

Lady Macbeth and how to get what you want

Topic

The use of persuasion in Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth'

Learning outcomes

- Read a summary of the main events of 'Macbeth'
- Develop ability to read Shakespearean language
- Identify different persuasive techniques used in an extract from 'Macbeth'
- Use different persuasive techniques in a role play

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B2+)

Time

Approximately 90 minutes or two shorter lessons: Lesson 1 (Lead in + Tasks 1-3); Lesson 2 (Tasks 4-5)

Materials

- Copies of Student worksheet
- Copies of Extract
- Optional BBC Teach video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-73pYMRtm3w>
- Cut-up role cards (see **Appendix** of the Lesson Plan)

Introduction

This lesson introduces students to the theme of persuasion in Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth'. Students read and order a short summary of the play's main events. They are introduced to Shakespearean language with a matching activity, then they read and/or listen to an extract from the play. They examine

persuasive techniques used by Lady Macbeth in the play, then use different persuasive techniques in a role play.

Procedure

<p>1. Lead-in: Introduction to 'Macbeth' (5-10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to say what they already know about Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth'. Write their ideas on the board. You could do this as a mind map. See: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/d-h/mind-map
<p>2. Task 1: Ordering events (10-15 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer students to Task 1 in the student worksheet. Individually or in pairs students order the events of Macbeth. They can use dictionaries. Walk around and help as they do the task. If necessary, teach key unfamiliar vocabulary before the task e.g. shaken, battle, prophecy, assassin, servant. Ask students to give the correct order: e, a, f, c, d, b Ask questions to check understanding of the summary: What do the three witches say? (Macbeth will be king, and Banquo's sons will be kings one day) How do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feel about the prophecy? (shaken / shocked, excited) Why does Lady Macbeth persuade her husband to kill King Duncan? (She wants him to be king) Why does Macbeth kill his friend, Banquo? (To make sure that he stays the king) How do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feel after murdering others? (guilty) What happens in the end? (Lady Macbeth kills herself; Macbeth is killed in battle / at war; there is a new king) <p>Note: Alternatively, you could show a short video summary of Macbeth online. Make sure that the content is appropriate for classroom use before you show it to your students. Ask questions to check understanding.</p>
<p>3. Task 2: Matching (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that students are going to read an extract from a scene of 'Macbeth'. In the scene, Lady Macbeth (Macbeth's wife) persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer students to Task 2A in the student worksheet. Explain that sentences 1-5 are some of Lady Macbeth's lines from the scene. In small groups, students discuss the sentences and see if they can guess what any of them mean. They can use dictionaries. If this is too challenging, just go straight to the next step. Refer students to Task 2B in the student worksheet. Students match sentences 1-5 to modern translations a-e. You can explain that 'thou' means 'you'. <p>Answers: 1c, 2a, 3d, 4e, 5b</p>
4. Task 3: Reading (10 mins)	<p>Note: If it's possible to show a video, before the lesson, find a video of Act 1 Scene 7. Find the section with the lines of the extract. BBC Teach has an example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-73pYMRtm3w</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that students will now read an extract from Act 1, Scene 7 of 'Macbeth'. Explain that the extract uses Shakespearean language, and that many readers of modern English find this challenging. As they read / watch, they should not worry about understanding every word. The aim of this is to experience some Shakespeare in its original form. Option 1: Hand out copies of the extract. Students should read and find the lines from Task 2A. If possible, play a video / audio file of the scene so that students can listen as they read. This will help with understanding. Option 2: Students watch the video and find the lines from Task 2A. It isn't necessary to analyse the language of the extract. Remind students that the aim is to experience Shakespeare in its original form. Ask some questions about the text and experience: Did they learn anything about Macbeth or Lady Macbeth? What did students understand? How did they feel when reading / listening?
5. Task 4: Identifying persuasive techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer students to Task 4 of the student worksheet. Explain that Lady Macbeth uses different techniques to persuade Macbeth. Check that everyone understands the meanings of the techniques listed in the table: flattery, reassurance, putting someone down, emphasising determination.

<p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read out the examples that Lady Macbeth uses in Act 1, Scene 7. Check any unfamiliar words. Ask students to think of more examples to check understanding. They can suggest examples for any context. Suggestions (persuading somebody to cook dinner): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flattery: You're such a good cook. Can you prepare something for this evening? I'm sure it will be delicious! Reassurance: Don't worry. You've made this dish before. You'll know what to do. Putting someone down: You never cook dinner, and I'm tired of it. It's your turn! Emphasising determination: I'm going out tonight. If you don't cook dinner, you'll have nothing to eat. Individually or in pairs, students think of and write other examples in the third column of the table. Walk around and help if necessary. When students are ready, ask some to read out their examples.
<p>6. Task 5: Role play (30-40 mins)</p>	<p>Note: Before the lesson, copy and cut up role cards in the Appendix.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that students are going to do a role play. In the role play, they will have to persuade others. Divide the class into pairs – one is Student A and one is Student B. Give each pair one of the situations. Each student takes one of the role cards. They must not show their cards to their partner. Give students a few minutes to read and understand their role card. They identify what they need to persuade their partner to do. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Situation 1A: Persuade to lend car / 1B Persuade to spend weekend with you Situation 2A: Persuade to copy in exam / 2B Persuade to study Situation 3A: Persuade to join in a trip / 3B Persuade to save money Individually, students prepare what they will say to persuade their partner. They should use some of the techniques they learned about in Task 4. When individual students are ready, they should role play their situations in pairs. Walk around the room and listen. If you have time, make notes of good examples of persuasion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite some groups to perform their role plays in front of the class. Alternatively, pairs can join up and perform their role plays in front of each other. As students watch and listen to the role plays, they should find examples of different persuasive techniques.• Review examples of good persuasive techniques you saw and heard in the role plays with the whole class.
7. Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students write a dialogue based on their role play situation. They include examples of different persuasive techniques.

Appendix: Role play cards for Task 5

Situation 1: Student A

You and three of your friends want to go to a music festival in the countryside next weekend. You've bought your tickets and you're really excited! The only problem is that you really need a car (you can't get there by public transport) and you haven't got one. You want Student B to lend you their car. If they do not lend you their car, you will not be able to go to the music festival. Your friends are counting on you!

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Situation 1: Student B

Student A wants to borrow your car this weekend, but you really don't want to lend it to them. Student A is really careless and last time you lent your car it came back badly scratched. Also, you are not at all sure about the people Student A is hanging out with at the moment. You think s/he is in with a very bad crowd, and you'd like Student A to spend the weekend with you.

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Situation 2: Student A

You have an English test coming up. It's a really important one, because if you don't pass it you won't be able to get into university / get a new role at work. Unfortunately, you've been a bit busy lately and you haven't really studied enough. You need to ask your clever friend if you can sit beside him/her in the exam and copy his/her answers.

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Situation 2: Student B

Your friend wants to sit beside you in the English exam – they haven't studied for the exam and want to copy your answers. You have worked really hard for this exam and you don't think it is at all fair of your friend to ask you to do this. You are also worried that you will get into really big trouble if you are caught. You think that your friend needs to study.

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Situation 3: Student A

You have just seen a great deal with an online travel company to a place that you've always wanted to visit. The bargain ends at midnight so you don't have much time. You need to persuade your friend to buy tickets and come with you – you know s/he has enough money. You have other friends you could ask, but no one is quite as much fun as this friend.

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Situation 3: Student B

Your friend invites you to join him/her on a trip. You're really trying to save money to buy something that you need, and if you go on the trip you'll lose some of your savings. Also, your friend is always spending money and never saves. You think that your friend should save instead of going on this trip.