

The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act V, by William Shakespeare

Literary Analysis: Comparing Heroes

In a previous lesson, you analyzed the central conflict in an excerpt from *Morte d'Arthur*, and compared it to the conflict between Macbeth and Banquo in Act III of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Now that you have finished reading *Macbeth*, revisit that comparison. How does knowing the outcome of *The Tragedy of Macbeth* change your views, if at all? In what ways are King Arthur and Macbeth comparable figures? In what ways are they not? (Keep in mind the definition of a tragic hero as one with a fatal character flaw.)

DIRECTIONS: Compare and contrast King Arthur and Macbeth by answering the questions. Write your answers on the lines provided.

- 1. How are the outcomes of *Morte d'Arthur* and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* alike? How are they different?

- 2. How do these outcomes reflect the difference between the central characters?

- 3. What makes Macbeth a tragic hero?

- 4. Is King Arthur a hero or a tragic hero? Explain.

- 5. Imagine that you want to make a Shakespearean tragedy out of *Morte d'Arthur*. How would you do it?
