**Macbeth Unit Test**

**Study Guide**

January 17

Exam will be between thirty and forty scan-tron multiple choice (40 points)

**Characters**

Be able to identify characters by either quotes or descriptions. To review you could create a chart in which you list each character, three traits, and a defining quote.

**Plot**

Be able to recall the primary events in the plot, and to articulate the basic plot elements (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Complete a plot chart to review; see: http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/plot-diagram-30040.html

**Terms**

Be able to identify and explain the following terms: *Metaphor, Paradox, Simile, Personification, Irony (verbal, situational, dramatic), foreshadowing, soliloquy, tragic flaw;* see: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html

**Vocabulary**

Know the meanings of these ten words: *resolute, prophetic, direful, posterity, bestow, rancor, covet, censure, pristine.* Use a dictionary, if necessary to look them up. Create a strong context sentence to prove mastery of the word. Review synonyms/antonyms in your classwork notes.

**Defining quotes**

For each of the following you need to be able to explain (a) who is speaking, (b) what the quotation communicates about a theme or idea from the play.

**Act 4:** PLEASE NOTE THAT IN PARENTHESES IS THE LINE NUMBERS FOR THE SLIM TEXT; THE FIRST SET OF NUMBERS IS FOR THE SIDE BY SIDE TEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Side by Side Text</th>
<th>Slim Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>165-166</td>
<td>163-164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>59-60</td>
<td>62-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>260-261</td>
<td>260-260</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Act 5:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Line Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>34-36</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26-30</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>15-17</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>17-20</td>
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In Shakespeare's *Macbeth* the main character, near the play's end, states:

> 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

(5.5.26-30)

Shakespeare in these lines suggests a metaphoric relationship between life and a “poor player” (presumably all people) who tells tales that, although “full of sound and fury,” really mean “nothing.” Using reference to the play as well as reference to history, science, film, or your own experience/observation, write an essay that explores your understanding of this quotation. Some questions to consider: 

1. Why might the character of Macbeth say something like this at the point in the play when he does say it? 
2. Does the study of History communicate information about the lives of long dead people who communicate meaningful value even today? 
3. Does scientific study make us optimistic or pessimistic about the possibility of living longer? 

You are expected to provide at least five paragraphs with a clear thesis in your introduction supported by well-developed body paragraphs.
Macbeth’s Mean Life

Is there really any meaning to the life we lead? Reading Shakespeare’s play Macbeth, one might come to the conclusion that life is one big struggle for power. Macbeth, along with his wife Lady Macbeth, seem to be willing to commit any crime, including murder, to get what they want. The question becomes not so much why they want to be king and queen but whether what they did to get this is justified. Every person has something that they want, but the world would be a very cruel and dangerous place if the search for this involves hurting or killing others. Although Macbeth and Lady Macbeth may believe that life means “nothing,” the fact is that life itself is the most precious thing a person has. The lesson that life does have value has been taught by the sense of justice one finds in a review of Abraham Lincoln’s presidency, Marie Curie’s selfless dedication to radiation therapy, and a dedicated firefighter friend who passed away trying to save others in the World Trade Center.

Not unlike Macbeth, Abraham Lincoln became a powerful leader of the country within which he lived; however, Lincoln made sure that his ambition was to ultimately serve those that he led. A specific example of this is his work to free the slaves by making sure his Emancipation Proclamation became the law of the land. Where Macbeth struggled most of the play to do whatever he could to keep his power, Lincoln was more concerned with promoting a sense of justice: he was, therefore, a model of a person who was doing something that would make them stronger as a people. Macbeth, on the other
hand, shows his people that nothing, legal or illegal, should stop a person from getting what they want. A nation of individuals who put their needs above a sense of justice will suffer a mean, short life.

**Furthermore**, Marie Curie is one of the greatest scientists the world has ever known and the message we learn from her life is that honest hard work can result in great things. Macbeth may want to be king, but he does not want to achieve this honestly. He goes as far as to kill his best friend Banquo as a part of his scheme to be king. Curie is not a political figure who wants to be king like Macbeth, but similar to Macbeth she is driven to achieve greatness. The difference between the two is that Curie’s greatness involved the study of radioactivity which led to cures for cancer. When Macbeth achieves what he wants the result is something that only benefits himself. He is a person who feels that life means “nothing” primarily because when he achieved what he wanted this only served him. Marie Curie’s struggle for greatness was something that could sustain her because it was something that promised life to so many others.

Dennis McHugh was a friend of mine who dedicated his life to save others during the tragedy at the World Trade Center on September 11. Thomas was not one of the first responders but he travelled with others down to the site from his Bronx station house. When I think of Dennis I think of those forty minutes he sat in the truck on his way down. Was he thinking about his young daughter or his wife? Did he consider not going when he must have known of the danger? Macbeth, a good soldier, certainly knew about danger and before he met the witches at the start of the play, he was actually a good friend to Banquo and fine citizen for his nation. Macbeth’s problem is that he let his desire to be king poison his ability to reason with the witches’ predictions and his wife’s
wishes. Dennis’ most important concern was to be a good husband and father; and he recognized the importance of life every day at work and at home. Unlike Macbeth, Denis never let a desire for promotion or extra money get in the way of what was most important to him. Denis gave his life so others could live. The fact that he could have looked the other way or walked away from the challenge only makes it clearer that life must mean something. My friend’s sacrifice forces those he left behind to realize that life may be hard at times, but it is a gift that is maybe most precious because it is most fragile.

Life appears to be most important to those people, like Abraham Lincoln, Marie Curie, and my friend Dennis, who give the most they can to others. Abraham Lincoln’s life communicated that having power means one must struggle even harder to preserve justice. Marie Curie lived to give to the world a way to help cure a most horrible disease. Dennis McHugh taught that giving to others the most of oneself is a most life affirming, life celebrating acts. Macbeth, after the suicide of his wife near the end of the play, comments that life is a “tale / told by an idiot, full of sound and fury / Signifying nothing” (5.5.26-30). Life may be loud and it can be hard but it means everything. Ironically and sadly we too often learn this lesson after someone we love has lost it.