

Macbeth on Trial

Role Play Activity



Macbeth

You will plead guilty at the trial, but you want to get a lighter sentence. Consider these points:

- What sort of man were you before the murder?
- Did your wife put a lot of pressure on you?
- Did you get led astray by the forces of evil?
- Did you find it easy to murder?
- Do you feel sorry for what you have done?

What other reasons can you think of for getting a lighter sentence? Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Prosecution Lawyer for Macbeth

You must show that Macbeth deserves a heavy sentence. Consider these points:

- Macbeth commits the murder out of pure ambition.
- Macbeth is too easily persuaded by his wife.
- Macbeth lets the forces of evil lead him astray and takes the witches' predictions as the truth.
- Macbeth's hallucinations and dreams show that he has regrets but in reality he is a cold blooded killer.

Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Macbeth on Trial

We are mining the archive which seems appropriate at the present time when the past looks more attractive than the future. This activity was first developed by Melanie Hart in about 1988 to provide a collaborative prequel as a preparation for hot seating. It has been used extensively since then. Melanie is now at Little Ilford School in the London Borough of Newham and I hope she is still busy producing activities.

This activity was last updated 5th April 2016.

The webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/macbethtrial.pdf>

Our collaborative talk for learning activities are designed to:

...build on prior knowledge.

...move from concrete to abstract thinking.

...ensure everyone works with everyone else.

...extend social language into curriculum language.

...provide motivating ways to go over the same topic more than once.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops and conferences worldwide but mainly in the UK. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers ideal opportunities for assessment of spoken language.

*They provide scaffolding for differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills. We strongly endorse the principles of the Learning Without Limits group to which we belong.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally work effectively over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/macbethtrial.pdf>

Macbeth on Trial

Imagine that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are arrested after the murder of King Duncan. As a class you are going to discuss the verdict of the trial.

You will receive a card to tell you your character. You could be:

- 1) Macbeth
- 2) Lady Macbeth
- 3) Defence lawyer for Macbeth
- 4) Defence lawyer for Lady Macbeth
- 5) Prosecution lawyer against Macbeth
- 6) Prosecution lawyer against Lady Macbeth

All the people who have the same character on their cards should form a group. Work together to decide what to say and what to ask the accused at the trial. There are points to help you on your card.

Then when you are all ready, take turns to act the trial out. Choose six other people to be the jury. Choose someone in the class to be the judge. Sometimes your teacher likes to do this,

After all the characters have spoken the jury must make their decision and hand it to the judge who will pronounce the verdict.

Macbeth on Trial

Macbeth

You will plead guilty at the trial, but you want to get a lighter sentence. Consider these points:

- a) What sort of man were you before the murder?
- b) Did your wife put a lot of pressure on you?
- c) Did you get led astray by the forces of evil?
- d) Did you find it easy to murder?
- e) Do you feel sorry for what you have done?

What other reasons can you think of for getting a lighter sentence? Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Defence Lawyer for Macbeth

Macbeth will plead guilty. You must try to get him a lighter sentence. Try and show that he has some good points.

- a) What kind of man was he before the murder?
- b) What kind of reputation did he have before the murder.
- c) Did anyone put strong pressure on him to do the murder?
- d) How did they do this?
- e) Was he in his right mind?
- f) Did he find it easy to murder Duncan?
- g) Did he show any regret for killing Duncan?

Look back through the play and find quotes to show that he had some good points.

Prosecution Lawyer for Macbeth

You must show that Macbeth deserves a heavy sentence. Consider these points:

- a) Macbeth commits the murder out of pure ambition.
- b) Macbeth is too easily persuaded by his wife.
- c) Macbeth lets the forces of evil lead him astray and takes the witches' predictions as the truth.
- d) Macbeth's hallucinations and dreams show that he has regrets but in reality he is a cold blooded killer.

Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Macbeth on Trial

Lady Macbeth

You will plead not guilty at the trial. However, the prosecution wants to show you deserve a heavy sentence. He or she may put these points to you.

- a) That you suggested the murder.
- b) That you put pressure on Macbeth to do the murder.
- c) That you helped plan the murder and covered it up.

Think how you can defend yourself. Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Prosecution Lawyer for Lady Macbeth

You must show that Lady Macbeth is guilty and deserves a heavy sentence, even though she did not actually kill King Duncan.

Consider these points:

- a) Did Lady Macbeth suggest murder to her husband?
- b) Did she put pressure on Macbeth to commit the murder?
- c) Did she actually plan the murder?
- d) Did she actually help Macbeth to carry out the murder.
- f) Did she help with the cover up?
- g) What were her feelings afterwards?

Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.

Defence Lawyer for Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth will plead not guilty. You must show that she is innocent and did not do the killing.

- a) She did not actually do the murder.
- b) Macbeth alone was driven by evil spirits
- c) Macbeth was ambitious.

Your client may be hard to defend. She could try to show that she was mad. Look back through the play and find quotes to support your reasons.
