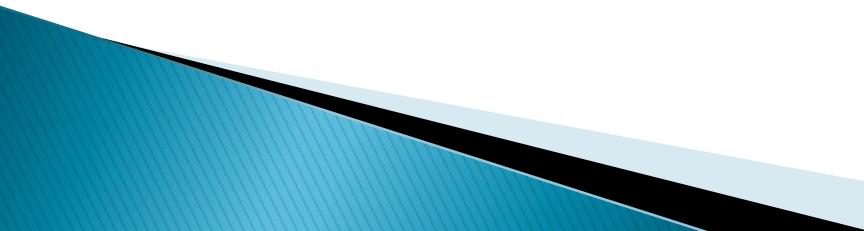


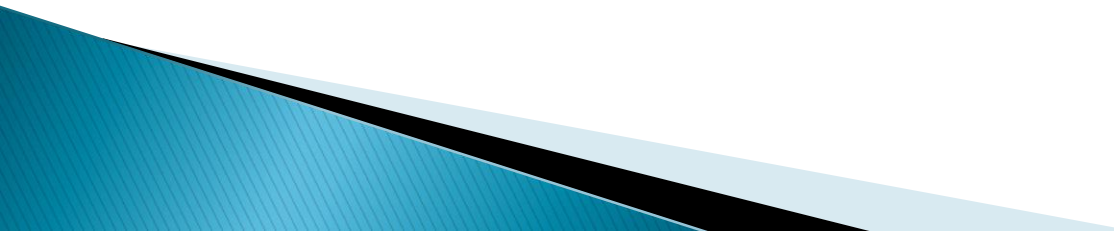
Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

- ▶ **Written** in the early 17th century during Shakespeare's "Tragic Period."
- ▶ **Tragedy:** a literary work depicting serious events in which the main character, who is often high-ranking and dignified, comes to an unhappy end.
- ▶ **Source:** Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577) about a Scottish king who ruled from 1040–1057.
- ▶ **Settings:** Scotland; England
- ▶ **Blank Verse:** almost all of Macbeth is written in *blank verse*, or *unrhymed iambic pentameter*.

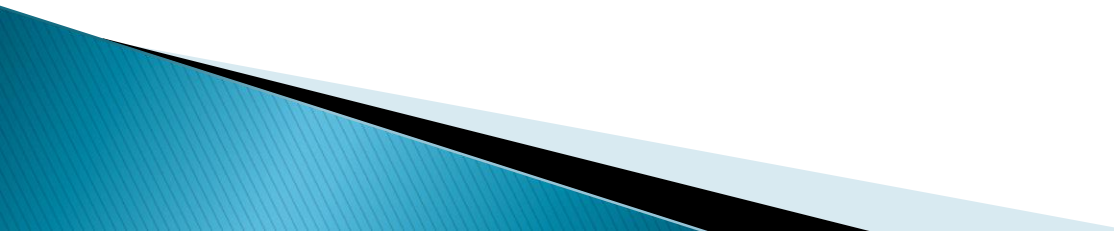
Literary Techniques in *Macbeth*

- ▶ Allusion
 - ▶ Antithesis
 - ▶ Aphorism
 - ▶ Aside
 - ▶ Character(ization)
 - ▶ Comic Relief
 - ▶ Foil
 - ▶ Imagery
 - ▶ Irony
 - ▶ Metaphor
 - ▶ Paradox
 - ▶ Pun
 - ▶ Simile
 - ▶ Soliloquy
 - ▶ Suspense
- 

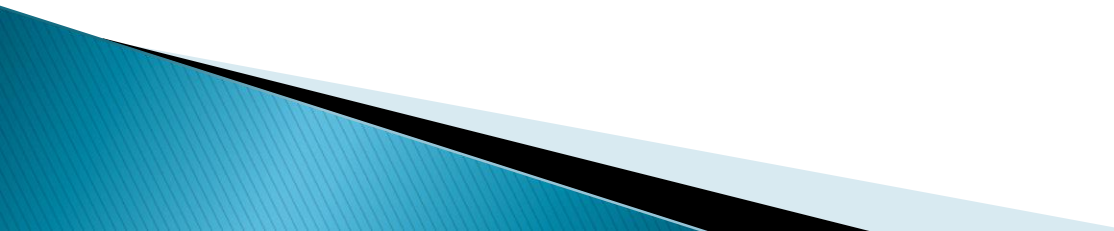
Macbeth: Main Characters

- ▶ **Macbeth:** A Scottish nobleman who murders Duncan, the King, in order to seize his throne. Once he becomes king, he quickly becomes a tyrant and is killed. The play charts the progress of evil as it overtakes his character.
 - ▶ **Lady Macbeth:** At the beginning of the play, she is the ambitious, cold-hearted one, urging Macbeth to follow his ambitions through murder. Eventually though, she succumbs to feelings of guilt and regret.
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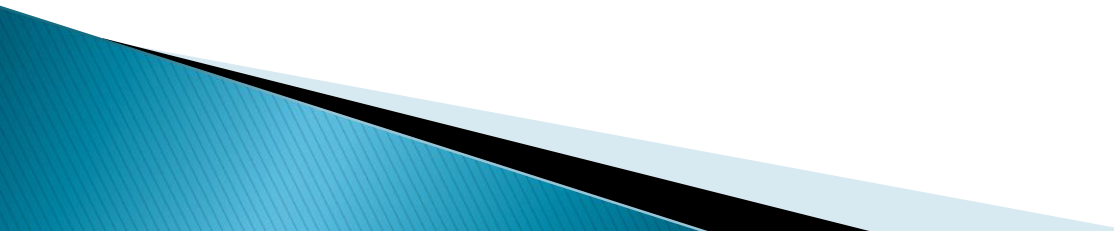
Macbeth: Main Characters

- ▶ **Banquo:** Another Scottish nobleman, Banquo also receives a favorable prediction from the witches, but he refuses to take action to see that destiny fulfilled.
 - ▶ **Fleance:** Banquo's young son who flees when Banquo is murdered. Because he lives, Macbeth fears that Banquo's line will fulfill the witches' prediction by becoming kings.
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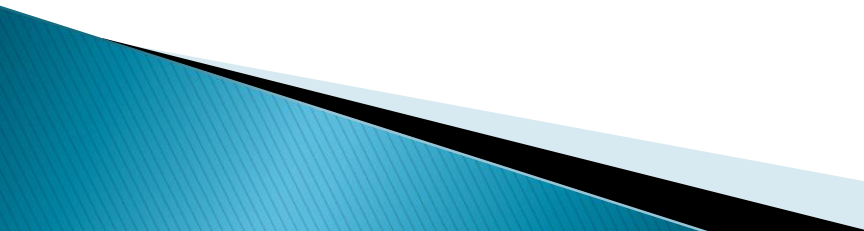
Macbeth: Main Characters

- ▶ **King Duncan:** Trusting and naïve, Duncan never suspects that Macbeth and his wife are plotting his death. He misreads both of them, just as he had misinterpreted the treacherous Thane of Cawdor.
 - ▶ **Malcolm:** Duncan's son and heir, Malcolm is everything a king should be: virtuous, pious, chaste, modest, and loyal.
- 

Macbeth: Main Characters

- ▶ **Witches:** These supernatural figures offer deceptive predictions that serve to ignite Macbeth's evil intentions.
 - ▶ **Macduff:** An honorable Scottish nobleman, Macduff opposes Macbeth and supports Malcolm as the new king, but only after determining that the prince is worthy.
- 

Macbeth: Key Themes

- ▶ **Fate vs. free will:** Does Macbeth have any control over his fate? Do the witches represent a destiny that can't be avoided, or do they simply provide an opportunity for Macbeth to reveal his character and create his own fate?
 - ▶ **Actions and Consequences:** What are the consequences of Macbeth's actions? What would have been the consequences if he had taken a different course of action?
- 

Macbeth: Key Themes

- ▶ **Appearance vs. reality:** How can one tell good from evil? Friends from enemies? Why does Duncan think that Macbeth and his wife are trustworthy when they are plotting his overthrow?
- ▶ **The nature of evil:** Is evil a supernatural force that infects people? Or is it part of human nature? What happens to Macbeth once he commits himself to evil actions? What happens to the world around him?

Macbeth: Key Themes

- ▶ **The nature of kingship:** What determines who is a rightful king? Can someone like Macbeth simply seize power? Or does a leader need to win the loyalty of the subjects? Must a king be virtuous, like Malcolm? Or simply powerful, like Macbeth?
- ▶ **The effect of guilt on the human mind:** Can people take actions they know are wrong and remain unaffected? How are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth changed by their actions? Do they suffer psychologically even when they are not caught?

Macbeth: Key Imagery

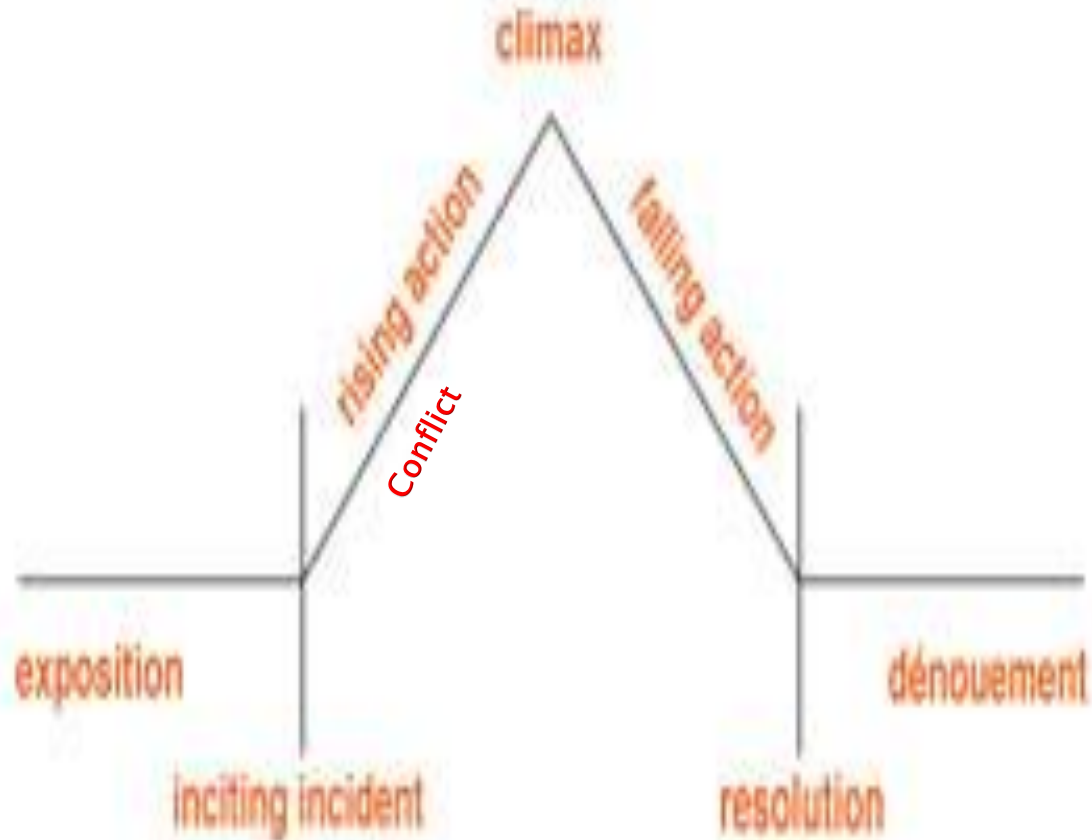
- ▶ **Blood:** (*It will have blood, they say, blood will have blood.*)
- ▶ **Darkness & Night:** (*And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.*)
- ▶ **Clothes:** (*Why do you dress me in borrowed robes?*)
- ▶ **Sleep:** (*...Sleep no more: Macbeth does murder sleep,...*)
- ▶ **Hands:** (*Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?*)

Macbeth: Key Imagery

- ▶ **Grain/Seed/Growing:** (*I have begun to plant thee and will labour to make thee full of growing.*)
- ▶ **Hell:** (*Not in the legions/ Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd/ In evils to top Macbeth.*)
- ▶ **Sorcery & Supernatural forces:** (the witches, the apparitions, Banquo's ghost)
- ▶ **Opposites that are indistinguishable:** (Paradoxes—*Fair is foul and foul is fair.*)

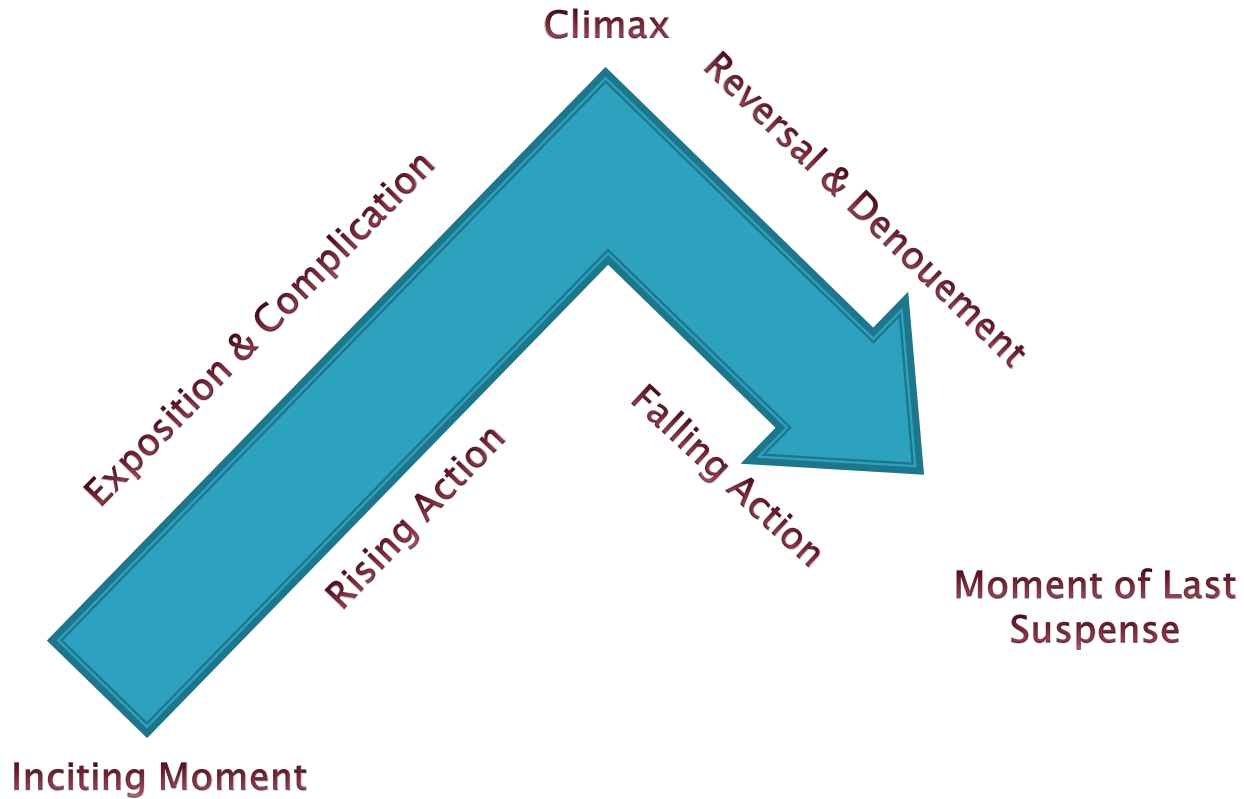
Dramatic Plot Patterns

Classical Plot Tradition (in 5 acts)

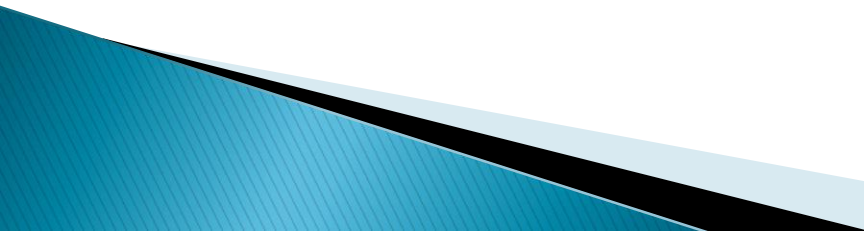


Shakespearean Tragedy

“Freytag Pyramid” Plot Structure



Recurring Patterns & Devices in Shakespeare's plays

- ▶ Contrasting Worlds
 - ▶ Rise of one character at the Expense of another
 - ▶ Foils: Parallel Characters who face similar situations or choices but have different reactions or outcomes
 - ▶ Disguise & Deceptions
 - ▶ Supernatural Aspects
 - ▶ Redemption &/or Reconciliation
- 

Elizabethan Tragic Hero Traits

- ▶ A member of the “power class” by birth, conquest, or usurpation
- ▶ A more fully realized human being than others (heightened powers and destiny)
- ▶ A character whose “Fate” is a combination of what others do and what he or she chooses to do
- ▶ has a “**Tragic Flaw**”, a weakness or character flaw
- ▶ Strong individualist, sometimes to the point of extremism
- ▶ Representative of “Universal Humankind”
- ▶ Intelligent and sensitive
- ▶ Learns through suffering
- ▶ Isolated
- ▶ Demonstrates personal courage in acceptance of death or annihilation