

10.4.2

Lesson 1 – Discussion Questions

Refer to your copy of *Macbeth*. Look at the full title—*The Tragedy of Macbeth*—as well as at the list of characters.

What information can you gather from the full title of this play?

What information about the play can you gather from the list of Characters in the Play?

Listen to a masterful reading of Act 1.1 and 1.2 (from “When shall we three meet again” to “What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won”). As you listen, focus on information about the character of Macbeth. (One free source of *Macbeth* on Audio is Librivox: <https://librivox.org/the-tragedy-of-macbeth-by-william-shakespeare/>)

What do you learn about Macbeth in these scenes? How do you learn it?

Reread Act 1.1, lines 1–13 (from “When shall we three meet again” to “Hover through the fog and filthy air”)

When do the Witches plan to “meet again” (line 1)?

Whom do they plan to meet, and where?

What do the Witches mean in line 12 by: “Fair is foul, and foul is fair”?

What effect do the Witches’ interactions have on the mood of this scene?

Reread Act 1.2, lines 1–25 (from “What bloody man is that? He can report” to “They smack of honor both.—Go, get him surgeons”).

What do you notice about the syntax of the dialogue in Act 1.2, compared to the syntax of the Witches’ dialogue in Act 1.1?

What is the effect of having some characters speak in a different meter than the rest?

What information does Duncan want from the “bloody man” (line 1)?

In the image in lines 10–11, what do “spent swimmers” do to one another? What does *spent* mean?

What does this image suggest about the progress of the “revolt”?

What words does the Captain use to describe Macbeth (lines 17–25)?

Who is “the slave” in line 22?

According to the Captain, what did Macbeth do to “deserve” the name “brave Macbeth” (lines 21–25)?

What does Ross report about the battle against Norway (lines 59–66)?

How does Ross describe the Thane of Cawdor (lines 60–61)?

What does Duncan plan to do with the Thane of Cawdor (lines 73–75)? Why?

What has Macbeth “won” that the Thane of Cawdor has “lost” (line 78)? Why?

Reread the last four lines of the scene. What do you notice about the meter and rhyme of these lines?

What is the effect of the meter and rhyme of these last four lines?

What is the impact of Shakespeare’s choice to introduce Macbeth through the dialogue of other characters?