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Instructions for Student Groups: How to do an Online Search of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Research Question: *Why does Macbeth, who knows that his actions are evil and will be punished, continue to choose evil?*

1. First make sure that everyone in your group understands the research question. This is very important because the research question will guide the decisions you will be making about the relevance of passages that you find in your search.
2. Begin by locating the two online texts that you will searching. The first is the [MIT text of Macbeth](#) and the second is the [Modified MIT text of Macbeth](#). Each online text offers certain advantages and disadvantages. The first option will allow you to search the entire text at once. You may wish to begin with this search; the catch, however, is that when you find passages, you will need to scroll up or down to determine exactly where you are in the play (unless you already know). If you become confused about where you are in the play, try the second online text; although you have to search through it one scene at a time, this text provides you with line numbers, which you will need for step #5 below.
3. When you have chosen an online text to begin with, click the "find on page" function on your Internet browser. (If you are using Microsoft Internet Explorer, click "edit," followed by "find on this page.") Enter your assigned word.
4. Now you must figure out: 1) where you are in the play and what is happening at this point; 2) whether or not the passage in which your word appears *might contribute* to answering the research question. Think of the passage as a clue in a mystery: it might not all by itself solve the mystery, but it may at some point in the future contribute to an answer. Or it may be irrelevant. When you are researching a question (or solving a crime mystery), irrelevant details can lead you astray. Discuss the passage as a group and make your decision.
5. If you decide that a passage is significant, the next step is to carefully record the act, scene, and line numbers (this is where the [Modified Text](#), with its line numbers, is most useful). If you have access to a word-processing program (such as MS Word), you can cut and paste relevant passages to create a document. But whether you are using a word processing program or not, you should take great care to record the exact line numbers of your chosen passage--there is nothing more frustrating than finding a great piece of evidence then forgetting where you found it.
6. When you have finished searching the entire play, look over the passages you have found, and select just **three key passages** from their results. This will involve discussing just how each passage contributes to answering the research question. What does the passage reveal about the workings of Macbeth's psychology and his motives for evil?
7. When you have chosen your three passages, write a short paragraph for each passage explaining why that passage is significant and what it reveals about Macbeth's motives for evil. All members of your group should be prepared to offer reasons to the rest of the class for your selections.

8. As a class, you will be pooling your results in order to better understand the motives behind Macbeth's increasingly evil actions as the play progresses.