*Macbeth* Literary Analysis

**Assignment**: The *Macbeth* literary paper features an analysis of one of Shakespeare’s characterization of Macbeth. Answer the following question: How does Macbeth represent the tragic hero? What is his tragic flaw (greed, lust, ambition, gluttony, etc.)?. Your paper is to reflect:

--a sophisticated, complex style of writing

--strong diction (word choice)

--effective, varied syntax (sentence structure)

--critical, insightful analysis of the play

--blended quotations cited correctly to support your analysis of the play’s motif

*Requirements:*

1. 6-10 pages---including your introductory paragraph, body paragraphs, and concluding paragraph. Refer to the shaping sheet.

2. Each paragraph will contain two BLENDED quotes from the play and one BLENDED quote from the literary criticism. Remember plot “commentary” is NOT plot “summary.”

3. A balance of both secondary and primary sources.

*Where do I start?*

1. First, you have to decide upon Macbeth’s tragic flaw and how you are going to support that flaw in the paper. Use your analytical paragraphs and passages from class, and go over the possible connections that you have. Once you decide on the direction you are taking, you will need to STUDY the quotes you have to determine how you will proceed in the paper and how you will formulate your thesis. Remember, each concrete detail will be a blended quote.
2. Now, form your thesis. Remember, the last sentence in the introductory paragraph on your shaping sheet will be your thesis. Your thesis should be composed of the point YOU are trying to make with *Macbeth*. Be creative!

Effective Use of Quotations in the *Macbeth* Paper

1. As OFTEN as possible, make the tenses in the quotation correspond to the tenses of your sentences.

*Awkward:* While the legislators cringe at the sudden darkness, “all eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport” (Smith 4). (Cringe is present tense, and turned is past tense)

*Better:* While the legislators cringe at the sudden darkness, “all eyes [turn] to Abraham Davenport” (Smith 4).

2. Be sure that the blended quotes make a grammatically complete and correct sentence. In short, when you integrate a quotation into your sentence, make it a grammatical part of the sentence. The entire sentence, including the quotation, must conform to the standard rules of usage.

*Weak and not blended:* Macbeth says, “a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage” (5.5.24-25).

*Better Blended Quotes:*

Macbeth admits he has no reason to kill Duncan except for his “vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps himself” (1.7.27).

In a private discussion with one of the Scottish lords, Lennox refers to Scotland as a “suffering country / Under a hand accursed!” (3.6.48-49).

Macbeth compares life to “a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage” (5.5.24-25).

3. There are a few exceptions when you are working with quotes; for example, you may use an **ellipsis** or **bracket** to omit certain lines that are not prevalent to your point. Use them wisely! Remember, plagiarism is not hard to spot!

**MAKE SURE YOU CITE YOUR SOURCES AND INCLUDE A WORKS CITED PAGE IN YOUR RESEARCH PAPER!!**

*Macbeth* MLA Specifications

First: **Times New Roman** font ONLY

Size: 12 point

1 inch margins (Word is usually set to this anyway)

The first page of your paper will look like this:

Laura Jones Jones 1

Mrs. Morrison

English 4 –3

18 August 2010

**Don’t forget the creative title here!!!**

**Within the paper there are few ways to cite your sources. When you are citing the play be certain to include the act, scene, and line numbers:**

Macbeth provides an example of hopelessness when he realizes “what’s done is done” (4.3.17).

The motif of blood begins to haunt Macbeth when he asks “[i]s this a dagger which I see before me?” (4.3.15).

**For the Literary Criticisms and the articles cite them like this within your paper:**

When Macbeth realizes he has lost the woman he truly loves, “time to grieve becomes unattainable because he is in the midst of defending his heinous actions” (Hayes 295).

Lady Macbeth proves she is not only insane, but also “riddled with devastating consequences of actions which lead to Macbeth’s downfall” (Mack 50).

# Works Cited

Hayes, Richard. “Imagery in *Macbeth*.” *The Journal of Shakespeare’s Tragedies* 77. 3 (2001): 294-310. *Gale*. Web. 11 Dec. 2010.

Mack, Maynard. “Literary and Political References in *Macbeth.”* *Everybody’s Shakespeare: Reflections Chiefly on the Tragedies*. (1993). Rpt. in *Readings on MACBETH .* Ed. Clarice Swisher. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc., 1999. 45-57. Print.

Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth. Prentice Hall Literature:Texas The British Tradition.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2010. 323-413. Print.

These are examples of what YOUR works cited page will look like and consist of. Remember, these MUST be in **alphabetical order.**

If you have any questions you can go to

[www.mlahandbook.com](http://www.mlahandbook.com)

Your teacher will give you the code to access the website.