

Knowledge Organisers: Macbeth

What will the exam look like?

Read the extract on the opposite page. Then answer the following question: How might an audience respond to...? [15]

Write about .. and how he/this theme is presented **at different points in the play**. [25] including 5 marks for SPaG.



CONTEXT

King James I (who ruled England and Scotland from 1603-1625) was Shakespeare's patron (he provided him with financial support in exchange for him writing plays) so the attitudes in the play are thought to have been heavily influenced by the King. King James I published "Demonology" in 1605, this book was about the dangers of the supernatural and witchcraft. The King was a supporter of the witch trials and even took part in the North Berwick witch trials in Scotland.

In the Jacobean era, **women** belonged to their fathers (or their brothers if their father died), and then to their husbands. Women could not own property of their own. Women had very few rights and were viewed as subservient to men. Women were not given the opportunity to work and they were not allowed on the stage. All the female parts in plays at the time were played by boys whose voices hadn't broken yet, therefore the portrayal of women is widely regarded as being very limited.

In England and Scotland, up until the 1700s, there was a very strong belief in **witches and witchcraft**. It was believed that 'witches' could be found within every community and that they could inflict diseases on people, spoil crops, bring about bad weather, and perform unspeakable and detestable acts of devil's work. The North Berwick witch trials took place in 1590 in Scotland, when a number of people from East Lothian were accused of witchcraft. They ran for two years and implicated seventy people. This was the first major witchcraft persecution in Scotland.

The Gunpowder Plot

In 1605, a group of Catholic conspirators plotted to assassinate King James I planting explosives in the House of Lords during the opening of parliament. They hid kegs full of gunpowder in the cellars beneath the chamber where the king and the rest of the political elite would assemble. One of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, was tasked with igniting this huge bomb. The plot was uncovered just 12 hours before parliament was due to open. However, the plot meant that King James I was keen to ward off any further attempts to take his throne.

The Divine Chain of Being and The Divine Right of Kings originated in the Middle Ages. Any attempt to remove the king was thought to be the worst of crimes: it was believed that to kill a king was to go against God and was therefore sacrilegious, and against the natural order.

Plot Summary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzAuJyWpK_s

Animated tales: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfnUq2_OFOY

Tragic Hero	A seemingly noble character whose actions lead to their downfall.	KEY TERMS
Soliloquy	A speech given by a character whilst alone to express their thoughts to the audience (not the other characters).	
Hubris	Excessive pride which leads to a downfall.	
Tragedy	A genre of play that focuses on the downfall of the main character.	
Hamartia	A fatal flaw or weakness that leads to tragic hero's downfall.	
Motif	A recurring idea/ image throughout a text	
Themes		
Ambition: Macbeth's ruthless seeking of power is presented as his ultimate flaw (hamartia). Shakespeare presents ambition as the gateway to deceit and evil. Shakespeare suggests that ambition can manifest itself in different ways: it can make a person ruthless and violent but it can also result in them becoming practical and detached.		Violence: Shakespeare's portrayal of violence is often contradictory: violence sustains and ends Duncan's throne; violence allows Macbeth to seize and hold the throne, until violence finally takes it from him.
Loyalty: Shakespeare suggests that loyalty is often diluted and ultimately lost as a result of ambition. Shakespeare highlights the importance of being loyal to the king and country, as well as being loyal to peers.		Deception (reality vs appearance): Shakespeare presents deception (lying) as one of the products of ambition and uses it as a signal for further moral decline. Shakespeare also suggests that everyone is capable of deception but that those in power are particularly vulnerable.
Nature and the supernatural: Shakespeare uses the supernatural to help the audience to understand the characters' secret ambitions. Shakespeare also uses the supernatural encourage the characters to make irresponsible decisions.		Guilt: Shakespeare suggests that ambition ultimately leads to guilt and that this eventually results in inner-torment and madness.
Masculinity/ gender: Shakespeare suggests that 'masculinity' can encourage violent and reckless behaviour and that ideas surrounding gender can be used as tools for manipulation.		Fate: Shakespeare suggests that Macbeth becomes so consumed with his own 'fate' that he fails to predict the consequences of his ruthless actions. Shakespeare suggests that the supernatural use 'fate' to manipulate Macbeth.

Techniques	Definition	Example
Pathetic fallacy	A type of personification where emotions are given to a setting, an object or the weather.	"The night has been unruly. Where we lay, Our chimneys were blown down and, as they say, Lamentings heard i' th' air" Lennox describing the night of Duncan's death, A3 S2.
Personification	Describing an inanimate object as having human feelings.	'Stars, hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires' Macbeth, A1 S4
Metaphor	A descriptive technique that names a person, thing or action as something else.	'Here's daggers in men's smiles. The near in blood, The nearer bloody' Donalbain, A2 S3.
Simile	A descriptive technique that compares one thing with another, usually using 'as' or 'like'.	'Look like th' innocent flower, But be the serpent under it'
Foreshadowing	When the writer hints what is going to happen later on in the text.	'The instruments of darkness tell us truths, Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's In deepest consequence' Banquo to Macbeth, A1 S3.
Superlative	An adjective/ adverb that indicates the most of something.	'He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor: In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!' Ross to Macbeth and Banquo, A1 S3. Intensifier
Repetition	When a word/ phrase is noticeably repeated throughout a sentence/ paragraph/ whole text.	'Unnatural deeds, Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets
Imagery	A technique in which the author appeals to the senses i.e. seeing, hearing, touching.	'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas in incarnadine, Making the green one red' Macbeth, A2 S

Key Characters:

King Duncan, King of Scotland

Macbeth, a warrior and thane

Lady Macbeth, his ambitious wife

Banquo, an ally of Macbeth

Malcolm: Duncan's Son

The Witches

Macduff, another Thane

How to structure your response

Extract Question:

- Locate the Extract
- Analyse 3/4 key quotes from the extract.

Essay Task:

- Track the theme/character
- Conclusion answers the question