

## English 9

### How to Read *Macbeth* During Distance Learning

First, it's not "Old English." Old English is an actual different language. Shakespeare is modern English, really, just 400 years old. And stylized sometimes into poetry.

Here are some tips for reading on your own:

- Don't read on your own. If possible, read on the phone with a classmate; read in the living room with your sibling. Even if you are reading with someone who knows less about reading Shakespeare than you do, getting the words into the air is important.
- Get a line reading. The edition of *Macbeth* that we have, the Folger edition, has great notes. When you really don't understand a word, it is probably glossed in the book.
- Just keep swimming. As I mention in my introductory screencast, frequently Shakespeare will say something with amazing imagery, getting it just right. And then he will say it again in simpler language. If you don't understand, keep going.
- Annotate. Keep track of ideas, images, and patterns.
- Use the study questions. The study questions will highlight the most important ideas—sometimes you can wait and get a less important line reading later.
- Don't be afraid to laugh. Shakespeare is funny. The tragedies use humor to lighten the mood (in order to darken it even more a little later), to remind you of the humanity of the characters, and to delay the climax of the plot.
- After you have been all the way through an act, watch a production of it. Brookewood has subscribed to Digital Theatre Plus, and I will post links for you to specific scenes once we have finished an act.

\*\*\*\*\*

Should you throw the book across the room and read a commercial summary? No, you should not. You are a maturing reader in a class. Write down what questions you have; read the material again; look up a word—but the only way to learn to read Shakespeare is to keep reading it.

- After you have tried to read out loud, consider an audiobook if you really need someone to express the words for you to be able to follow. Listen to the audiobook, though, with the book in front of you. Stop periodically to annotate so you remember what has been said—or the emotion that seems to accompany it.