

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

Macbeth

Act 2, Scene 2 — the murder of Duncan

William Shakespeare · 20 questions with a full answer key and explanations

What's inside

- **20 multiple-choice questions**, including passage analysis with the original text printed above it — the way your English class asks it.
- **Answer key** on its own page so you can take the quiz first.
- **Explanations** for every question, so a wrong answer teaches you something.
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The quiz

Macbeth — Act 2 · Scene 2. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. What immediate problem arises when Macbeth returns from Duncan's chamber?

- A. He has forgotten to kill the guards.
- B. He has brought the bloody daggers with him instead of leaving them to frame the guards.
- C. He is too loud and risks waking the entire castle.
- D. He has accidentally killed Donalbain as well.

PLOT & EVENT

2. Lady Macbeth's primary motivation for smearing the drugged grooms with Duncan's blood is to:

- A. Satisfy her own bloodlust and reinforce her power.
- B. Create a convincing illusion of the grooms' guilt.
- C. Further traumatize Macbeth by exposing him to more blood.
- D. Symbolically cleanse her own hands of the deed.

CHARACTER

3. Macbeth's inability to say 'Amen' after hearing the guards' prayers primarily reveals his:

- A. Deep-seated religious piety that prevents sacrilege.
- B. Overwhelming guilt and spiritual alienation from divine blessing.
- C. Fear of being discovered by the waking guards.
- D. Confusion and disorientation immediately following the murder.

CHARACTER

4. Lady Macbeth's statement, 'Had he not resembled My father as he slept, I had done't,' primarily suggests that she:

- A. Is secretly more compassionate than Macbeth.
- B. Possesses a hidden vulnerability that prevents her from committing the act herself.
- C. Is merely trying to reassure Macbeth of her resolve.
- D. Believes Macbeth is too weak to complete the murder.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. What sound does Lady Macbeth initially mistake for the 'fatal bellman'?

- A. A wolf's howl
- B. The castle clock striking midnight
- C. An owl's shriek
- D. A guard's cry

MICRO-DETAIL

6. Besides the owl, what other small creature's cry does Macbeth mention hearing after the murder?

- A. A bat
- B. A raven
- C. A cricket
- D. A mouse

MICRO-DETAIL

7. Who does Macbeth state is sleeping in the 'second chamber'?

- A. Malcolm
- B. Donalbain
- C. Banquo
- D. Macduff

MICRO-DETAIL

8. Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth that her hands are the same color as his, but she would be ashamed to have a heart that is what color?

- A. Black
- B. Green
- C. White
- D. Yellow

MICRO-DETAIL

9. Macbeth famously asks if all the water in whose 'multitudinous ocean' could wash the blood from his hands?

- A. Poseidon's
- B. Neptune's
- C. Oceanus'
- D. Triton's

ANALYTICAL

10. Macbeth's repeated lament, 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep,' primarily functions to:

- A. Foreshadow his eventual insomnia and psychological torment.
- B. Symbolize the destruction of innocence and natural order caused by his crime.
- C. Express his immediate regret over the physical act of killing.
- D. Warn Lady Macbeth about the consequences of their actions.

ANALYTICAL

11. The contrast between Macbeth's immediate reaction to the murder and Lady Macbeth's reaction primarily serves to:

- A. Highlight the traditional gender roles of the period.
- B. Emphasize the different ways individuals cope with extreme stress.
- C. Illustrate the theme of appearance versus reality, as Lady Macbeth maintains composure while Macbeth crumbles.
- D. Suggest that Lady Macbeth is inherently more evil than Macbeth.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

LADY MACBETH. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold: What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.—Hark!—Peace! It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman, Which gives the stern'st good night. He is about it. The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets, That death and nature do contend about them, Whether they live or die.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

12. In the opening lines, 'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold: What hath quench'd them hath given me fire,' Lady Macbeth employs which literary device?

- A. Metaphor
- B. Personification
- C. Antithesis
- D. Synecdoche

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

13. The phrase 'the fatal bellman' used to describe the owl's shriek primarily functions as a:

- A. Simple simile comparing the owl to a bellman.
- B. Metaphor personifying the owl as a harbinger of death.
- C. Hyperbole exaggerating the owl's sound.
- D. Allusion to a specific historical figure.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

14. Lady Macbeth's tone in this opening soliloquy can best be described as:

- A. Anxious and hesitant
- B. Triumphant and resolute
- C. Regretful and mournful
- D. Confused and disoriented

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

MACBETH. Methought I heard a voice cry, "Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep,"—the innocent sleep; Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care, The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, Chief nourisher in life's feast. ... Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the house: "Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor Shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

15. The extended description of 'sleep' in this passage ('knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,' 'balm of hurt minds,' etc.) primarily serves as:

- A. A literal description of the benefits of rest.
- B. An ironic commentary on Macbeth's exhaustion.
- C. An extended metaphor for innocence, peace, and natural order now destroyed.
- D. A digression that slows the pace of the scene.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

16. The repetition of 'Sleep no more!' and 'Macbeth shall sleep no more!' creates a sense of:

- A. Calm reassurance
- B. Inevitable doom and psychological torment
- C. Playful irony
- D. Confused questioning

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

17. Macbeth's tone in this speech is best characterized as:

- A. Defiant and proud
- B. Philosophical and detached
- C. Horrified and despairing
- D. Manipulative and cunning

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

MACBETH. Whence is that knocking? How is't with me, when every noise appals me? What hands are here? Ha, they pluck out mine eyes! Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

18. The rhetorical questions 'Whence is that knocking? How is't with me, when every noise appals me? What hands are here?' primarily serve to:

- A. Solicit answers from Lady Macbeth.
- B. Express Macbeth's profound disorientation and terror.
- C. Engage the audience directly in his internal struggle.
- D. Demonstrate his intellectual curiosity.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

19. The imagery in 'Ha, they pluck out mine eyes!' suggests Macbeth is experiencing:

- A. Physical pain from his bloody hands.
- B. A literal hallucination of his eyes being removed.
- C. Intense self-loathing and a desire to escape the sight of his guilt.
- D. A sudden loss of vision.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

20. The phrase 'The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red' is an example of:

- A. Understatement
- B. Irony
- C. Hyperbole and vivid imagery
- D. A simple metaphor

Answer key

Check your answers here, then read the explanations on the next page.

1. B	2. B	3. B	4. B	5. C
6. C	7. B	8. C	9. B	10. B
11. C	12. C	13. B	14. B	15. C
16. B	17. C	18. B	19. C	20. C

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Answers explained

Why the right answer is right — and what the question is really testing.

1. B. He has brought the bloody daggers with him instead of leaving them to frame the guards.

Macbeth's psychological shock causes him to forget the crucial step of framing the guards, forcing Lady Macbeth to take action.

2. B. Create a convincing illusion of the grooms' guilt.

Her pragmatic action is entirely focused on manipulating appearances to deflect suspicion from herself and Macbeth.

3. B. Overwhelming guilt and spiritual alienation from divine blessing.

Macbeth's inability to utter 'Amen' signifies his profound guilt and the immediate spiritual consequence of his regicide, suggesting he has severed his connection to divine grace.

4. B. Possesses a hidden vulnerability that prevents her from committing the act herself.

This line reveals a momentary, unexpected flicker of human vulnerability in Lady Macbeth, suggesting a limit to her ruthlessness despite her outward strength.

5. C. An owl's shriek

The owl's shriek is a classic omen of death, and Lady Macbeth interprets it as such.

6. C. A cricket

The mention of crickets adds to the eerie, unnatural atmosphere of the scene.

7. B. Donalbain

Donalbain's presence nearby heightens the tension and risk of discovery.

8. C. White

A 'white heart' symbolizes cowardice, which Lady Macbeth disdains in Macbeth.

9. B. Neptune's

Macbeth's hyperbolic reference to Neptune emphasizes the indelible nature of his guilt.

10. B. Symbolize the destruction of innocence and natural order caused by his crime.

This powerful motif connects Macbeth's crime to a disruption of both his personal peace and the cosmic order, highlighting the profound thematic implications of regicide.

11. C. Illustrate the theme of appearance versus reality, as Lady Macbeth maintains composure while Macbeth crumbles.

Their contrasting reactions immediately after the deed underscore the theme of appearance versus reality, as Lady Macbeth's outward control masks her eventual breakdown, while Macbeth's immediate psychological collapse reveals his inner turmoil.

12. C. Antithesis

Antithesis is used to highlight the contrasting effects of the same substance on different individuals, emphasizing Lady Macbeth's heightened state.

13. B. Metaphor personifying the owl as a harbinger of death.

This metaphor personifies the owl, transforming a natural sound into a chilling symbol of impending doom and the finality of death.

14. B. Triumphant and resolute

Her tone is one of determined resolve and a sense of victory, despite the gravity of the act, showcasing her initial strength.

15. C. An extended metaphor for innocence, peace, and natural order now destroyed.

This extended metaphor elevates 'sleep' beyond a mere physical state, making it a symbol of the profound spiritual and natural harmony Macbeth has shattered.

16. B. Inevitable doom and psychological torment

The repetition, combined with the declarative statements, powerfully conveys the inescapable, self-inflicted curse of sleeplessness and guilt that will plague Macbeth.

17. C. Horrified and despairing

Macbeth's tone is one of profound horror and despair, reflecting his immediate and overwhelming psychological breakdown after the murder.

18. B. Express Macbeth's profound disorientation and terror.

These questions are not seeking answers but rather externalizing Macbeth's internal chaos, fear, and the overwhelming sensory impact of his crime.

19. C. Intense self-loathing and a desire to escape the sight of his guilt.

This vivid imagery conveys Macbeth's extreme self-revulsion and the unbearable psychological burden of his actions, making him wish to be blind to his own guilt.

20. C. Hyperbole and vivid imagery

This powerful use of hyperbole and vivid imagery emphasizes the immense, indelible nature of Macbeth's guilt, suggesting it is so vast it could stain the entire ocean.

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