

Macbeth Seminar Discussion Groups

Each of you will be assigned to a seminar group. Each group is responsible for leading the seminar discussion on the act(s) you've been assigned. Everyone is required to participate in the discussions on each seminar day.

Assignments are as follows:

Group A	Act 1
Group B	Act 2
Group C	Act 3
Group D	Act 4 / Act 5

Discussion Ideas

Read your section carefully, making annotations in your book or on sticky notes attached to the page.

Prepare **seven** thought-provoking questions that are generally level two and three, as defined below. There are basically three levels of questions:

- level one: literal--the answer can be found in the text directly;
- level two: interpretive--the answer can be drawn from the text in general, the answer is interpreted, a conclusion based on careful reading;
- level three: extension--the answer is found outside of the book, the text is a reference point for generating ideas beyond the text.

Again, I'm looking for seven questions that qualify as level two or three: interpretive and extension.

You should use one or more of the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Cite a passage and ask an open-ended interpretive question. (Do not just say: "So, what do you think about that?").

Strategy 2: Point out symbols, motifs, metaphors, effective imagery or diction, dominant tones/shifts in tone and suggest the effect they have in the text/author's purpose.

Strategy 3: Discuss events in the act(s) and then ask what Shakespeare is saying about his society or our society. Ask about parallels in our day and age, etc.

Keep your eye on the room. You will be in charge of initiating and continuing the discussion.

Written notes

On the day your group's volume is discussed, you will be responsible to bring to class the following:

1. Synopsis of your section
2. One lead question: Identify a question you believe would best open the discussion on this particular act. This may be what you believe to be the most important, most interesting, most profound, most controversial, etc. part of the act(s).
3. Five interpretive questions: see criteria above
4. One extension questions: see criteria above
5. You will provide brief notes for responses to each of your questions

This should be printed out on a single sheet of paper. It will be handed in to me after our seminar discussion that day.

MAJOR ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHILE STUDYING MACBETH

- What are the qualities of a just ruler?
- Can apparently good ends be pursued through evil means?
- Is man a slave to his fate (i.e., a victim of supernatural forces) or does he bring about his own fate through his actions (free will)?
- What are the effects of half-truths? Moral blindness? (Think of comparisons to Doctor Faustus)
- What is the difference between courage and ambition?

SIGNIFICANT QUOTATIONS

ACT ONE

If you can look into the seeds of time / And say which grain will grow and which will not, / Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear / Your favors nor your hate.

And for an earnest of a greater honour, / He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor; / in which addition, hail, most worthy Thane.

The Prince of Cumberland! That is a step, / On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap, / For in my way it lies.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be / What thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy nature; / It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness.

Come, you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here; / And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top full / Of direst cruelty. Make thick my blood.

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,

We fail! / But screw your courage to the sticking place, / And we'll not fail.

ACT TWO

Is this a dagger I see before me, / The handle toward my hand? / Come, let me clutch thee.

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry / Did you not speak?

Infirm of purpose! Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood / That fears a painted devil.

My hands are your color; but I shame / To wear a heart so white.

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of Hell Gate, he should have old turning the key. Knock, knock, who's there?

The night has been unruly; Where we lay / Our chimneys were blown down, and (as they say) / Lamentings heard / 'th'air, strange screams of death, / And prophecying, with accents terrible.

O, yet I do repent of my fury, That I did kill them.

ACT THREE

Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all, / As the weird women promis'd, and I fear / Thou play'dst most foully for't.

There is none but he / Whose being I do fear; and under him / My Genius is rebuk'd, as it is said / Mark Antony's was by Caesar.

I am one, my liege, / Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world / Hath so incens'd that I am reckless what / I do to spite the world.

O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly! / Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

Then comes my fit again. I had else been perfect, / Whole as the marble, founded as the rock, / As broad and general as the casing air; / But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in / To saucy doubts and fears.

Thou canst not say I did it, never shake / Thy gory locks at thee.

It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood.

ACT FOUR

By the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes. / Open, locks, / Whoever knocks!

Be bloody, bold, and resolute: laugh to scorn / The pow'r of man; for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth.

The castle of Macduff I will surprise, / Seize upon Fife, give to th'edge o'th'sword / His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls / That trace him in his line.

All is the fear, and nothing is the love; / As little is the wisdom, where the flight / So runs against all reason.

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows / Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds / As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out / Like syllable of dolor.

But I have words / That would be howl'd out in the desert air, / Where hearing should not latch them.

Be comforted. / Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge / To cure this deadly grief.

ACT FIVE

Out, damn'd spot! Out, I say! One—two—why then 'tis time to do't... who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies. / Some say he's mad; others that lesser hate him / Do call it valiant fury; but for certain / He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause / Within the belt of rule.

Out, out, brief candle! / Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, / And then is heard no more.

Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so. / Within this three mile may you see it coming; I say, a moving grove.

Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests, / I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one born of woman.

Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane, / And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born, / Yet I will try the last.

Hail, King! For so thou art. Behold where stands / Th' usurperer's cursed head: the time is free.