

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY

English 12

Fall 2019

You should know the following terms for your test on Tuesday.

This is the moment when you take out paper and pen/pencil and begin taking notes.

**For those who have already done so,
*Good Job!***

For those of you haven't, please do so now.

For Tuesday...

You will need to know the following ten terms.

We will use them throughout our reading, and they will appear on the *Macbeth* test and the EQT.

So, ready? Let's begin.

AMBITION

- **Definition:**
 - *a strong desire for rank, success, fame, or power*
- **Note:** *Ambition* in twenty-first-century democracies like the U.S. is a good thing or a **virtue**.
 - However, for most of human history, *ambition* has been a bad thing, or a **vice**.
- *Ambition* is one of the major **themes** of the play and Macbeth's **tragic flaw**.
- “Fling away Ambition, By that sinne fell the Angels.”

APOSTROPHE

Definition:

- *A figure of speech in which a **speaker directly addresses an absent or dead person, an abstract quality, or something nonhuman as if it were present and capable of responding.***
- **Apostrophe** occurs when a character (*let's say, Macbeth*) talks to ghosts or to his own hallucinations (e.g., a dagger).

ASIDE

Definition:

- *Private words that a character in a play speaks to the audience or to another character that are **NOT** supposed to be overheard by others on the stage*

It has been called a "**stage whisper.**"

- It will often appear as a stage direction in *ITALICS* in the text of the play

DRAMATIC IRONY

Definition:

- *Dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something the characters do not.*
- *Because of this understanding, the words of the characters take on a different meaning.*
- If you're watching a movie about the Titanic and a character leaning on the balcony right before the ship hits the iceberg says, "It's so beautiful I could just die," that's an example of dramatic irony.

Dramatic Irony in Shakespeare

Example from *Romeo and Juliet* :

- When Romeo finds Juliet and commits suicide because he thinks that she is dead, that is **dramatic irony**.
- The audience knows that Juliet is NOT dead, but the character Romeo does not have this knowledge.
- If you have ever found yourself screaming, “*No, don’t do it!*” at a movie, you have experienced dramatic irony.

MOTIF

[moh-TEEF]

Definition:

- *In literature, a word, character, an object, an image, or an idea that recurs in a work or several works.*
- It is always significant and usually **SYMBOLIC**.
- A recurring **MOTIF** and **SYMBOL** in *Macbeth* is the image of **BLOOD**.

PARADOX

Definition:

- *An apparent contradiction that is actually true.*
- We see a **PARADOX** when the Weird Sisters tell Banquo that he is “**lesser than Macbeth and greater.**”

SOLILOQUY

[so-LIL-oh-KWEE]

Definition:

- *a long speech in which the character who is usually alone onstage expresses his or her private thoughts or feelings*
- Lady Macbeth's **SOLILOQUY** is perhaps one of the most famous speeches in English literature. She famously calls on spirits to “*unsex*” her.

TRAGEDY

Definition:

- *A play, novel, or other literary work that shows the downfall and destruction of a noble or outstanding person. It almost always ends in death.*
- Shakespeare's most famous **TRAGEDIES** include *Romeo and Juliet* (1595), *Hamlet* (1601), *Othello* (1605), *King Lear* (1606), and *Macbeth* (1606).

TRAGIC FLAW

Definition:

- *An error in judgment or weakness of character that leads to the protagonist's downfall or death.*
- Macbeth's **TRAGIC FLAW** is **AMBITION.**

TRAGIC HERO

Definition:

- *A character who gains self-knowledge and wisdom, even though he suffers defeat and, quite often, death.*
- **Note:** A tragic hero is almost always **more** complex than an epic hero. And, yes, Macbeth is a **TRAGIC HERO**.

Why we gotta learn this?!?

Correction:

- ***“Why do we have to learn this?”***
- These concepts help you to **ANALYZE** what you read, and by extension, what you encounter in the world.
- By practicing **ANALYSIS** in one context, it becomes easier to do in others. Analysis is simply the act of **breaking something down into its components**, but it is a skill that is necessary for almost any career (law, medicine, military, engineering, management, pharmacy, forensics, et al.).

1. Do **NOT** turn these notes in to the basket.
2. Keep these notes and study them for your test on Tuesday.
3. No, you may **NOT** use them on the test.
4. The test will be matching with ten terms and ten definitions or examples.
5. ***IF*** you study, you should do well. If you ***DON'T*** study, you will do poorly.
6. If you won't be here on Tuesday, you will make it up at a later date, like all other tests. There is no need to tell me that you won't be here.