

Women in Shakespeare: Lady Macbeth

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Directions: After reading and analyzing Lady Macbeth’s Act I soliloquy and primary documents about the history of Shakespeare and women in Nashville, you will work in groups to write an argument essay about gender roles that you will present to the class. **How have women been perceived historically and how has the role of women changed throughout time?**

Standards: 11-12.L.VAU.5, 11-12.RL.KID.1, 11-12.RL.CS.5, 12.RL.RRTC.10, 11-12.SL.CC.1, 11-12.SL.CC.2, 11-12.SL.CC.3, 11-12.SL.PKI.4, 11-12.SL.PKI.5, 11-12.W.TTP.1, 11-12.W.PDW.6

What You Will Need:

1. Lady Macbeth’s soliloquy from Act I, scene 5
2. [Cultural Shift: Women's Roles in the 1950s](#)
3. Margaret Webster production of *Macbeth*, playbill from 1949
4. [The Ryman's Woman-Led Legacy: Lula C. Naff](#)
5. Virginia Woolf “Shakespeare’s Sister” from *A Room of One’s Own*

Essential Questions: [Womens Studies Map](#)

1. In what ways are gender roles used in society and what are their purposes?
2. To what extent do gender roles inhibit and/or liberate individuals?

Key Ideas: [Womens Studies Map](#)

- Gender roles vary widely between and among cultures and affect societies in many ways.
- Women have been the target of oppression based on gender, race class and ethnicity through gender stratification and stereotyping.
- The oppression of women in social, political, and economic systems continues today throughout the world.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Lady Macbeth say, “unsex me here” in her Act I speech? What does that mean? What does she want?
2. What was the role of women in Shakespeare’s time? Remember, women couldn’t even act on stage at that time!
3. What was the role of women in the 1950s? How unusual do you think it was for a woman (Lula Naff) to run a theater such as the Ryman auditorium or for a woman (Margaret Webster) to stage a production of *Macbeth* in 1949?
4. What was Virginia Woolf’s argument about women in “Shakespeare’s Sister”?
5. In your opinion, what is the role of women today? How different, if at all, would the character of Lady Macbeth be if she were living today? Could she/would she kill King Duncan herself?

Products

1. Argument essay (1-2 pages with a Works Cited)
2. Presentation (5-10 slides with a Works Cited)

Rubrics

[TN Argument Writing Rubric 9-12](#)

[AP English Literature and Composition Scoring Rubrics, Effective Fall 2019](#)