



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2016 Volume I: Shakespeare and the Scenes of Instruction

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## Shakespeare: Scenes of Instruction and the Graphic Novel

Curriculum Unit 16.01.03  
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### Objective

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We will be studying *Macbeth* and how the Visual Arts teacher can help enhance a student's learning experience. My hope is that this unit will be suggestive for teaching scenes from other plays as well as for *Macbeth*. The graphic novel form can help students interpret plot, character, and theme through its unique lens. This paper will examine both the purpose and the specifics of having students create their own graphic novel panels using Photoshop and Wacom (electronic drawing) tablets for four scenes from the play.

Among the many considerations students will address will be the fundamental question of whether "to represent or not to represent" visually. As students will discover, deciding what to leave out is just as important as deciding what to leave in. It will become helpful to suggest to students that some things are better left unseen, and that sometimes the reader's imagination can conjure up an image that is far more powerful than any image an illustrator can create.

Shakespeare's plays are usually seen, and thought of, as being stage productions or films. The actor on the stage, or in a film, has more opportunities to convey a visual message than the illustrator. The film actor has multiple frames of film while the illustrator has just a few graphic panels. In a stage production of *Macbeth* an actor who plays Macbeth can mime the dagger to help the audience imagine what Macbeth is seeing. In a graphic 2-dimensional representation of a dagger, visible to both Macbeth and to the viewer, it may be necessary to give a clearer impression.

In Kenneth Branagh's film version of *Hamlet* Branagh choose to represent Hamlet's youth during his famous "to be or not to be" speech. While Hamlet is speaking to Yorik's skull Branagh runs images of Hamlet, as a child, playing with the court jester. Is this the best decision or would this have been better left to the imagination? Most people are capable of envisioning of happy childhood as well as what Yorik might have looked like.

Students will closely consider the importance of visual clues to the reader: These clues are the result of key questions each student must ask. For example, students may speculate on the issue of mood and atmosphere created through shading and lighting: How may a certain sense of mood and atmosphere be conveyed? The same scene with different lighting can look dramatically different. Character expressions are another

consideration: Will the panel be an extreme close-up view? A face in shadow? An overhead view? How will each frame convey emotions? These considerations and others make up the challenge as well as the reward of the unit.

## Introduction

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Arranging, planning, and creating scenes from a Shakespeare play by creating graphic novel panels would add a layer of depth to my lessons as compared to having students create graphic novel panels based on modern day characters or their own characters. Hopefully a focus on moments in Shakespeare's plays would make Shakespeare, a topic that most students view as difficult, easier to understand and to interpret. Scenes from *Macbeth* would present the opportunity to collaborate with the English teachers in my school who teach the play, and to offer students an opportunity to combine artistic and literary interpretations to produce a thought-provoking product.

The term "graphic novel" is generally used to describe books that resemble comic books in terms of format and narrative development. The graphic novel is a specific genre of comic book - a format that often helps to attract and motivate teens to read. Students at the Cooperative Arts Magnet High School need those interdisciplinary connections to achieve a well-rounded learning experience.

The Cooperative Arts school is divided into Arts concentrations: Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Music (band and choir), Theater and Dance. For Visual Arts students, in particular, the graphic novel format would tie into the drawing and design skills they have obtained as underclassmen (I teach mainly eleventh and twelfth grade students.) Analyzing and visualizing what a scene might look like can also be of benefit to the visual learner, helping him/her to better understand Shakespeare's themes and meanings.

I believe visual arts can be raised to a different level if visual projects can be used to enhance academic learning. This can have a great benefit for students who are visual learners or for the visual learner and/or struggling student. As a high school student I struggled with science until one of my teachers took notice of my drawing skills. She explained to me that she needed drawings showing every step in some of the science experiments we would be working on in class, and asked if I could help. I would sketch out the steps initially and she would look them over and make corrections until I had all of the steps for her to hang up on the wall. As a visual learner this was very helpful to me. I could then walk into science class feeling prepared as opposed to fearful. I didn't become an A student, but I did become a more confident student who was more willing to learn.

## Narrative

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### Why use the graphic novel approach?

The graphic novel format has become more and more mainstream. Teachers have been using graphic novels in the class for students struggling with their reading skills. Graphic novels can be a great equalizer for

students of different abilities. Special needs students find visual clues and emotional contexts that give them a better understanding of the written word. Visual interpretations of stories can be helpful to English Language Learners who are just beginning to acquire language skills. Graphic novels also have a way of drawing in reluctant readers, namely boys, who tend to be visual, and drawn to video games, computers, movies, and television. As a former Art Director for Grolier Books and Scholastic, I know this is a notoriously hard group to reach.

### **How did the graphic novel manage to make its way into libraries and schools?**

Over the past decade libraries have been adding more books to the graphic novel sections. In most libraries graphic novels make up a small percentage of their collection of books. Cuyahoga County Public Library in Ohio for example counts 10% of their books as graphic novels but as much as 35% of the library's circulation. These figures also hold true for school libraries as well. Yuma High School in Yuma, AZ, won the 2015 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant. Yuma High School originally had a graphic novel collection that made up just 2.9% of their library's collection but 31.76% of their circulation <sup>1</sup>. Graphic novels are even in high demand at institutions of higher learning. At Columbia University, Karen Green, the librarian of ancient and medieval history, selects graphic novels for Columbia's library: "Graphic novels are the most frequently requested material in our Ivy League request system," says Green. <sup>2</sup>

High quality graphic novels such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1991) and Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen* (1987) began to pave the way for the acceptance of graphic novels. Graphic novels started to become more acceptable in early 2000s. As publishers began to release classics in graphic novel form, books sales began to increase. This was spurred on by the popularity of the genre manga (Japanese comics).

In 2007 the first *Great Graphic Novels for Teens* list from Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) was released. This is a list of graphic novels and illustrated non-fiction books for children ages 12-18. The list helps young adult librarians make informed choices in terms of what they want to add to their library collections. Among the top ten titles for the 2016 list is *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans* By Don Brown, a graphic novel that chronicles the events and devastation of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

In 2011 the American Library Association added an annually updated Core Collection of Graphic Novels for readers in grades K through 8. The ALA's criteria and description reads:

*Graphic novel here is defined as a full-length story told in paneled, sequential, graphic format. The list does not include book-length collections of comic strips, wordless picture books, or hybrid books that are a mixture of text and comics/graphics. The list includes classics as well as new titles that have been widely recommended and well-reviewed, and books that have popular appeal as well as critical acclaim.* <sup>3</sup>

### **Rationale: why combine Macbeth with the graphic novel form?**

Why choose *Macbeth* for a graphic novel unit? When I questioned the English teachers at my school as to which play I should use, they most frequently recommended *Macbeth* followed by *Hamlet*. Other plays can be used, but I think it best to work with what is being taught within your school. This will reinforce what students are learning in English class.

*Macbeth* gives the opportunity to deal with the seen and the unseen. This is an important question when illustrating a story. What will enhance the story? What should be left to the reader's imagination? *Macbeth* deals with the super-natural, murder and intrigue. These topics present wonderful opportunities to deal with causes and effects - to introduce character motivation, atmosphere as a character, and other related concepts.

### The Visual Elements of a Graphic Novel

Even though most students are familiar with the graphic novel format, students will need to understand the basics of building graphic novel panels. There is a basic visual vocabulary for the graphic novel, including, but not limited to, the following:

**Panels:** Squares or rectangles that contain a single scene. It is a good idea to “break” these panels when appropriate. This can be as simple as a character's head overlapping into another panel or as complicated as a character breaking out of the edge of a panel while running. Breaking the grid created by the panels creates a more dynamic layout. Figure 1.

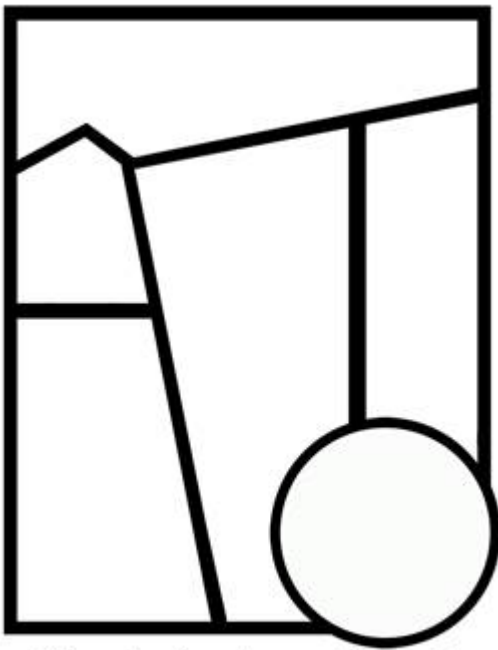


Figure 1 - Sample graphic panel page lay-out

**Thought panel:** A thought panel has wavy lines as opposed to straight edges and contains images that represent thoughts or memories. Thought images are usually shown as monochromatic or duotone images. This helps to separate these images from what is going on in the story. Students should consider their colors wisely. Memories are never entirely clear in our minds; however happier memories may be rendered in brighter colors than bad memories. Yellow could be perceived as a happier color than a muted blue or brown. The color red might convey a more dramatic thought or memory.

**Gutters:** the space between panels or the space at the center (binding) of the graphic novel.

**Dialogue balloons:** contain the characters' communications with each other. There are two different types of dialogue balloons: A rounded balloon for talking and a jagged balloon for yelling. Figures 2 and 3.



Figure 2 - dialogue balloon

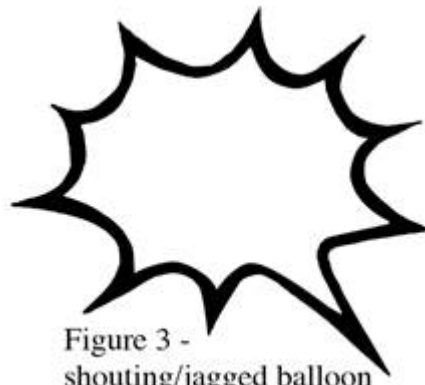


Figure 3 - shouting/jagged balloon

**Captions:** contain information about a scene or characters.

**Sound effects:** large words created outside of the dialogue balloons; for example, into the course of a sword fight the artist might insert words like “clang” and “thump.”

**Thought balloons:** one large circle containing dialogue with a series of other circles leading to the character. Figure 4

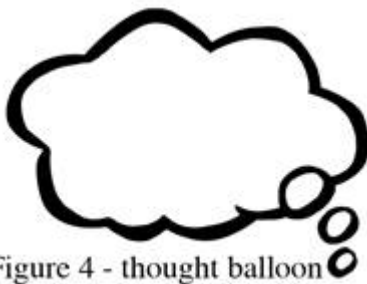


Figure 4 - thought balloon

### Creating illustrations for graphic novel panels

In order to produce an effective scene, I find it is important to have students create multiple sketches of each panel. Quick sketches will give them the opportunity to work out the right composition of images, allowing them to see how their ideas might work out and which ideas work best. Would the viewer have an idea of what is going on in the scene without words? Will the illustrations assist the reader in understanding the play? Are characters conveying the right emotions - emotions that support your interpretation? It is important to make sure the story and the visual images are working together to convey the emotion and the plot of the story.

Decisions will also need to be made as to the language of the graphic novel. Some of the graphic novels based on classics alter their language to make it more modern and easier for the reader. In my classes, this issue will have to be a personal choice based on student needs, but I think it is a good idea to stick to the original language when possible. If you, the teacher, are lucky enough to be able to collaborate with an English teacher who is teaching *Macbeth* the burden of such decisions should be lessened. Provided you do have English Language Learners or students who are struggling with reading, it would be a good idea to modify effectively.

My classes are not leveled. My students come to my classroom with a wide range of skill sets. At a magnet school there is also the unique situation of students coming from various school systems. What was expected

from a student during their k-8 education varies widely. The majority of students come from the New Haven school system. We also have a mix of student from various suburban school as well as private schools.

Students would also need to choose if the story will be reset in time. Would it be helpful to set the characters in a more modern context? Would setting the characters in a more modern setting make it easier for students to relate to the story? This is not unusual for both movie and theater productions of Shakespeare's work. Whether students choose the 11th century or the 21st, some aspects of the time period would need to be researched. Choosing a color palette to work with is also important. To a certain extent colors will be dictated by the time period, setting and mood of the story.

There is an excellent example of a *Macbeth* graphic novel by John Haward. This can be used as reference for the visual arts teacher, though I think exposure to those images might influence students too much. It has an effective use of color and composition both in terms of individual panels and overall page layout. The color palette shows a dark stormy Scotland while also using bright colors to draw in the reader. The construction of panels within the page make for a dynamic page layout and help lead the viewer through the action

I would show students *Romeo and Juliet* by John McDonald (Adapter), William Shakespeare (Author) and Clive Bryant (Editor) to show the basics of a graphic novel. (Kindle edition and could be projected on screen.) Most students have a basic idea of what happens in *Romeo and Juliet*. There are, visually, wonderful sword fights and examples of the overall vocabulary of the graphic novel. The illustrator also deals well with Juliet's death scene. She is shown in silhouette, which is something most students would not expect. I would keep borrowings to a minimum, so that imitation is not overly encouraged though students' sense of a range of possibilities would be increased. Students will come to the project with various levels of prior knowledge of both the play and the graphic novel form.

For visual reference there is also the possibility of showing book illustrators from the golden era of illustration. These illustrations are not similar in style to the graphic novel, but they do serve the same purpose. N.C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle and Maxfield Parrish illustrations are all excellent examples of illustrators who worked to create images that enhanced the story. N.C. Wyeth's work in particular shows examples of illustrating the right moment in the action. Scribners reissued a number of classic illustrated books by these illustrators. Titles include: *The Scottish Chiefs* by Jane Porter, *The Boy's King Arthur* by Sidney Lanier and *The Arabian Nights* edited by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora A. Smith.

I find it important to provide students with plenty of access to reference materials. There are excellent resource books used by professional illustrators. *The MacMillian Visual Dictionary* by Jean-Claude Corbeil and Ariane Archambault provides reference for over 3,500 different objects. Pictures include everything from street lights to buildings to various styles of clothing. There is also *Facial Expressions: A Visual Reference for Artists* by Mark Simon. This book has over 250 pages of different faces showing different emotions from various angles. This can be helpful in finding the right emotion for a character's face.

Google or Bing images are good resources. However if a student's search is not specific enough I find it can be time consuming. It is well known that illustrators (N.C. Wyeth and Norman Rockwell) used real life models. I have let students use other students for models and to pose for a reference photograph.

Students who are struggling with their drawing skills can set-up scenes and photograph them and work over them. Most students have phones with cameras. They can then import those pictures into Photoshop. Photoshop works on a system of layers. Black line might make up one layer while color would be on another layer. Thought and type bubbles would also be on one layer. This allows for easier editing of lines, colors and

the positioning of both type and graphics.

Students sometimes tell me they feel as though they are “cheating” if they are working over a photograph. Audrey Flack (Super Realism) was known to have set-up still life scenes and photographed them for her work. She would then turn these photos into slides and project them onto the canvas and paint over the projection, similar to camera obscura. <sup>4</sup> Camera obscura was used as drawing tool by artists during the Renaissance.

### **Macbeth: Act II scene i lines 1-30 and summary**

Sometime after midnight, just before Macbeth murders Duncan, Banquo and his son Fleance return to Macbeth’s castle. Banquo is weary, but he somehow cannot sleep. Macbeth unwillingly encounters Banquo and his son. Banquo seems surprised to see Macbeth is still awake. He hints that Macbeth should be asleep. Banquo points out that King Duncan has enjoyed Macbeth’s hospitality. He gives Macbeth a diamond, presumably a gift from Duncan to Lady Macbeth as a thank you for her hospitality. When Banquo references the witches’ prophecy, Macbeth replies he and Banquo will “speak further” at a later time. Macbeth and Banquo part ways.

Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing a torch before him

BANQUO

How goes the night, boy?

FLEANCE

The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.

BANQUO

And she goes down at twelve.

FLEANCE

I take’t, ‘tis later, sir.

BANQUO

Hold, take my sword. There’s husbandry in heaven;

Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers,

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature

Gives way to in repose!

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch

Give me my sword.

Who's there?

MACBETH

A friend.

BANQUO

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and

Sent forth great largess to your offices.

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up

In measureless content.

MACBETH

Being unprepared,

Our will became the servant to defect;

Which else should free have wrought.

BANQUO

All's well.

I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

To you they have show'd some truth.

MACBETH

I think not of them:

Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,

We would spend it in some words upon that business,

If you would grant the time.

BANQUO

At your kind'st leisure.



MACBETH

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,  
It shall make honour for you.

BANQUO

So I lose none

In seeking to augment it, but still keep

My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,

I shall be counsell'd.

MACBETH

Good repose the while!

BANQUO

Thanks, sir: the like to you!

Exeunt BANQUO and FLEANCE

The main question here would be what Banquo is trying to convey to Macbeth, and how Macbeth receives Banquo's words. Students should ask themselves questions such as: What does each character say to the other? What is hinted? What is hidden? Why? Banquo comments on the night being without light: "There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out." What is Banquo feeling or sensing? Does he sense that something is about to happen? Does he show this fear or concern in his facial expressions or mannerisms? How does the darkness act a force of evil, is the lack of "candles" (stars) in the heavens a premonition of something terrible to come. Can the darkness, visually, become its own character in the graphic panels? If so, who is more visually enveloped in the darkness, Banquo or Macbeth? Banquo talks about being troubled by his dreams, by the witches prophecies. Does Macbeth share Banquo's concerns? When Banquo says "I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters: To you they have show'd some truth." Macbeth responds "I think not of them:" What would Macbeth's facial expressions look like compared to Banquo's? Should Macbeth's facial expressions hint at what he is hiding? In terms of body language, should Macbeth have his back to Banquo, so that only the reader knows what Macbeth is really thinking? Students should be looking at each character's perspective.

Students would also need to address why Banquo feels the need to point out King Duncan's finer points, his kindness and generosity, Duncan's gifts to the household staff and his gift of a diamond to Lady Macbeth. What might Banquo be trying to convey to Macbeth?

### **Macbeth: Act II scene i lines 33-64 and summary**

Macbeth is anticipating Lady Macbeth's signal, a bell, as he moves closer to King Duncan's chambers. He is increasingly thinking about murdering the king and he is trying to prepare himself for the act. An imaginary dagger floats in front of him, leading him toward Duncan. Macbeth begins to question the appearance of the

dagger, he reaches out to grab it, but nothing is there. He even draws a real dagger from his belt and holds it up for comparison. The seen and the unseen, reality and imagination, are side by side. The dagger changes, becoming bloody, and Macbeth begins to think more murderous, predatory thoughts as shown through animal and mythological images and references. He hears the bell, and responds: "Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell which summons you to heaven, or to hell."

MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,

The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight? or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,

Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,

Which was not so before. There's no such thing:

It is the bloody business which informs

Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates

Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,

Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,

Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.

With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design

Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear

Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,

And take the present horror from the time,

Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

A bell rings

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.

Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

Exit

### **What visual questions might arise from Macbeth: Act II scene i**

The focus of this scene should be on Macbeth's internal process. This is his final submission to his murderous thoughts and to the act of murder itself. The visual questions revolve around how to interpret this powerful scene. The choices will come down to focus: Is Macbeth's tipping point caused by external forces - the night, the influence of his wife, the witches prophecies and more immediately, the dagger? The dagger seems so real that Macbeth actually attempts to grab it, what kind of atmosphere might be swirling around him. How might students make the illustrations take on an "other-worldly" appearance, by using the background as character?

Would the scene focus on Macbeth's internal influences? Should the dagger be shown at all or should it be assumed that this is just a product of Macbeth's "heat-oppressed brain?" What would someone in Macbeth's state of mind look like in terms of his facial expressions and mannerisms. Thought panels could be used to show what's going on in Macbeth's mind. What images, drawing on the text, might show such a troubled mind? Macbeth is on the verge of irrevocably changing his course in life; how might that play out visually in his thoughts?

### **Macbeth: Act IV scene iii lines 84 to 99 and summary**

Malcolm is testing Macduff to find out where Macduff's loyalties lie and how he feels about Macbeth. Malcolm and Macduff have come to England to join with the English and to depose Macbeth. Macduff has left his family behind, making Malcolm wonder if Macduff is in league with Macbeth. Malcolm, the rightful king, tests Macduff, telling Macduff what a horrible king he himself would make, an even more ruthless ruler than Macbeth. He says that he sees in himself " *All the particulars of vice so grafted That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth Will seem as pure as snow*"

MALCOLM

I grant him bloody,  
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,  
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,  
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust.

MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
To take upon you what is yours: you may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.  
We have willing dames enough: there cannot be  
That vulture in you, to devour so many  
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM

With this there grows  
In my most ill-composed affection such  
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,  
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels and this other's house:

And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more; that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF

This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root  
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;  
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will.  
Of your mere own: all these are portable,  
With other graces weigh'd.

MALCOLM

But I have none: the king-becoming graces,  
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,  
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,  
I have no relish of them, but abound  
In the division of each several crime,  
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should  
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth.

Students would need to decide whether to confine their visuals to Malcolm talking to a horrified Macduff or whether to draw what Malcolm is inventing. If the latter, the question would arise: How symbolically should lechery and avarice be represented? And a second, harder question: How might students convince the viewer, visually, that Malcolm is painting a false picture of himself?

Silhouetted characters in the foreground with the action in the background is one way to give the impression of a story being told. This technique could be useful in showing Malcolm's agenda, and Macduff's reactions: Would the student show what Macduff thinks as Malcolm is speaking?

Would Macduff look on as scenes of Malcolm's horrifying behavior enters his mind? Could Malcolm's temptations be shown in thought panels in a monochromatic or duotone color scheme? Should Malcolm's long list of horrible deeds be implied, for example showing some beautiful women in a thought panel in reference to Malcolm's thoughts of lecherous behavior? Would it be a good idea to show Malcolm's face in the foreground talking about the horrible king he would be with Macduff's horrified face in the background? What would Malcolm's face look like during the exchange? Would he let the audience in on his trickery - his test for Macduff? Considerations such as these are what will influence the viewer in the final product.

### **Macbeth: Act V scene iii lines 37 to 62 and summary**

The doctor has come to report to Macbeth on Lady Macbeth's condition. Lady Macbeth is so troubled by what she and her husband have done that she cannot sleep. Instead, she sleepwalks, reliving as she does the terrible events that have transpired. The doctor is trying to tell Macbeth that there is no cure because the cause is spiritual and metaphysical, and that only Lady Macbeth can cure herself.

Macbeth:

How does your patient, doctor?

Doctor:

Not so sick, my lord,

As she is troubled with thick coming fancies,

That keep her from her rest.

Macbeth:

Cure her of that.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,

Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,

Raze out the written troubles of the brain

And with some sweet oblivious antidote

Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff

Which weighs upon the heart?

Doctor:

Therein the patient

Must minister to himself.

Macbeth:

Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.

Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.

Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.

Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast

The water of my land, find her disease,

And purge it to a sound and pristine health,

I would applaud thee to the very echo,

That should applaud again.--Pull't off, I say.--

What rhubarb, cyme, or what purgative drug,

Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

Doctor:

Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation

Makes us hear something.

Macbeth:

Bring it after me.

I will not be afraid of death and bane,

Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Doctor:

[ *Aside* ] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,

Profit again should hardly draw me here. *Exeunt* .

Should thought panels be used to convey Lady Macbeth's condition, and Macbeth's processing of the doctor's news? What color would convey that type of madness? Would Macbeth be staring at the doctor intently to find out what the prognosis is or would he be too focused on what is to come? Is he pleading, or angry, or does he feel the situation with Lady Macbeth is too far gone at this point? Is it all he can do to hold himself together? Does Macbeth seem to be rushing towards his own destiny?

How would the students dramatize this scene? If Macbeth were in the foreground, what emotions should his

face convey to the reader? How would the doctor be reacting in the background? Is the doctor in an impossible situation? Student might choose to show the doctor in the foreground reacting to Macbeth's behavior in the background.

## Activities

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**Materials:** pencils, drawing paper, black sharpie markers, Photoshop, scanners, Wacom tablets and a *Macbeth* book for each student.

### Activity One

Students will look at the elements of a graphic novel (as previously discussed in the narrative). Students will look at *Romeo and Juliet* by John McDonald (Adapter), William Shakespeare (Author), Clive Bryant (Editor). Students will answer the questions below. Students will identify the basic elements of the graphic novel, mentioned earlier and then answer the questions below.

1. Description - What is visually happening in the scenes?
2. Analysis - How does the illustrator make use of composition? Is the page dynamic in the way it tells the story? Explain.
3. Interpretation - What is communicated by means of gesture? How does the illustrator convey emotion? How does the character's environment function? Does it function as a place for the character to be, or as an actual character its self? Explain. What is the perspective of the viewer?
4. Judgment - What aspects of the work do you consider the visual and/or conceptual strength of the work?

### Warm-up

As a warm-up activity the teacher will select faces from the *Facial Expressions: A Visual Reference for Artists* by Mark Simon to project on screen . These faces will show a range of emotions. Students will describe: What emotion does this face represent? Interpret: What the person's face might be communicating.

### Activity two

Initially, for each activity, students should create multiple quick sketches of each scene to determine what composition will work best.

Students will begin reading *Macbeth: Act II scene i* lines 1-30. The teacher will review the scene with students and discuss what is going on in the scene.

Students will break into two groups. One group will illustrate the scene from Macbeth's point of view, while the other group will illustrate the scene from Banquo's point of view. A note on point of view: Students should consider point of view as a graphic term, related to the visual focal point of the scene. For example, a scene from Banquo's visual standpoint may imply some of his thoughts and emotions.

When the students have finished with their graphic panels they will come back together to critique their work. Work will be divided into two sides: Banquo's point of view and Macbeth's. Again, students will establish a



visual perspective that will lead the reader to each character's internal perspective. Students will answer the following questions about their work:

1. Description - What is visually happening in the scenes?
2. Analysis - How does the illustrator make use of composition? Is the page dynamic in the way it tells the story? Explain. Do the colors work to convey the mood of the scene? Explain.
3. Interpretation - What is communicated by means of gesture? How does the illustrator convey emotion? How does the character's environment function: Is it a character its self or just an environment? Explain. Banquo mentions the lack of light in the night sky: How/how much does the illustrator show this in his or her work? What is the perspective of the viewer?
4. Judgment - What aspects of the work do you consider the visual and/or conceptual strength of the work? Is the story better, visually, when it's told from Macbeth's point of view or Banquo's? Explain your point of view and support it with examples.

### Activity 3

#### ***Macbeth* : Act II scene i lines 33-64**

Students will begin with the scene: *Macbeth*: Act II scene i lines 33-64. The teacher will review the scene with students and discuss what is happening. For this scene students will be dealing with the theme of "Seen and Unseen," and they will have to make more choices in terms of what details to emphasize accordingly.

When the students have finished with their graphic panels they will come back together to critique their work. Students will answer the following questions about their work:

1. Description - What is visually happening in the scenes?
2. Analysis - How does the illustrator make use of composition? Is the page dynamic in the way it tells the story? Explain. How effectively do the colors work to convey the mood of the scene?
3. Interpretation - What is communicated by means of gesture? How does the illustrator convey emotion? How does the character's environment function? Is it a character itself or just an environment? Did the illustrator choose to illustrate the dagger? Why or why not? What is the perspective of the viewer?
4. Judgment - What aspects of the work do you consider the visual and/or conceptual strength of the work? Did anyone choose not to include the imaginary dagger? Why/why not? Visually speaking, is it better to leave the dagger in or leave it in? Explain your point of view and support with examples.

### Activity 4

#### ***Macbeth* : Act IV scene iii lines 84 to 99**

Students will begin reading *Macbeth*: Act IV scene iii lines 84 to 99. The teacher will review the scene with students and discuss what is going on in the scene.

Students will break into two groups. One group will illustrate the scene from Macduff's visual point of reference, while the other group will illustrate the scene from Malcolm's visual point of reference. Students should be reminded to consider how they will illustrate the ruse from Malcolm's speech about being an even worse king than Macbeth. How will students illustrate what Malcolm is trying to project to Macduff? Will Malcolm let the reader in on what he knows to be the truth? How far should they go in illustrating Malcolm's purported lecherous traits? How will students visually indicate an interpretation of the degree of Malcolm's deceptions of Macduff? When Malcolm lists the qualities of a good king, will this moment be shown through

more of a type solution or a combination of character and type?

When the students have finished with their graphic panels they will come back together to critique their work. Work will be divided into two sides Macduff's point of view and Malcolm's. Students will answer the following questions about their work.

1. Description - What is visually happening in the scenes? Are any thought panels used? Why/why not?
2. Analysis - How does the illustrator make use of composition? Is the page dynamic in the way it tells the story? Explain.
3. Interpretation - What is communicated by means of gesture? How does the illustrator convey emotion? Does it effectively convey the very different emotions of each character? Explain. How does the character's environment function? As a character itself or simply as an environment? Explain. How does Macduff react to Malcolm's test? What is the perspective of the viewer?
4. Judgment - What aspects of the work do you consider the visual and/or conceptual strength of the work? Is the story better, visually, when it's told from Macduff's point of view or from Malcolm's? Does Malcolm let the viewer in on his test of Macduff? Explain. If thought panels are used, how effective are they and does the color scheme support the visual image? Explain your answer and support it up examples.

## Activity 5

### ***Macbeth* : Act V scene iii lines 37 to 62**

Students will begin by reading *Macbeth*: Act V scene iii lines 37 to 62. The teacher will review the scene with students and discuss what is going on in the scene.

For this scene students will again be taking two different points of view. Students who make Macbeth the visual focal point of their illustrations will need to make decisions about his facial expressions and mannerisms. Should Macbeth's expression show his cynicism about medicine and the doctor's ability to help his wife? What physical details could suggest such an affect? Does Macbeth look different from Act II scene i lines 1-30? So much has happened since he first heard the prophecies: Has his situation taken a toll on his physical appearance?

Students who make the doctor the visual focal point of their illustrations will need to make decisions about his facial expressions and mannerisms as well. How is the doctor reacting to Macbeth? We already know the doctor believes there is no cure for Lady Macbeth, does he view Macbeth as lunatic as well? Do you get the impression the doctor will be leaving as soon as possible?

When the students have finished with their graphic panels they will come back together to critique their work. Work will be divided into two sides: Macbeth's point of view and the doctor's. Students will answer the following questions about their work.

1. Description - What is visually happening in the scenes? Are any thought panels used? Why/why not?
2. Analysis - How does the illustrator make use of composition? Is the page dynamic in the way it tells the story? Explain. Do the colors support the emotions in the scene? Explain.
3. Interpretation - What is communicated by means of gesture? How does the illustrator convey emotion? Does it effectively convey the very different emotions of each character? How do Macbeth's expressions compare with the doctor's? Environment: How do certain aspects of the scene's environment help to influence the mood and the plot?

4. Judgment – What aspects of the work do you consider the visual and/or conceptual strength of the work? Is the story better, visually, when it’s told from Macbeth’s point of view or the doctor’s? Justify. Did anyone include images of Lady Macbeth? Why/why not? Does including Lady Macbeth make the graphic panel stronger visual and in terms of the information it conveys to the viewer? Explain your answer and support it with solid reasoning.

## Background

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Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School demographics.

I am a part-time visual arts teacher at Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School (Co-op), an inter-district magnet high school. I teach Photoshop and Graphic Design classes. These classes mix visual arts and technology as well as Art History, Graphic Design/Advertising and simple animation. Unlike most of the other visual arts teachers, I teach students from all of the different Arts. Approximately 65% of the students are from the city of New Haven and 35% come from surrounding towns. The students are accepted to the school via a lottery system at Co-op and choose an area of the Arts to study. They will continue in this area of study for all four years. The students may choose from music; choral or instrumental, visual art, theater, creative writing, or dance.

Students come from the surrounding districts as well as New Haven to attend Co-op rather than their local public high schools, primarily because they are interested in studying the arts in a smaller setting. Co-op has approximately 624 students enrolled in grades 9–12. The student population is 65 % of female and 35% male, 49% Black students, 24% Hispanic, 26% White and 1 % Asian American students. The main languages spoken are English and Spanish with 1 % English language learners (ELLs). The school has 7% students with special education needs. The proportion of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches is 66%, which is higher than the state average.

Co-op is located one block from two of Yale University’s museums, the Yale University Art Gallery and the Yale Center for British Art. Teachers often take their students on mini field trips to the galleries. Co-op also has a working relationship with Yale University and Shubert Theater.

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## Appendix: Implementing Common Core Standards

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Currently, New Haven follows the National Core Arts Standards that instills a four-layered approach for a holistic and comprehensive Art education experience that includes Creating, Presenting, Responding and Connecting.

I have listed the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, Reading: Literature, Grade 11-12 as well as the Core Arts Standards for visual arts. The intent of this unit is to combine English literature with visual arts to create an interdisciplinary learning experience for students.

### Visual Arts Standards

Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Producing (media arts): Realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work. Anchor Standard #5. Develop and refine artistic work for presentation. Anchor Standard #6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning. Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Anchor Standard #9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context. Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

## **English Language Arts Standards, Reading: Literature, Grade 11-12**

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7

Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

## **Footnotes**

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4. Meriam Webster Dictionary, Camera Obscura: a darkened enclosure having an aperture usually provided with a lens through

which light from external objects enters to form an image of the objects on the opposite surface. Information about Renaissance artists and the use of camera obscura can be easily accessed on-line.

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