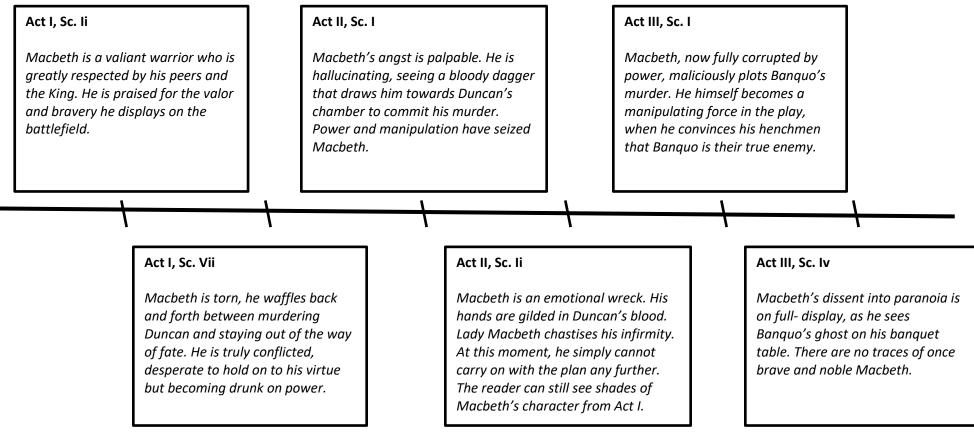


Tracing Macbeth's Downfall Acts I-III

Directions: Use unit vocabulary when possible as well as other vivid, descriptive words to trace the development o Macbeth's character in each of the places in the text. Provide textual evidence to support your assertions. Then, write a response to the prompt that follows.



Grade 10: Macbeth



Respond to the following:

In Poetics, Aristotle claims that a great tragedy includes a character whose change in fortune "be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad." How do the changes in Macbeth's behavior in Acts I-III illustrate this idea? Cite evidence from throughout Acts I-III to support your answer.

As the play begins, Macbeth is characterized as brave and noble. He is a fierce warrior, and is handsomely rewarded for his success on the battlefield. The King presents him with a diamond for Lady Macbeth and bestows upon Macbeth a new title. Shakespeare sets Macbeth up to be the quintessential tragic character. Very quickly, the reader begins to identify Macbeth's frailties: his thirst for power, his susceptibility to manipulation, and his hubris. By Act III, these flaws are on full display and Macbeth is a mere shell of the character he once was. His dissension into paranoia and evil is most displayed by his hired murder of his former best friend and most loyal confidant, Banquo. Macbeth perfectly illustrates Aristotle's concept of an effective tragedy.

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