

## Mini Research Assignment: *Macbeth*

1. We are only interested in England and Scotland. Please don't bring in info about any other countries.
2. What does late 16th and early 17th c. mean? Most often it will refer to 1580 – 1612, approx. In the cases of philosophy and medicine you might find yourself looking a little earlier. With respect to the historic events, it is hard not to capture Mary Queen of Scots (James I's mother) and her controversy with Elizabeth I of England, even though this falls earlier. But for the most part keep the timeframe in mind. We don't want reports from 1688, 1638 or 1648 – or from 1530! These are overwhelmingly different periods in England and Scotland.
3. The reports should be no longer than 5 minutes.
4. Where possible, bring handouts for the class if you are sourcing a *primary document*, e.g. Holinshed's *Chronicles* or *Daemonologie* or if you have visual material.
5. Think about how this little research presentation amplifies our understanding of *Macbeth*. Imagine that we are producing the play. What do we need to know? How and why is it interesting?

### Topics

- Performance History of the *Macbeth*:
  - 17th c, both before and after the Restoration
  - 18th c onward – who did it, where, why, how?
- *Daemonologie*, by James VI, Scotland, later James I, England – bring selections for class
- Holinshed's *Chronicles* - a very brief history, and then explicit citations of the source for *Macbeth* AND a brief description of Scotland's political history at the time *Macbeth* is set in, not the early 17th c.
- On the topic of guilt and hallucinations and madness – what can be found relating to late 16th, early 17th century English understanding of these? medicine, spirituality, philosophy?
- Religious Controversies in the early 17th c
  - What is the religious, and therefore political, state of England and Scotland in the late 16th c and early 17th c with respect to religion?
  - The Gunpowder Plot
- Treachery and treason – of a non-religious nature in early 17th c England – that is...as opposed to the previous topics that do pertain to religion and politics.

- Succession to the throne of England – from Elizabeth I to James I. What were the succession issues surrounding Elizabeth, and how did James become Sovereign?
- The doctrine of mental reservation or mental equivocation – *Mentalis Restrictio* – and what it has to do with *Macbeth*.
- Sound and *Macbeth* – go through the text and give us a description of the soundscape of the world.
- Paradox in *Macbeth* – what are the verbal paradoxes, multiple meanings, manipulations of words and meaning, equivocations and lies in the play – 2 people – check out scenes 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, 3.1, 3.4 – for starters AND what are late 16th and early 17th c attitudes toward paradox, double meaning, etc.
- The Great Chain of Being – what is it and how does it relate to *Macbeth*? Check out these resources:
  - [Arthur Lovejoy](#): *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (1936) ISBN 0-674-36153-9
  - [E. M. W. Tillyard](#): *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1942)

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