



SHAKESPEARE SHORTS

READERS' THEATER SERIES



- 6 Ten To Twenty-Five Minute Plays
- Program For Easy Staging & Costumes
- 21 Reading Comprehension & Writing Activities

Reproducible
HANDS-ON
Activities



Macbeth

ON THE MARK PRESS

A Guide to Shakespearean Vocabulary

Shakespeare is often difficult for people today to understand because of the language used in his day. Below you will find examples of some of the common "old-fashioned" words and phrases used by Shakespeare, with modern explanations. Once you understand them, Shakespeare's plays will be even more enjoyable to you.

Word	Meaning	Example	Meaning
thou	you	Thou shalt be king.	You shall be king.
thee	you	I give this to thee.	I give this to you.
thy	your	I see thy glory.	I see your glory.
hast	have	...try all thy friends thou hast in Ephesus.	...try all your friends you have in Ephesus.
hath	has	His majesty hath appointed this ...	His majesty has appointed this...
art	are	O, Bottom, thou art changed!	Oh, Bottom, you are changed!
wilt	will	Wilt thou be gone?	Will you go?
dost	do	What dost thou know?	What do you know?
shalt	shall	Thou shalt be king.	You shall be king.
'tis	it is	'Tis he, that villain Romeo.	It is he, that villain Romeo.
whence	where	Whence is that knocking?	Where is that knocking coming from?
hence	from here	Help me hence!	Help me from here!
whither	where	Whither have they vanished?	Where have they vanished to?

Shakespeare also uses some old-fashioned verb forms not listed above. Since Shakespeare often wrote in a form of verse that had to have a certain number of beats in each line to maintain its rhythm, he often used what we would call contractions to make the words fit. For example, you might see the words **speakest** (pronounced *speak-ist*), which means "speak", and **speak'st** (pronounced as *speaks*) in a different place. They both mean the same thing. Another example is the use of past tense verbs ending in -ed. In order to fit into the beats per line of his verse, Shakespeare often replaces the "e" with an apostrophe. You might see the words **punished** and **punish'd** in the same play, and while they have the same meaning, they are pronounced very differently. **Punished** is pronounced *pun-ish-ed*, a three-syllable word, while **punish'd** is pronounced the same way as we would pronounce the word *punished*. In this collection of plays, do not pronounce the -ed ending as a separate syllable unless specifically told to do so.

A Midsummer Night's Dream



Dramatis Personae

Duke Theseus –	_____
Hippolyta, his fiancé –	_____
Hermia –	_____
Lysander –	_____
Helena –	_____
Demetrius –	_____
Peter Quince –	_____
Nick Bottom –	_____
Francis Flute –	_____
Tom Snout –	_____
Snug –	_____
Robin Starveling –	_____
Egeus –	_____
Oberon, the Fairy King –	_____
Titania, the Fairy Queen –	_____
Puck, or Robin Goodfellow –	_____
Fairy –	_____
Peasblossom –	_____
Cobweb –	_____
Moth –	_____
Mustardseed –	_____
Philostrate –	_____
Narrator –	_____

Long ago, in Athens, Duke Theseus and his fiancé, Hippolyta, busied themselves with preparations for their upcoming wedding. In the middle of their discussions, a man named Egeus entered the palace with his daughter, Hermia, and two men named Lysander and Demetrius.

Duke Theseus: Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on apace.

Hippolyta: In four happy days, the moon, like to a silver bow new bent in Heaven, shall behold the night of our solemnities.

Macbeth – A Comprehension Check

1. Where does the story take place?

2. What do the witches predict will happen to Macbeth?

3. When Macbeth hears this how does he react? What does this tell us about his personality?

4. Why does Macbeth return to the witches later in the play? Do they offer him any hope of success?

5. Who is more ambitious, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? Explain your opinion with proof from the story.

6. Who comes to fight against Macbeth? Why?

7. After Macbeth hears of his wife's death he speaks one of the most famous passages in English literature. What does Macbeth mean when he speaks these words?
(Hint: Think about his wife's death, and the situation in which he finds himself.)

Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

8. Do you find the witches to be scary, mysterious, or unnerving? Explain your opinion.

Creative Thinking and Writing



Activity Nine

Pretend you are Macbeth. Write several diary entries that follow this format:

- Tell what has happened.
- Give your thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the events.
- Express how you hope things will go in the future.

Your diary entries should include the following events:

- Your first meeting with the witches
- The night King Duncan is killed
- The day you see Banquo's ghost
- Meeting the witches for the second time
- The death of your wife and the battle with your enemies

Share your diary entries with a friend.



Creative Thinking and Writing

Activity Ten

When Macbeth hears the predictions of the three witches, he writes a letter to his wife about it. If you were Macbeth, what would be in your letter? **Write Macbeth's letter** to his wife for him. Use proper friendly letter format.

Think about...

- What are your feelings at this moment?
- What hopes and fears do you have?
- What message do you want your wife to receive?
- What do you hope her reaction will be?
- How will you organize your ideas?

Write your letter and share it with a friend.