duncan—a sense of right and wrong, or fear of getting caught?***

**MACBETH**

1 If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well

It were done quickly: … that we but teach

Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return

To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice

5 Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice

To our own lips.

He's here in double trust;

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,

Who should against his murderer shut the door,

10 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against

The deep damnation of his taking-off;

15 And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed

Upon the sightless couriers of the air,

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind.

I have no spur

20 To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on the other.

**#4—Act 1, Scene 7: Analysis—“He is here in double trust”**

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| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: What dissuades Macbeth from killing Duncan—a sense of right and wrong, or fear of getting caught?*** | |

**#5--Act 1, Scene 7: Text—“We will proceed no further”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: Considering what kind of woman Macbeth is married to, is he less guilty for killing King Duncan?***

**MACBETH**

1 We will proceed no further in this business:

He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought

Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,

5 Not cast aside so soon.

**LADY MACBETH**

Was the hope drunk

Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?...

What beast was't, then,

That made you break this enterprise to me?

10 When you durst do it, then you were a man;

And, to be more than what you were, you would

Be so much more the man….

I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

15 I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

**#5--Act 1, Scene 7: Analysis—“We will proceed no further”**

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| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Considering what kind of woman Macbeth is married to, is he less guilty for killing King Duncan?*** | |

**#6 Act Two, Scene 1: Text—“Is this a dagger?”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

**Prompt: Describe Macbeth’s state of mind. What signs are there that he is reluctant to kill Duncan?**

**Macbeth:**

1 Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

5 To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

10 Thou marshall’st me the way that I was going,

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,

Or else worth all the rest. I see thee still,

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,

15 Which was not so before. There’s no such thing.

It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates

20 Pale Hecate’s offerings, and withered murder,

Alarumed by his sentinel, the wolf,

Whose howl’s his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,

With Tarquin’s ravishing strides, towards his design

Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,

25 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,

And take the present horror from the time,

Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives.

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives

**#6 Act Two, Scene 1: Analysis—“Is this a dagger?”**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Describe Macbeth’s state of mind. What signs are there that he is reluctant to kill Duncan?*** | |

**#7—Act 2, Scene 2: Text—“Macbeth doth murder sleep”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: Immediately after the murder, are there any signs that Macbeth still has some goodness left in him?***

**MACBETH**

1 Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!

Macbeth does murder sleep'…

Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:

'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor

5 Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

**LADY MACBETH**

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think

So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,

And wash this filthy witness from your hand.

10 Why did you bring these daggers from the place?

They must lie there: go carry them; and smear

The sleepy grooms with blood.

**MACBETH**

I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;

15 Look on't again I dare not.

What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,

20 Making the green one red.

**#7—Act 2, Scene 2: Analysis—“Macbeth doth murder sleep”**

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| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Immediately after the murder, are there any signs that Macbeth still has some goodness left in him?*** | |

**#8—Act 4, Scene 1: Text—“Macduff I will surprise”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: Who is motivating Macbeth to kill Macduff’s family? The witches? Himself? Lady Macbeth?***

**MACBETH**

1 I did hear The galloping of horse: who was't came by?

**LENNOX**

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word

Macduff is fled to England.

**MACBETH**

Fled to England!

**LENNOX**

5 Ay, my good lord.

**MACBETH**

Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:

From this moment

The very firstlings of my heart shall be

The firstlings of my hand. And even now,

10 To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:

The castle of Macduff I will surprise;

Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword

His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls

That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;

15 This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.

But no more sights!--Where are these gentlemen?

Come, bring me where they are.

*Exeunt*

**#8—Act 4, Scene 1: Text—“Macduff I will surprise”**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Who is motivating Macbeth to kill Macduff’s family? The witches? Himself? Lady Macbeth?*** | |

**#9—Act 5, Scene 3: Text—“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: Macbeth has created a hellish life for himself. Does he seem to take responsibility for his own downfall and loss of respect?***

**MACBETH**

1 I have lived long enough: my way of life

Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;

And that which should accompany old age,

As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

5 I must not look to have; but, in their stead,

Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. Seyton!

**Act 5, Sc 5**

**MACBETH**

She should have died hereafter;

There would have been a time for such a word.

10 To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,

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!

15 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.

**#9—Act 5, Scene 3: Analysis—“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow”**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
| 1. **Characters**: Describe the characters and their emotions. How should each character act his/her scene. | |
| 1. **Prewriting:** Briefly answer the prompt and incorporate evidence from the passage to support your claim. You will eventually write a complete CLEAR paragraph for the passages. ***Prompt: Macbeth has created a hellish life for himself. Does he seem to take responsibility for his own downfall and loss of respect?*** | |

**#10—Act 5, Scene 7: Text—“I will not yield”**

**Mark the text, and next to the text paraphrase Shakespeare’s language for a modern audience.**

***Prompt: A tragic hero often dies with some honor. Does Macbeth show honor before his death or is he simply a murderer without a conscience?***

**MACBETH**

1 Why should I play the Roman fool, and die

On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes

Do better upon them.

**MACBETH**

They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,

5 But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What's he

That was not born of woman? Such a one

Am I to fear, or none.

**MACDUFF**

Despair thy charm;

And let the angel whom thou still hast served

10 Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb

Untimely ripp'd.

**MACBETH**

I will not yield,

To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,

And to be baited with the rabble's curse.

15 Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,

And thou opposed, being of no woman born,

Yet I will try the last. Before my body

I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,

And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'

**#10—Act 5, Scene 7: Analysis—“I will not yield”**

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Background**: Describe what happened previously in the play prior to this scene. | 1. **Currently**: Summarize what happens in this scene. |
| 1. **Setting**: Describe where the scene takes place. Where would you set the scene and how would you design the stage? | |
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