

MACBETH | LESSON PLAN 1

32-SECOND MACBETH



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Folger Shakespeare Library, Head of Education 1996–2000

Play Covered

Macbeth

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*

Not necessary, but fun:

Borgeson, Jess, et al. *The Reduced Shakespeare Company's The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*. New York: Applause Books, 1999.

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!