



MACBETH

CURRICULUM GUIDE

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A companion to the Folger Shakespeare Library Edition

FolgerSHAKESPEARE
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Advancing knowledge & the arts

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ON THE COVER:

Henry Fuseli. *Macbeth consulting the vision of the armed head*. Oil on canvas with original inscribed frame, 1793. Folger Shakespeare Library.

See more images of *Macbeth* from the Folger collection at www.folger.edu/digitalcollection.



Images: 1) William Shakespeare. *Macbeth*. London, 1600. Folger Shakespeare Library. 2) Walter Elder (Macbeth) and Chaon Cross (Lady Macbeth), *Macbeth*, directed by David W. Johnson, Folger Theatre's presentation of Shenandoah Shakespeare Express, 1999. Photo by Mike Bailey. Folger Shakespeare Library. 3) John Gregory. *Macbeth* bas relief, 1932. Folger Shakespeare Library. 4) Faustin. Scene from *Macbeth* at the Lyceum Theatre, London. Print, 1875. Folger Shakespeare Library.

At the Folger, we love to see students take Shakespeare and make it their own. We believe that Shakespeare is for everyone and that students of all ability levels can successfully engage with his works.



Photos from Folger student Shakespeare festivals, classroom visits, and teacher workshops by Mignonette Dooley, Mimi Marquet, Deidra Starnes, and Lloyd Wolf.



SHAKESPEARE IS FOR EVERYONE!

Shakespeare isn't an antiquated art form. His plays are full of explosive family situations, complex relationships, and deep emotions that today's students can—and do—relate to. At the Folger Shakespeare Library, we love to see students take Shakespeare and make it their own. We believe that Shakespeare is for everyone and that students of all ability levels can successfully engage with his works.

The best way to *learn* Shakespeare is to *do* Shakespeare. What does this mean? Put simply, it is getting students up on their feet and physically, intellectually, and vocally engaging with the text. We believe that students learn best using a performance-based methodology and that performance can build a personal connection with the text that traditional teaching methods may not.

Performance—which is not the same thing as “acting”—activates the imagination. Active learning invigorates the mind and stays with the learner. Shakespeare's genius with language, his skill as a dramatist, and his insight into the human condition can instill even the least academic student with a passion not only for Shakespeare but also for language, drama, psychology, and knowledge.

The Lesson Plans and Tips for Teaching Shakespeare included in this Curriculum Guide provide practical, classroom-tested approaches for using performance-based teaching techniques. We have also included a Synopsis, a Fact Sheet, and Famous Lines and Phrases from the play and interesting facts to share with students.

Remember that enthusiasm is more important than expertise. There is always more for everyone to learn, so enjoy the ride with your students!

Robert Young
Director of Education
Folger Shakespeare Library



Above: Andrew Zox, Cleo House, Jr., and Eric Hissom (Weird Sisters). Photo by Carol Pratt. Below: Ian Merrill Peakes (Macbeth) and Kate Eastwood Norris (Lady Macbeth). Photo by T. Charles Erickson. *Macbeth*, conceived and directed by Teller and Aaron Posner, Folger Theatre in a co-production with Two River Theater Company, 2008. Folger Shakespeare Library.

MACBETH

SYNOPSIS

Following a fierce battle, Macbeth, a Scottish nobleman, meets three “weird sisters” who tell him that he will be “king hereafter.” Macbeth becomes convinced that he can only become king of Scotland by killing Duncan, the present king. Macbeth tells his wife about his meeting with the witches, and she tells him that she will take charge of the preparations for Duncan’s murder. Macbeth kills the king, and he and Lady Macbeth become king and queen of Scotland. Macbeth arranges other murders to secure his hold on the throne, including the slaughter of the innocent Lady Macduff and her children. Enraged by his family’s murder, the nobleman Macduff unites with Duncan’s son Malcolm and other Scottish nobles to raise a rebellion. Macduff confronts and kills Macbeth. Malcolm becomes king. Learn more at www.folger.edu/editions.



See more images from *Macbeth* at the Folger collection at www.folger.edu/digitalimagecollection.

MACBETH

CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

The Royal Family

Malcolm
Duncan's Eldest Son

Duncan
King of Scotland

Donalbain
Duncan's Second Son

The English Army

Siward
English General

Young Siward

The Three Weird Sisters

King Duncan's Army

Macbeth — **Lady Macbeth**
Thane of Glamis Macbeth's wife

Macduff — **Lady Macduff**
a Thane Macduff's wife

Young Macduff

Banquo
a Thane

Fleance
Banquo's son

Commanders & Soldiers

Ross
A Lord

Lennox
A Lord

Caithness
A Lord

Mentith
A Lord

Sergeant

Macbeth's Castle

Angus
Macbeth's Attendant

Gentlewoman

Doctor

Seyton
Macbeth's Page

Servant

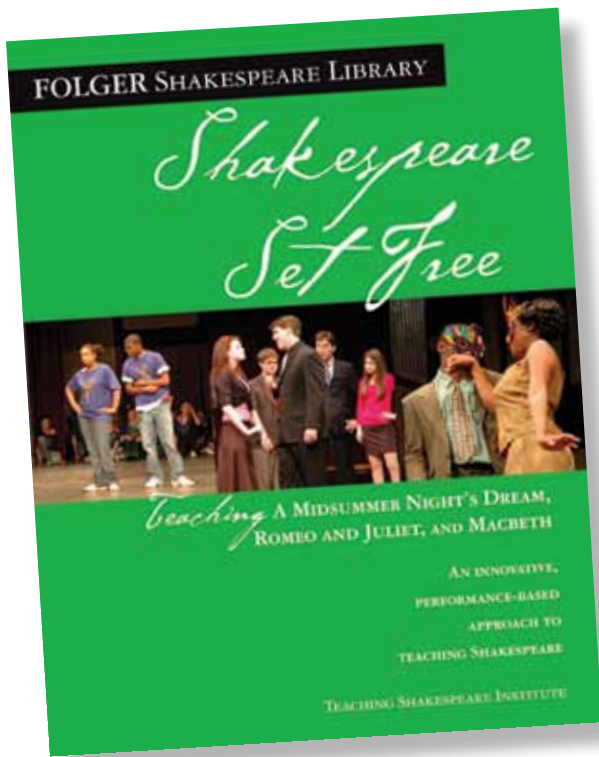
Porter

Murderer **Murderer**

CHARACTER KEY

Main Characters in **white**
Secondary Characters in **black**

FROM ONE CLASSROOM TEACHER TO ANOTHER



Learn more at www.folger.edu/shakespearesetfree.



See performance-based teaching strategies in action at www.folger.edu/teachervideos.

Teenagers like wooing and sword-swinging and bragging and swearing and vengeance. Macbeth is loaded with those things.

Dear Colleagues,

You enter *Macbeth* to a question:

When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightening, or in rain?

Then blood runs under cloak of night; a ghost shakes gory locks at an usurping king. And several murders, apparitions, and a suicide later, you exit darkness, invitation to a coronation in hand. At the very least, you feel entertained. With any luck you will feel flat out elevated.

Try telling that to most teenagers. The classroom spokesperson for the vast majority groans, "Shakespeare? This is going to be impossible. Forget it, I can't read books written in Old English." The can-do kid responds from the front of the room, "Oh, come on, just try. It'll make sense once you translate it." Optimism and determination aside, these two are twins: they see Shakespeare's plays as printed words in a dead language, a bookworm's aerobics.

Why are some captivated while others are turned off? After all, the play's words never change. *Macbeth* always says, "I have done the deed." *Macduff* always says, "Turn, hell hound, turn!" Too often we communicate that the plays are sacred texts, and we distribute them with the well-intentioned but misguided assumption that our students should eagerly study them with the same reverent devotion that monks dedicate to their holy books. God knows teenagers are not monks. Look at how they spend their days. They like wooing and sword-swinging and bragging and swearing and vengeance. *Macbeth* is loaded with those things. So how to you get a kid to see that? By teaching the play as living spoken language, best experienced on stage by every comer.

Christopher D. Renino

Scarsdale Senior High School, Scarsdale, NY

Excerpted from *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream*



TIPS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Performing Shakespeare—even at the most rudimentary level, script in hand, stumbling over the difficult words—can and usually does permanently change a student's relationship with the plays and their author.



At the Folger, we believe that **Shakespeare is for everyone.** We believe that students of all ability levels, all backgrounds, and at all grade levels can—and do—successfully engage with Shakespeare's works.

Why? Because Shakespeare, done right, inspires. The plays are full of explosive family situations and complex relationships that adolescents recognize.

Performance is particularly crucial in teaching Shakespeare, whose naked language on the page may be difficult to understand. "Performance" in this sense does not mean presenting memorized, costumed, fully staged shows, although those can be both satisfying and educational. Performance means getting students up on their feet, moving around a classroom as characters, and speaking the lines themselves.

Remember:

1. Enthusiasm is more important than expertise—there is always more for everyone to learn, so enjoy the ride with your students!
2. Trust Shakespeare's original language, but don't labor over every word.
3. Pick out key scenes that speak most clearly to your students. You do not have to start with Act 1, Scene 1.
4. Use the text to explain the life and times, not vice versa.

The following two Lesson Plans will give you practical ways to get started using this approach in your classroom.

Want More?

Folger Education's *Shakespeare Set Free Toolkit* is a comprehensive resource for teaching Shakespeare, with lesson plans, activity guides, podcasts, videos, and other teaching tools. Learn more at www.folger.edu/toolkit.



TEACHING SHAKESPEARE FAQS

How long does it take to teach a play?

A Shakespeare unit can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, depending on your students. You may want to spend a few days to introduce the play's major characters and themes, or you could spend a couple of weeks exploring several scenes, key ideas, and multiple interpretations. Full play units, such as the ones in *Shakespeare Set Free*, can take up to six weeks to teach. You do **NOT** need to start with Act 1, Scene 1 and you do **NOT** need to labor over every word.

Do I need to teach the entire play?

Sometimes it is better to do just part of a play rather than the whole play. Or you might opt for a Shakespeare sampler, using several scenes from different plays.

Which edition of the play is best to use with students?

The Folger Shakespeare Library paperback editions are relatively inexpensive, and easy to use, with the text on one page and footnotes and scene summaries on the facing page. Be aware that Shakespeare plays in literature anthologies often edit out some of the more bawdy content—content which students often love. They are also very heavy to carry around when students are performing scenes.

You can install the **Free Electronic Shakespeare Reader** on your hard drive on any Windows computer at www.shakespeare.ariyam.com. This is a downloadable piece of software that allows you to have all of Shakespeare's 38 plays instantly at your fingertips. Once you have it, there is no Internet connection required. It also provides in-depth full-text searching to all of Shakespeare's plays. You can also download the text online from sites such as www.opensourceshakespeare.org.

Should I start with the movie?

One disadvantage with watching a film version first is that students equate this version with the play and have difficulty realizing that scenes and

lines can be interpreted and enacted in many different ways. One way around this is to start with one scene which your students read and perform. Follow this activity by showing clips from several film versions of the same scene. This strategy enables allow for some meaningful discussion about possible interpretations.

What if I have never read the play before?

Learn along with your students—model for them the enthusiasm and excitement that comes with authentic learning.

Do I need to teach about the Globe Theatre or Shakespeare's Life?

The simple answer is "No." While telling students that Shakespeare had three children and that he and Anne Hathaway had to get married might be interesting, it really doesn't help them understand the plays. It's much better to integrate some facts about Elizabethan life when they come up in the plays. So when Francis Flute protests, "Let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that's the perfect opportunity to explain the Elizabethan stage convention of young men playing the female parts.

Are student projects helpful?

Designing Globe Theatres out of sugar cubes and Popsicle sticks, designing costumes, creating Elizabethan newspapers in the computer lab, doing a scavenger hunt on the Internet, or doing a report on Elizabethan sanitary conditions has nothing to do with a student's appreciation of Shakespeare's language. If you want to give students a project, have them select, rehearse, and perform a scene.

What is a "trigger scene?"

A trigger scene is a short scene from a play that introduces the students to key characters and plot elements. Most important, the trigger scene shows students that they can uncover the meaning of Shakespeare's texts as they "put the scene on its feet."

Tried and true trigger scenes for beginning Shakespeare:

***Macbeth*, 1.3.38 onwards**
(Macbeth meets the witches)

***A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.2**
(The rustic actors are introduced)

***Hamlet*, 1.1**
(Ghost appears to soldiers)

***Julius Caesar*, 3.3**
(Cinna the poet is attacked by mob)

***Much Ado About Nothing*, 4.1**
(Beatrice urges Benedick to kill Claudio)

***Othello*, 1.1**
(Iago rudely awakens Brabantio)

***Romeo and Juliet*, 3.5**
(Juliet angers her parents)

***The Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1**
(The two sisters quarrel)

***Twelfth Night*, 2.2**
(Malvolio returns ring to "Cesario")

Want More?

Folger Education's *Shakespeare Set Free* Toolkit is a comprehensive resource for teaching Shakespeare, with lesson plans, activity guides, podcasts, videos, and other teaching tools. Learn more at www.folger.edu/toolkit.



MACBETH | LESSON PLAN 1

32-SECOND MACBETH



Janet Field-Pickering

Folger Shakespeare Library, Head of Education 1996–2000

Play Covered

Macbeth

Meeting the Standards

This lesson plan covers NCTE Standards 1, 3, and 4.

What's On for Today and Why

The length of Shakespeare's plays is enough to strike terror into the hearts of most students, especially ones who expect "the two-hours' traffic of our stage" promised by the Prologue in *Romeo and Juliet*. Taking inspiration from the Reduced Shakespeare Company's hilarious and brief *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Abridged) and Cam Magee, an actor and dramaturg from Washington, DC, we present our own very concise version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

This lesson will take one class period.

What To Do

1. Make nine photocopies of the handout—one each for *Macbeth* and the eight other actors.

2. Have nine volunteers take their places at the front of the room. Assign roles and let the actors read through the script once, for rehearsal. Then get out your stopwatch and see if your students can make or break the 32-second record. When the script indicates that a character dies, the actor must hit the floor.

3. Then select nine more volunteers to see if the second group can beat the first group's record. Again, give them a practice run before timing, and cheer for the winners.

4. If you wish, ask your students, in groups, to create their own 32-second versions of one act from *Macbeth* or another complete Shakespeare play. Along with selecting short and punchy lines to highlight the plot, they need to pick the characters that they want to include in their scripts. For example, in "The 32-second *Macbeth*," Actors 1–8 are, respectively, the witches, Duncan, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, Macduff's son, and Macduff.

What You Need

- Handout for 32-Second *Macbeth*

Not necessary, but fun:

Borgeson, Jess, et al. *The Reduced Shakespeare Company's The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*. New York: Applause Books, 1999.

How Did It Go?

Did your students have fun? If you asked them to write their own 32-second versions, were they able to identify and incorporate key lines and characters into effective scripts?

Want more?



Find more ideas and resources on teaching *Macbeth* at www.folger.edu/teachingmacbeth.

HANDOUT

32-SECOND *MACBETH*—PAGE 1

ACTORS 1, 2, 3

Fair is foul and foul is fair.

ACTOR 4

What bloody man is that?

ACTOR 2

A drum, a drum! Macbeth doth come.

MACBETH

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

ACTOR 3

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

MACBETH

If chance will have me king, then chance will crown me.

ACTOR 5

Unsex me here.

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done.

ACTOR 5

Screw your courage to the sticking place.

MACBETH

Is this a dagger that I see before me? (Actor 4 dies)

ACTOR 5

A little water clears us of this deed.

NOTES:

HANDOUT

32-SECOND *MACBETH*—PAGE 2

NOTES:

ACTOR 6

Fly, good Fleance, fly! (dies)

MACBETH

Blood will have blood.

ACTORS 1, 2, 3

Double, double, toil and trouble.

ACTOR 7

He has kill'd me, mother! (dies)

ACTOR 8

Bleed, bleed, poor country!

ACTOR 5

Out damn'd spot! (dies)

MACBETH

Out, out, brief candle!

ACTOR 8

Turn, hell-hound, turn!

MACBETH

Lay on Macduff! (dies)

ACTOR 8

Hail, king of Scotland!

MACBETH | LESSON PLAN 2

When Fair is Foul: Paradox and Equivocation in Macbeth



Matt Patterson

Bishop Seabury Academy
Lawrence, KS

Play/Scenes Covered

Macbeth 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 2.3, 3.1, 3.4
From the *Folger Shakespeare Library Edition*

Standards Covered

This lesson plan covers NCTE Standards 1, 2, 3, and 6.

What's On for Today and Why

In this lesson students will examine the role of paradox and equivocation in the Scottish play. The goal is for students to gain a greater appreciation of how Shakespeare—and his characters—manipulates words to give them multiple, complex meanings beyond the expected. Students will discover how language drives the events in the play and what it tells us about the characters in it.

The lesson will take one class period. Alternately, it can be split into two partial lessons—one on paradox after students read Act 1, and the other on equivocation after students read Act 3.

What To Do

1. Distribute handouts on paradox and equivocation and read the definitions. (Available on the following page).
2. Divide the class into small groups of students (2 or 3 to a group).
3. Assign each group a numbered quotation from the handout (If you split this assignment into two lessons, you might assign the same quotation to multiple groups).
4. Assign each group to complete, in writing, items A, B, and C listed on the handout for their assigned quotation. Students will need to refer to the text to describe the context of their assigned lines.
5. Have each group report their discoveries to the rest of the class. Discuss how paradox and equivocation contribute to the themes of the play and what they tell us about the characters that use them in their speech.
6. Have students look at the equivocations in 4.1.91-92, Second Apparition, and 4.1.105-107, Third Apparition, and ask them to track the course of these equivocations as they continue to read

the play. If you prefer to maintain a greater sense of mystery, tell students that there are two equivocations in Act 4 and ask them to identify them as they continue to read.

7. If time allows, assign each student a character from the play and ask him/her to write a paradox or equivocation from that character's perspective. Ask students to share their lines aloud with the rest of the class or post them on the walls of the classroom.

What You Need

- Handout on Paradox and Equivocation

How Did It Go?

Did students gain a better appreciation for double meanings in Shakespeare's language? Were they able to relate paradox and equivocation to characterization of the speakers and to broader themes from the play? Did their original lines demonstrate an understanding of the ability of words to hold multiple meanings?

Want more?

Find more ideas and resources for teaching *Macbeth* at www.folger.edu/teachingmacbeth.



MACBETH | HANDOUT | PAGE 1

PARADOX AND EQUIVOCATION

Paradox: *A statement that seems to be contradictory but that might be true when considered from a particular perspective.*

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair.” —the Witches, 1.1.12

Equivocation: *A statement that lends itself to multiple interpretations, often with the deliberate intent to deceive.*

“Faith, here’s an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale, who committed treason enough for God’s sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven.” —the Porter, 2.3.8–11

Paradoxes

A. Identify the speaker and the addressee, and explain as much as you can about the context of the situation.

B. Explain the specific terms in the quotation that make it a paradox.

C. Explain the hidden truth to be found in the paradox.

1. “So foul and fair a day I have not seen.” —1.3.39

2. “Lesser than Macbeth and greater.” —1.3.68

3. “Not so happy, yet much happier.” —1.3.69

4. “This supernatural soliciting / Cannot be ill, cannot be good.” —1.3.143–144

5. “And nothing is but what is not.” —1.3.155

MACBETH | HANDOUT | PAGE 2

PARADOX AND EQUIVOCATION

Equivocations

A. Identify the speaker and the addressee, and explain as much as you can about the context of the situation.


B. Explain the specific terms in the quotation that make it an equivocation.

C. Explain the deceptive truth that is to be found in the equivocation.

1. "All our service, / In every point twice done and then done double" —1.6.18–19

2. "Had I but died an hour before this chance, / I had lived a blessed time" —2.3.107–108

3. "And though I could / With barefaced power sweep him from my sight / And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not, / For certain friends that are both his and mine, / Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall / Who I myself struck down"—3.1.129–134



Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in about 1606 or 1607, but the play was not published during his lifetime. *Macbeth* first appeared in print in the First Folio of 1623.

Underground rocker and former The Velvet Underground member John Cale wrote a darkly lyrical song entitled "Macbeth."

Shakespeare based *Macbeth* on real events in Scottish history; however, while Shakespeare's play portrays Macbeth as a villain, in Scottish traditions he is generally remembered as a good and just king.

Macbeth is Shakespeare's shortest tragedy.

Macbeth has inspired movies, operas, and numerous parodies, not all of them well-received. *Life Magazine* said that Orson Welles's 1948 film adaptation "doth foully slaughter Shakespeare."

DID YOU KNOW?

Learn more at
www.folger.edu/shakespeare.

Perhaps the greatest difference between dramatic performances in Shakespeare's time and ours was that in Shakespeare's England female roles were played by boys or young men. The first person to play Lady Macbeth was probably a teenage boy!

In 2008, magician Teller (of Penn & Teller) co-directed *Macbeth* at Folger Theatre with Aaron Posner. The directors incorporated the play's magic and illusions into a "supernatural horror thriller" production.

FAMOUS LINES AND PHRASES FROM *MACBETH*

Did you know you're quoting Shakespeare when you say...

Fair is foul, and foul is fair...
Witches—1.1.12

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.
Macbeth—1.3.39

Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here...
Lady Macbeth—1.5.47-48

Yet I do fear thy nature;
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness...
Lady Macbeth—1.5.47-48

The be-all and the end-all here.
Macbeth—1.7.5

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?
Macbeth—2.1.44-45

It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood.
Macbeth—3.4.151

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
Witches—4.1.10-11

At one fell swoop?
Macduff—4.3.258

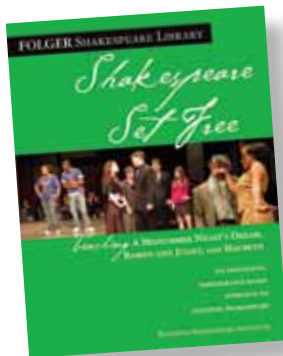
Out, damned spot, out, I say!
Lady Macbeth—5.1.37

What's done cannot be undone.
Lady Macbeth - 5.1.7

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow...
Macbeth—5.5.22



SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

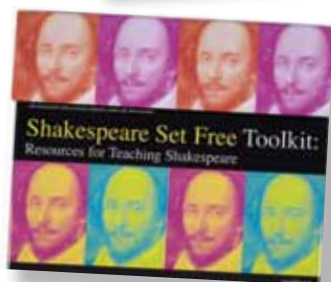


Shakespeare Set Free

The *Shakespeare Set Free* series offers innovative, performance-based approaches to teaching Shakespeare from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the world's leading center for Shakespeare studies. This volume includes unit plans on *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and day-by-day teaching strategies that successfully immerse students of every grade and skill level in the language and the plays themselves—created, taught, and written by real teachers in real classrooms. Other volumes focus on *Hamlet*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*.



Available at the Folger Gift Shop 202-675-0308, or www.folger.edu/shop.

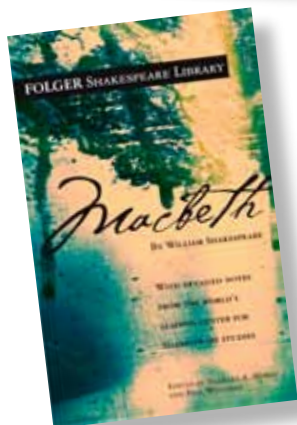


Shakespeare Set Free Toolkit

Think of it as Shakespeare in a box! Everything you need to teach Shakespeare, all in one place: the Doing Shakespeare Right guide to getting started; *Shakespeare Set Free* curriculum guide; two-line scene cards; a flash drive with instructional videos, podcasts, handouts, scripts, and images; *The Play's the Thing* DVD that follows a 5th grade class preparing for a festival; and the *Macbeth* Edition DVD, which includes a film of the smash 2008 Folger Theatre/Two River Theater Company production.



Available at the Folger Gift Shop 202-675-0308, or www.folger.edu/shop.

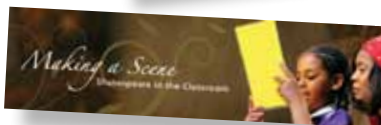


Play-by-Play: Macbeth

Folger Education's "Play-by-Play" website section contains resources on each of the most commonly taught plays, all in one place. Find *Macbeth* lesson plans, podcasts, videos, and more.



Learn more at www.folger.edu/teachingmacbeth.



Making a Scene: Shakespeare in the Classroom

Folger Education's blog features new ideas, tips, and resources for teaching Shakespeare. With the teaching community commenting, Folger educators explore what works and what doesn't in today's classroom. Join the conversation!



Learn more at www.folger.edu/edblog.

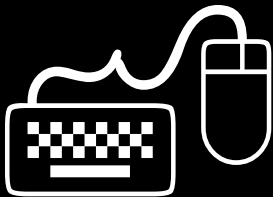


Bard Notes

A monthly update just for teachers with our newest classroom activities, lesson plans, teacher workshops, and more for K-12 educators.



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ABOUT THE FOLGER

Folger Shakespeare Library is a world-renowned center for scholarship, learning, culture, and the arts. It is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection and a primary repository for rare materials from the early modern period (1500–1750). The Folger is an internationally recognized research library offering advanced scholarly programs in the humanities; an innovator in the preservation of rare materials; a national leader in how Shakespeare is taught in grades K–12; and an award-winning producer of cultural and arts programs—theater, music, poetry, exhibits, lectures, and family programs. By promoting understanding of Shakespeare and his world, the Folger reminds us of the enduring influence of his works, the formative effects of the Renaissance on our own time, and the power of the written and spoken word. A gift to the American people from industrialist Henry Clay Folger, the Folger—located one block east of the U.S. Capitol—opened in 1932.

Our **Folger Education** division is a leader in how Shakespeare is taught today. It provides online resources to millions of teachers and students in grades K–12 each year, trains teachers across the country in performance-based teaching of Shakespeare, hosts student Shakespeare festivals and family programs, and publishes the groundbreaking *Shakespeare Set Free* series and the Folger Editions, the leading Shakespeare texts used in American classrooms today.

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