

## 10.4.2

## Lesson 24

## Introduction

In this lesson, students view and analyze *Throne of Blood*, Akira Kurosawa's 1957 film adaptation of *Macbeth*, in order to compare Kurosawa's presentation of the opening scenes, Act 1.1 through Act 1.3 of the original play (the first 20:09 minutes of the film). Students consider what is absent or changed in the film version of the opening scenes. They then explore how Kurosawa's representation might influence their understanding of Shakespeare's setting of these scenes and introduction of the characters. As they view the film, students record their observations on the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool. Students use their observations as the basis for a discussion about how Kurosawa develops and interprets the first three scenes of *Macbeth* through character development, and the use of setting and cinematic choices. Student learning is assessed through independent completion of the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of the lesson.

For homework, students write a paragraph in response to the following prompt: What does Kurosawa choose to emphasize or omit in his treatment of the opening three scenes of *Macbeth*? Analyze the impact of these choices. As an optional extension homework, students may respond to the following question, using the *Throne of Blood* Homework Tool: Reread the Witches' dialogue from Act 1.3, lines 1–38 of *Macbeth* and the lyrics of the spirit's song from *Throne of Blood* and analyze how these two texts develop mood.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.7	Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux-Arts" and Breughel's <i>Landscape with the Fall of Icarus</i> ).
Addressed Standard(s)	
SL.9-10.1.a-e	<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other</p>


	<p>research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p>b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.</p> <p>c. Propel discussions by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</p> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.</p> <p>e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.</p>
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## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed through completion of the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of the lesson. Students use the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool to respond to the following focus question, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the film.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you notice about the characters, setting, and cinematic choices?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>① For a High Performance Response, see the Model Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of this lesson.</p>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mutinies (v.) – revolts against authority</li> <li>garrison (n.) – military camp, fort, or base</li> <li>abdicate (v.) – leave the position of being a king or queen</li> <li>karma (n.) – the force created by a person's actions that some people believe causes good or bad</li> </ul>

<p>things to happen to that person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sovereign (n.) – monarch; a king, queen, or other supreme ruler</li> <li>realm (n.) – kingdom</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>castle* (n.) – large building usually with high, thick walls and towers that was built in the past to protect against attack</li> <li>haunted (adj.) – lived in or visited by ghosts</li> <li>perished (v.) – died or was killed</li> <li>web* (n.) – net made from silk threads woven together by a spider</li> <li>fortresses* (n.) – places that are protected against attack</li> <li>commander (n.) – person who is in charge of a group of people</li> <li>forest* (n.) – thick growth of trees and bushes that covers a large area</li> <li>maze* (n.) – complicated and confusing system of connecting passages</li> <li>rank (n.) – position in a society, organization, group, etc.</li> </ul> <p> *Consider providing students with a visual aid to support these definitions.</p>

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p><b>Standards &amp; Text:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RL.9-10.7, SL.9-10.1.a-e</li> <li>Text: <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 1.1–1.3</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Sequence:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Film Viewing</li> <li>4. Group Discussion</li> <li>5. Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 15%</li> <li>3. 50%</li> <li>4. 15%</li> <li>5. 10%</li> </ol>

6. Closing

6. 5%

## Materials

- Copies of the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool for each student
- Excerpt from Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (00:00 – 20:09)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.4.1 Lesson 1)
- Copies of the *Throne of Blood* Homework Tool for each student (optional)

## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.7. In this lesson, students explore how Kurosawa uses character, setting, and cinematic choices to interpret the first three scenes of *Macbeth*. Students engage in a discussion and complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out the results of their search for Lesson 23 homework. (Conduct a brief search to find five interesting facts about Akira Kurosawa or samurai films to share with the class.) Ask students

to form pairs to discuss and share their findings. Each pair should contain one student who has conducted a search into Kurosawa and one student who has conducted a search into samurai cinema.

● Student responses regarding Akira Kurosawa may include:

- Akira Kurosawa was a Japanese filmmaker who lived from March 23, 1910 to September 6, 1998.
- Kurosawa's father, Isamu, was a member of a former samurai family from Akita Prefecture.
- As a boy of 13, Kurosawa witnessed the aftermath of an earthquake in Tokyo, and this influenced his later work in which he often confronted unpleasant realities.
- At the age of 23, Kurosawa lost his older brother, Heigo, who committed suicide.
- After World War II, Kurosawa was very influenced by democratic ideas during the American occupation of Japan.
- Kurosawa was most famous for samurai films such as *The Seven Samurai* (1954).
- In 1957, Kurosawa directed *Throne of Blood*, an adaptation of Macbeth set in medieval Japan.
- In 1990, Kurosawa received the Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement.

● Student responses regarding samurai cinema may include:

- The term samurai cinema refers to films about the medieval and early-modern military of the nobility of Japan.
- Samurai cinema is called *chanbara* in Japanese, meaning "sword-fighting films."
- Samurai films are usually set during the Tokugawa era (1600–1868), and often focus on the end of an entire way of life for the samurai, as they deal with changes to their status resulting from a changing society.
- Samurai films changed a lot following World War II. Before the war, samurai films tended to be dramas rather than action films, but after World War II they became more action-based with darker and more violent characters who were often physically and psychologically scarred.
- A famous director of samurai films was Akira Kurosawa.
- Samurai films often deal with the idea of *bushido*, the code of honor to follow the samurai's leader that sets samurai warriors apart. Samurai were supposed to be skilled in warfare and martial arts and ready to defend their honor even to death. Samurai who failed to do so might choose to commit suicide in order to save reputation or "face," or to take revenge in the case of a loss of someone the samurai cared about.
- The style of samurai films is very different from Western films; the acting as well as the action tends to be more stylized and formal.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Film Viewing

50%

Distribute the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool. Inform students that they are going to use this tool to organize their observations about the film and that they will turn in their completed tools at the end of the lesson. Instruct students to make notes during the film, recording their observations about the characters in the first column, about the setting in the second column, and about the cinematic choices that the director makes in the third column.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion on the following question:

**What decisions might a director make about characters, setting, and structural choices in a film?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- A director might decide to dress the characters a certain way.
- A director might direct actors to use certain gestures or to play their part in a particular manner.
- A director might make such choices as which character gets most screen time.
- A director might choose a particular setting for the film.
- A director might choose the position and angle of the camera.
- A director might choose who or what is framed by the camera.
- A director might make decisions about lighting; for example, the director decides on whom or what the light shines or does not shine.
- A director might choose to use a soundtrack or sound effects.

Post or project the following focus question for students to consider as they view the film:

**What do you notice about the characters, setting, and cinematic choices?**

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding prompts to support students in their viewing:

**Look at the characters, their clothing, and the way they act. Look at when and where the story happens. Look at how the movie camera and lighting are used.**

Transition students to the film viewing. Show the opening of *Throne of Blood* (00:00 to 20:09).

- ▶ Students view the opening of *Throne of Blood* and record their observations on the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool.

## Activity 4: Group Discussion

15%

Instruct students to form the small groups established in 10.4.2 Lesson 1. Post or project the following question for groups to discuss before sharing out with the class:

### What do you notice about the characters, setting, and cinematic choices?

- ① Consider reminding students that this is an opportunity to apply standard SL.9-10.1.a-e by participating effectively in a collaborative discussion. Students may especially focus on setting goals for the discussion, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement, and making new connections in light of new evidence and reasoning.

▶ Student groups discuss the focus question.

☞ See the Model Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding questions:

Where is the scene set and how does this impact the drama?

How do the costumes the actors wear develop their characters?

How do the gestures of the actors develop their characters?

How does the director choose to use lighting?

How does the director choose to use close ups?

How does the director choose to frame the action?

What is the impact of sound effects and music?

☞ See the Model Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 5: Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool

10%

Instruct students to complete the Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool independently, adding any additional notes based on their discussions.

- See the Model Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.

## Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

**What does Kurosawa choose to emphasize or omit in his treatment of the opening three scenes of *Macbeth*? Analyze the impact of these choices.**

Ask students to use vocabulary from the unit so far in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following optional extension homework to deepen students' understanding: Respond in writing to the following question using the *Throne of Blood* Homework Tool.

**Reread the Witches' dialogue from Act 1.3, lines 1–38 of *Macbeth* and the lyrics of the spirit's song from *Throne of Blood* and analyze how these two texts develop mood.**

- ① If necessary, remind students that *mood* is the general atmosphere or feeling of a scene.
- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

**What does Kurosawa choose to emphasize or omit in his treatment of the opening three scenes of *Macbeth*? Analyze the impact of these choices.**

**Optional Extension Homework:** Respond in writing to the following question using the *Throne of Blood* Homework Tool.

**Reread the Witches' dialogue from Act 1.3, lines 1–38 of *Macbeth* and the lyrics of the spirit's song from *Throne of Blood* and analyze how these two texts develop mood.**

## Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to record your observations about Kurosawa's treatment of *Macbeth* in *Throne of Blood*.

**Focus Question:** What do you notice about the characters, setting and cinematic choices?

Character Development	Setting	Cinematic Choices
<i>e.g., Who is in each scene? Who gets most screen time? How do the actors portray their characters? Are they dramatic? Are they reserved?</i>	<i>e.g., Where is this scene set? What do you notice about this environment? What do you notice about the time and place?</i>	<i>e.g., Is there a soundtrack? What do you notice about how the camera changes position at different moments in the scene? What is the camera angle? What or who is being framed? On who or what does light shine or not shine?</i>

**Vocabulary:**

- mutinies (v.) – revolts against authority
- garrison (n.) – military camp, fort, or base
- abdicate (v.) – leave the position of being a king or queen
- karma (n.) – the force created by a person's actions that some people believe causes good or bad things to happen to that person
- sovereign (n.) – monarch; a king, queen, or other supreme ruler
- realm (n.) – kingdom

**Words for Additional Support**

- castle (n.) – large building usually with high, thick walls and towers that was built in the past to protect against attack
- haunted (adj.) – lived in or visited by ghosts
- perished (v.) – died or was killed
- web (n.) – net made from silk threads woven together by a spider
- fortresses (n.) – places that are protected against attack
- commander (n.) – person who is in charge of a group of people
- forest (n.) - thick growth of trees and bushes that covers a large area
- maze (n.) – complicated and confusing system of connecting passages
- rank (n.) – position in a society, organization, group, etc.

## Model Kurosawa Film Viewing Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to record your observations about Kurosawa's treatment of *Macbeth* in *Throne of Blood*.

**Focus Question:** What do you notice about the characters, setting, and cinematic choices?

Character Development	Setting	Cinematic Choices
<i>e.g., Who is in each scene? Who gets most screen time? What are the characters wearing? How do the actors portray their characters? Are they dramatic? Are they reserved?</i>	<i>e.g., Where is this scene set? What do you notice about this environment? What do you notice about the time and place?</i>	<i>e.g., Is there a soundtrack? What do you notice about how the camera changes position at different moments in the scene? What is the camera angle? What or who is being framed? On who or what does light shine or not shine?</i>
Kurosawa begins the film without the Witches; instead, the viewer hears an unnerving chanting by an unseen chorus. This creates a sense of doom, as it is clear from the words of the chant that something bad is going to happen, but we do not know exactly what. This increases the impact of the spirit's appearance when she does arrive, as it makes her appearance more mysterious and unexpected.	The viewer is invited to look upon "the ruins of Spider's Web Castle." The setting is very isolated; for a long time the camera stays on empty countryside with nobody in sight. When Kurosawa does show the castle, it is isolated, with only a single rider riding up to it. At the beginning of the film, the weather is frightening and violent: there is a strong wind that whistles across the mountains and fog	The chanting on the soundtrack creates an ominous and creepy mood as the film opens. Kurosawa also uses sound effects to indicate the stormy weather; the viewer hears the sound of the wind whistling, and in the forest scene, the sound of thunder. The use of sound effects in the forest scene includes the sound of cackling voices as Washizu shoots his arrow into the trees,

Character Development	Setting	Cinematic Choices
<p>The characters in the fortress scene are all men and all dressed in armor, indicating that this is a military environment. The armor also shows that the film is set in the past.</p> <p>The style of acting is very dramatic, with a lot of shouting, which indicates the urgency of the situation and the heroism of Washizu and Miki.</p> <p>In the first appearance of Miki and Washizu, it is clear from their clothing that they are soldiers: they are dressed in armor and carrying weapons. Also, the actors playing them have a stern and angry manner.</p> <p>We hear the spirit before we see her; she is singing in a soft, haunting way, which emphasizes her creepiness and the unsettling lyrics about death and the meaninglessness of life. The words of the spirit's song are much grimmer and more unsettling than the Witches' conversation about the mischief that they are planning. The fact that we hear her before seeing her also makes her seem more mysterious and supernatural, as if she appears out of nowhere.</p>	<p>makes it difficult to see anything.</p> <p>In the scene in the forest, the thunder and lightning create a tense, uneasy atmosphere.</p>	<p>which creates the sense that the forest is an evil character in its own right in the film.</p> <p>By filming Washizu and Miki through the trees, Kurosawa creates the impression that they are being watched by an evil force, again making the forest a character in the film.</p> <p>The bright lighting on the spirit, while everything around is dark indicates that there is something supernatural about her.</p> <p>The shot stays on the pile of corpses while Miki and Washizu leave the shot, reinforcing the impression that the forest is a dangerous place and that there is something very wrong.</p>

Character Development	Setting	Cinematic Choices
<p>There is only one spirit, as opposed to the Three Witches in <i>Macbeth</i>.</p> <p>The spirit is spinning when Miki and Washizu find her, an image which contributes to the idea that she is part of or represents the forest itself, as it associates her with the “Spider’s Web” of the forest’s name.</p> <p>Unlike the Witches, the spirit does not address Miki and Washizu at first. She waits for them to address her, which changes our idea about the responsibility of the different characters; rather than being hailed by the Witches as in Shakespeare, they hear the spirit and seek her out.</p> <p>Washizu’s reaction to the Witches is different to <i>Macbeth</i>’s. Washizu first hesitates and then appears to be angry with the spirit, but does not seem to be sincere in his anger and claim of loyalty to the Sovereign of Spider’s Web Castle.</p>		

**Vocabulary:**

- mutinies (v.) – revolts against authority
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**Words for Additional Support**

- castle (n.) – large building usually with high, thick walls and towers that was built in the past to protect against attack
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- rank (n.) – position in a society, organization, group, etc.

## Throne of Blood Homework Tool

Macbeth Act 1.3, Lines 1–38	Spirit Song from <i>Throne of Blood</i>	Vocabulary
<p><i>Thunder. Enter the three Witches.</i></p> <p><b>First Witch</b> Where hast thou been sister?</p> <p><b>Second Witch</b> Killing swine.</p> <p><b>Third Witch</b> Sister, where thou?</p> <p><b>First Witch</b> A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap And munched and munched and munched. "Give me," quoth I.</p> <p>"Aroint thee, witch," the rump-fed runnion cries. Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' <i>Tiger</i>, But in a sieve I'll thither sail, And, like a rat without a tail, I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.</p> <p><b>Second Witch</b> I'll give thee a wind.</p> <p><b>First Witch</b> Th' art kind.</p> <p><b>Third Witch</b> And I another.</p> <p><b>First Witch</b> I myself have all the other, And the very ports they blow; All the quarters that they know I'th shipman's card. I'll drain him dry as hay.</p>	<p>Strange is the world Why should men Receive life in this world? Men's lives are as meaningless As the lives of insects The terrible folly Of such suffering A man lives but As briefly as a flower Destined all too soon To decay into the stink of flesh Humanity strives All its days To sear its own flesh In the flames of base desire Exposing itself To Fate's Five Calamities Heaping karma upon karma All that awaits Man At the end</p>	<p>folly (n.) – foolish behavior strives (v.) – tries very hard to do something sear (v.) – burn and damage the surface of (something) with strong and sudden heat base (adj.) – not honest or good calamities (n.) – events that cause great harm and suffering travails (n.) – difficult experiences or situations stench (n.) – very bad smell odor (n.) – disagreeable smell</p>



Reread the Witches' dialogue from Act 1.3 of *Macbeth* and the lyrics of the spirit's song from *Throne of Blood* and analyze how these two texts develop mood.