Meeting the Standards
This lesson plan covers NCTE Standards 1, 3, and 4.

What’s On for Today and Why
The length of Shakespeare’s plays is enough to strike terror into the hearts of most students, especially ones who expect “the two-hours’ traffic of our stage” promised by the Prologue in Romeo and Juliet. Taking inspiration from the Reduced Shakespeare Company’s hilarious and brief The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) and Cam Magee, an actor and dramaturg from Washington, DC, we present our own very concise version of Shakespeare’s Macbeth.

This lesson will take one class period.

What To Do
1. Make nine photocopies of the handout—one each for Macbeth and the eight other actors.
2. Have nine volunteers take their places at the front of the room. Assign roles and let the actors read through the script once, for rehearsal. Then get out your stopwatch and see if your students can make or break the 32-second record. When the script indicates that a character dies, the actor must hit the floor.
3. Then select nine more volunteers to see if the second group can beat the first group’s record. Again, give them a practice run before timing, and cheer for the winners.
4. If you wish, ask your students, in groups, to create their own 32-second versions of one act from Macbeth or another complete Shakespeare play. Along with selecting short and punchy lines to highlight the plot, they need to pick the characters that they want to include in their scripts. For example, in “The 32-second Macbeth,” Actors 1–8 are, respectively, the witches, Duncan, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff’s son, and Macduff.

What You Need
• Handout for 32-Second Macbeth


How Did It Go?
Did your students have fun? If you asked them to write their own 32-second versions, were they able to identify and incorporate key lines and characters into effective scripts?

Want more?
Find more ideas and resources on teaching Macbeth at www.folger.edu/teachingmacbeth.
The 32-second *Macbeth*

**Actors 1, 2, 3**  
Fair is foul and foul is fair

**Actor 4**  
What bloody man is that?

**Actor 2**  
A drum, a drum! Macbeth doth come

**Macbeth**  
So foul and fair a day I have not seen

**Actor 3**  
All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

**Macbeth**  
If chance will have me king, then chance will crown me

**Actor 5**  
Unsex me here

**Macbeth**  
If it were done when 'tis done

**Actor 5**  
Screw your courage to the sticking place

**Macbeth**  
Is this a dagger that I see before me? (Actor 4 dies)

**Actor 5**  
A little water clears us of this deed.

**Actor 6**  
Fly, good Fleance, fly! (dies)

**Macbeth**  
Blood will have blood

**Actors 1, 2, 3**  
Double, double, toil and trouble

**Actor 7**  
He has kill'd me, mother! (dies)

**Actor 8**  
Bleed, bleed, poor country!

**Actor 5**  
Out damn'd spot! (dies)

**Macbeth**  
Out, out, brief candle!

**Actor 8**  
Turn, hell-hound, turn!

**Macbeth**  
Lay on Macduff! (dies)

**Actor 8**  
Hail, king of Scotland!