

Macbeth - Study Questions - Act I -- Use these as a study guide source!

Act 1. scene 1

1. The three characters who make an appearance in this scene are the three \_\_\_\_\_.
2. List at least 3 words/phrases that describe the mood/atmosphere of this scene.  
A. \_\_\_\_\_ B. \_\_\_\_\_ C. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The witches know that they will be meeting \_\_\_\_\_ upon the heath some time in the future.
4. The witches' short rhyming verse (poetic language) makes it sound as though they are casting a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Lines 4 and 11 are the most significant lines in this scene. They are contradictory statements that read like riddles. They also relate to one of the major themes of the play – that life is often confusing and it's hard to discern (to recognize clearly) truth from falsehood. Line 4 has been cited below using proper citation format. (1 = the Act; 1 = the scene; 4 = the line number) Copy line 11 in the space provided below line 4 using proper citation format.

“When the battle's lost and won” (1.1.4).

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair” (1.1.12).

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Act 1. scene 2

6. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (King Duncan's subjects) rebelled against Duncan.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ fought bravely to protect Duncan, but of the two \_\_\_\_\_ is clearly the hero of the day.
8. The Captain describes Macbeth as “valor's minion.” The Captain, therefore, is describing Macbeth as \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Read lines 24-25 in which the Captain describes how Macbeth killed the traitor Macdonwald. Describe what Macbeth did using your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. The Captain then goes on to use animal metaphors to describe the further fearlessness of Macbeth and Banquo as they face the Norwegians. The Captain compares Macbeth and Banquo to \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_, while he compares the Norwegians to \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_. See line 39.
11. At the end of this scene, King Duncan orders the execution of the \_\_\_\_\_ and grants his title to \_\_\_\_\_.

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Act 1. scene 3

12. What did the sailor's wife do that upset the first witch?  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. As punishment for what the sailor's wife did, the witch brings the following curses. The sailor will not be able to \_\_\_\_\_, and his ship will be caught in a permanent \_\_\_\_\_.
14. The other two witches support the first witch, and the first witch goes on to reveal that she has a “pilot's thumb.” What does your answer to #13 and the information in #14 make you think about these “women”?

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15. In his first line, Macbeth says, “So foul and fair a day I have not seen.” What does this line remind you of from scene 1?

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16. The witches greet Macbeth with what three titles? Put them in proper order.

First \_\_\_\_\_ Second \_\_\_\_\_ Third \_\_\_\_\_

17. In lines 45-50, Banquo says to Macbeth, “Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear/Things that do sound so fair?” Based on what Banquo asks Macbeth here, it is clear that Macbeth is \_\_\_\_\_ by the way the witches greet him. (Hint: look up the word “start,” as well as consider the word “fear.”)

18. In #17 indirect characterization is used to give some insight into Macbeth. Which form of indirect characterization best applies to #17? This is a little tricky, so really think this one through. ☺ Circle one:

appearance      reaction of another      speech      action      thought

19. The three predictions that the witches make for Banquo are:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

20. Consider the following lines said by Macbeth: “Stay, you imperfect speakers. Tell me more.” (1.3.73) and “...Would they had stayed.” (1.3.85) What do Macbeth’s lines here clearly show about him?

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21. Before Macbeth can get more information out of the witches they \_\_\_\_\_. Banquo says that they looked like \_\_\_\_\_, just as water has, as they departed. (oooohhhh – spooky! ☺)

22. Macbeth also uses an image to describe the witches leaving. He says that they “as \_\_\_\_\_ into the \_\_\_\_\_.”

23. When Ross arrives, he confirms one of the witches’ prophecies as coming true. Ross informs Macbeth that the King has named him \_\_\_\_\_.

24. Macbeth turns to Banquo and asks him whether he doesn’t now hope that his children will become kings because already one of the witches’ prophecies has come true, so why not all of them. (Do you see a problem here? If Banquo’s children become kings, then even though Macbeth might become king, then that means that Macbeth’s children won’t become kings. Hmmmmm – what emotion could this lead to in Macbeth? Okay, back to the question at hand ☺ ) Banquo responds to Macbeth’s question by stating some wisdom about evil. He states:

...”But ‘tis strange.  
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray’s (betray us)  
In deepest consequence. –

What does Banquo mean?

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25. What do you think Macbeth is thinking when he says “This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good.”

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26. Read Macbeth's Aside carefully. (143-155 and 157-159) It begins and ends with "This supernatural soliciting... Without my stir."  
Macbeth is terrified of his own thoughts because he is obviously contemplating doing something horrible, most likely \_\_\_\_\_.

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### Act 1. scene 4

27. The previous Thane of Cawdow asked for Duncan's forgiveness and showed that he was truly sorry for his rebellion against the King. (See Malcolm's first lines in this scene.) When Duncan hears of this, he makes the following comment, "...There's no art / To find the mind's construction in the fact." (1.4.13-14). How could this line be connected to Macbeth? (Consider what Macbeth has already thought about doing to Duncan and what he says in lines 25-30.)
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28. Duncan bestows the title of The Prince of Cumberland on his son \_\_\_\_\_ right now. Based on Macbeth's response to this title, it is clear that Duncan intends for this son to become the future \_\_\_\_\_. (Hmmm – isn't this a problem for Macbeth?)

29. Read carefully the following aside from Macbeth:

The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step  
On which I must fall down or else o'erleap,  
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;  
Let not light see my black and deep desires.  
The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be  
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

(1.4.55-60)

It is clear that he thinks he might have to \_\_\_\_\_ Malcolm in order to become king.

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### Act 1. scene 5

30. In a letter, Macbeth calls \_\_\_\_\_ his "dearest partner of greatness."
31. Is Lady Macbeth's immediate reaction to the letter that the predictions will or will not come true?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
32. However, Lady Macbeth also makes it clear that she is worried when she says she fears his nature because it is "too full o' th' milk of human kindness" (1.6.16). Clearly, she is worried that Macbeth is too \_\_\_\_\_ of a person to do whatever it takes to become king.
33. Copy the three lines which show that Lady Macbeth plans to influence Macbeth to do whatever is necessary to get the "golden round" (crown). Be sure to use proper citation format.
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34. Lady Macbeth is shocked when she hears that \_\_\_\_\_ will be visiting their castle that very night.

35. Based on the fact that Lady Macbeth says, "O never / Shall sun that morrow see," she clearly implies that she plans for \_\_\_\_\_ to be murdered that night.

36. In order to harden her heart and soul, Lady Macbeth asks that the "...spirits/ That tend of mortal thoughts" \_\_\_\_\_ her. (This is a pretty shocking request...but she will say something even worse later on.)

37. What is Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to do when she says,  
...Bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue. Look like th' innocent  
flower,  
But be the serpent under 't.

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**Act 1. scene 6**

38. Based on Duncan's first three lines in this scene, does he suspect any danger for him at Macbeth's castle in Inverness?  
Yes or No

39. With what kind of attitude does Lady Macbeth greet Duncan when he arrives?

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**Act 1. scene 7**

40. \_\_\_\_\_ begins this scene with a soliloquy.

41. The "it" that Macbeth mentions in the first two lines of this scene, clearly refer to what?

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42. Macbeth is referring to \_\_\_\_\_ when he says, "...He's here in double trust." (1.7.12).

43. The first reason that Macbeth gives for *not* wanting to murder Duncan is that he (Macbeth) is his \_\_\_\_\_ and his \_\_\_\_\_. The second reason is that he (Macbeth) is his \_\_\_\_\_.

44. Towards the end of this soliloquy, Macbeth says that he has "...no spur / To prick the sides of my intent" except for his own \_\_\_\_\_, making it clear that he realizes this murder falls completely on himself.

45. At one point soon after this, Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he won't go through with the murder and his reasons for feeling this way. Copy the lines that indicate this is how Macbeth feels. Be sure to use proper citation format! (Hint: the number of lines below indicate how many lines you will need to copy.)

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46. Okay, here's where Lady Macbeth gets even worse! (Remember, she asked to be "unsexed" earlier? Well, this is even worse when she states what she would be willing to do to her own baby!) First copy the line *numbers* that indicate that she is a cold, vicious, heartless woman. Then in the lines provided, rewrite the main idea in your own words.

Line Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_  
Her words rewritten:

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47. When Macbeth says to his wife that she should "Bring forth men-children only, / For thy undaunted mettle should compose / Nothing but males," he's really saying that she is what?

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49. Review lines 1.7.71-82. Describe Lady Macbeth's plan to ensure that she and Macbeth will have plenty of time and opportunity to murder Duncan. Whom does she plan to frame for the murder?

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50. At one final point, Macbeth indicates that he has made the choice to completely go through with the murder. Copy the lines that indicate his decision. Use proper citation format. (Hint: the number of lines shown below indicate how many lines you must copy.)

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