

REFLECTING ON  
*MACBETH* ACT ONE PARAGRAPHS

2019

# TERMS

- *Macbeth* is not a book or a novel; it's a script or a **play** or a theatrical drama.
- **BTS:** Body Thesis Sentence—the topic sentence in any main argument, modeled as a form of a thesis statement
- **CS:** Concluding Sentence—the last sentence in a paragraph (or argument) that is modeled as a form of a thesis statement

# THESIS

- *Macbeth* (the play's title) should be in Italics for MLA format
- Don't try to prove too much in your thesis—if you say “people” in your thesis, you have to prove all people. So, narrow the focus of your writing to specific groups and time periods.

# EVIDENCE

- Nice contextual lead-ins and great citations
  - Large roman numerals—Act #s
  - Small roman numerals—Scene #s
  - Arabic numerals—Line #s
    - (I, ii, 34-46)
- Use less of your quotes
- Present evidence in chronological order

# ANALYSIS

- Your analysis should always be focused on the way that the author uses language, structure, technique, or style to shape meaning.
  - So, the author's name should come up a lot in your analysis sentences
- Elaborate more in your analysis sentences—share what the author does with language and then what ideas that language communicates

# ORGANIZATION

- Use an interesting title
  - “Topic: Interesting Phrase” is a great format
- Indent paragraphs.
- Concluding sentences matter! They should mirror the structure of the BTS and provide resolution to that part of your argument.

# STYLE

- You should only be using parentheses in formal academic writing when you're citing a source.
  - Parenthetical asides are too informal for academic, analytical writing.
- Avoid these words in formal academic writing—all can be edited out and make your argument flawed and wordy
  - “We”
  - “One”
  - “The Reader”
  - “I”
    - **Ex:** The reader sees that Shakespeare uses metaphors to cloud Macbeth's motives; one can infer that Macbeth is lying. (18 words)
      - **Better:** Shakespeare uses metaphors to cloud Macbeth's motives, showing he's lying. (10 words)

# EDITING FOR BREVITY

- ING words

- TO BE verbs

- “Macbeth is killing ...

- “Macbeth kills ...

- “Okonkwo is shooting ...

- “Okonkwo shoots ...

- PREPOSITIONS

- The writing of Shakespeare shows that the lying of Macbeth... (10 words)

- Shakespeare writes Macbeth’s lies showing... (5 words)



# AVOID THE FOLLOWING WEAKNESSES TO HAVE POWERFUL LITERARY ANALYSIS:

- Rhetorical questions
- Absolute claims
- Generalizations
- Speculation
  - “Shakespeare must have been a fair man ...
  - “Shakespeare believed in equal rights ...
  - “The ending of *Macbeth* is what the audience wants to see ...”
  - “ ... the outcome of *Macbeth* would have been different.”

# WORDS TO HESITATE BEFORE USING IN FORMAL WRITING

## Words that lead to generalization:

- many
- people
- society
- similarities
- differences
- various
- several
- everything

## Words that lead to speculation”

- would
- could
- should
- might
  - \*Use of speculative words is sometimes appropriate in history but never in language arts