



Macbeth Comparative Analysis

In this worksheet, you will play the role of instructor *and* student to better understand the theme of power in *Macbeth*. You will:

1. Identify two comparable scenes from *Macbeth*.
2. Create a writing prompt that instructs the responder to analyze how literary elements are used in the two scenes to convey the influence power has over an individual's actions.
3. Write a well-developed response to your comparative prompt.

1. Identify two comparable scenes from *Macbeth*.

Find two sections of the text that can be compared in some abstract way. Make sure these scenes both demonstrate the influence power has over an individual's actions. The sections of text to be compared cannot come from the same scene but may be taken from the same act. Next, record a line or two from each scene in the columns in the chart below, and write a short summary describing the events in the scene. Be sure to properly cite the quoted text. An example has been provided for you to better understand the task.

Chosen Scene 1 Citation and Summary	Chosen Scene 2 Citation and Summary
Act 1, scene 2: "For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—" (1.2.16) Macbeth's power in this scene is illustrated through his bravery, battle prowess, and ability to command Duncan's armies. The power that is given to him by the king demonstrates the trust the king has in him as a leader and commander. This scene also reflects Macbeth's loyalty.	Act 1, scene 5: "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature; It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness To catch the nearest way[.]" (1.5.1–5) In this scene, Lady Macbeth views the same traits the captain saw in Macbeth as a weakness instead of a strength. She views Macbeth's loyalty to the king as a potential downfall in their grasp for power.

Write two to three sentences to explain why you think your chosen scenes can be compared (and contrasted). Below is a sample explanation for the example scenes above.

These two scenes present characters' perceptions of Macbeth. However, the two show very different portrayals of Macbeth's loyalty and bravery. The captain admires Macbeth for his battlefield prowess and his power to command and fight, while Lady Macbeth believes Macbeth's loyalty to be a weakness. She sees power as having the ruthlessness to fulfill one's ambitions, which she believes Macbeth lacks.

2. Create a writing prompt.

Model your comparative prompt on the example below. Try to create a prompt that can be answered with a definitive statement.

Prompt format:

Read and review [chosen scene 1] and [chosen scene 2]. Then, in a well-developed response, analyze how Shakespeare [uses literary techniques/crafts the text/relies on literary strategies] to [convey, illustrate, characterize, expose, reveal, etc., the comparative abstract idea].

Sample prompt based on example provided:

Read and review the captain's description of Macbeth from 1.2.8–42 and Lady Macbeth's reaction to her husband's letter from 1.5.1–44. Then, in a well-developed response, analyze how Shakespeare uses literary techniques to convey the captain's and Lady Macbeth's differing views of Macbeth's attitude toward power.

Your comparative prompt:

3. Write a well-developed response to your comparative prompt.

Write your response on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to include evidence from both of your chosen scenes from the text.

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)