**Macbeth Discussion Questions**

Read through the 19 Questions—choose 5 to focus on in preparation for our class discussion next period. Thoughtfully reflect on the 5 questions of your choice and **type your responses (double spaced).**

1. The idea of deception—that is, things are not always as they seem—is presented in Macbeth. Using specific references, trace the theme of deception as it is presented in the play.
2. To what extent is Lady Macbeth responsible for Macbeth becoming King of Scotland? To what extent is he responsible for his own choices? Use specific evidence from the play to support your answer.
3. A writer such as Shakespeare was able to create in the reader a feeling (such as respect, sympathy, love, hate, admiration, or several of these together) towards one or more characters. Choose a character in the play and write your feelings towards that character and explain how the author managed to make you feel as you do.
4. What is the significance of the play’s opening lines, “Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair?” How does this lend itself to one of the main themes in Macbeth? What is the significance of Macbeth’s first line in the play “So foul a day I have not seen”?
5. Discuss Macbeth’s moral decline from a brave and admirable hero, to a man tempted to an evil act, to a man consumed by darkness.
6. How and why is the contrast between appearance and reality so important in the play? Include the role the witches play in affecting the play’s events.
7. What is Shakespeare saying about the nature of prophecy and fate? Just because the witches predict things doesn’t mean they’re able to see the future...right? or can they?
8. What is Shakespeare saying about what it means to be a man? Which character(s) do you think Shakespeare believes is the best example of a man?

1. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth change dramatically over the course of the play, and their marriage changes, too. What are these changes, what causes them, and how and why is their relationship in the end so different from their relationship in the beginning?

10. Blood is mentioned over 100 times in Macbeth. What are the most significant references to blood in the play? As a psychological symbol, what does blood represent for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?

1. How is guilt and mental sanity connected in the play? Which characters show this correlation and what do we learn from it? Are they actually going “mad” or is it sane to feel guilt?

1. Was Macbeth really bad from the beginning, or was he a good man who did bad things? What good qualities can you find in him?

1. Ben Jonson once said that Shakespeare is “not of an age, but for all time.” In your opinion, what does Macbeth have to offer today’s audiences?
2. What is your favorite scene in the play? Explain why this scene is so memorable to you and how it will help you remember *The Tragedy of Macbeth* for many years to come.
3. How does Shakespeare use the play to comment on gender roles? Consider the characters of Lady Macbeth, Lady Macduff, and/or the witches. Include any other references to femininity/womanliness and masculinity/manliness to support your point.

1. Were you satisfied with the ending of the play? Explain your answer using specific evidence from the play.

1. List three specific examples of dark imagery that appear throughout the play. In what scenes do these images appear? Explain why Shakespeare uses so much dark imagery in the play.

1. Discuss the following characters as doubles of Macbeth: Duncan, Malcolm, Banquo, the Thane of Cawdor, and Macduff. How would you compare each character to Macbeth? If we interpret these characters as reflections of various facets of Macbeth's personality, what facet would each character represent?

1. A tragic hero should provoke our sympathy. Do you sympathize with Macbeth? Why or why not? Does his downfall evoke pity and terror? Does he fit Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero?