

















# Knowledge Organiser: Macbeth

Writer's Intent	Characters			
<p><b>Macbeth</b> is a play about how an individual can be corrupted by ambition. The tragic hero Macbeth is faced with these questions when he is provided with the Witches prophecies which lead him to believe he can be king and question free will. The tragic downfall of Macbeth allows Shakespeare to warn against pursuing similar acts, disrupting the divine right of kings.</p>	<p><b>Macbeth</b>  </p> <p>Title character (eponymous protagonist), who is ambitious and ruthless despite his initial loyalty. He symbolises the evil within us all and what happens if we don't suppress these urges.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'only vaulting ambition which o'erleaps itself'</li> <li>2. 'I am in blood stepp'd so far'</li> <li>3. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury"</li> </ol>		
	<p><b>Lady Macbeth</b>  </p> <p>Defies expectations of a Jacobean woman, often seen controlling her husband in the beginning. She is strong and ambitious but goes mad and dies off stage because of her actions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Stop up the access and passage to remorse'</li> <li>2. 'What's done is done'</li> <li>3. 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'</li> </ol>		
	<p><b>Macduff</b>  </p> <p>A thane who is loyal to the crown and tries to re-instate Malcolm to the throne. Macbeth murders his wife and children leading to Macduff seeking revenge and fulfilling the witches' prophecy (he was not born of woman).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'O nation miserable, with an untitled tyrant bloody-sceptered'</li> <li>2. 'But I must also feel it as a man'</li> <li>3. 'Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripped'</li> </ol>		
Key Themes				
<p><b>Ambition</b>              A desire and determination to achieve something. The Macbeths' unbridled ambition drives the play and acts as a warning to the audience.</p>	<p><b>Banquo</b>  </p> <p>Macbeth's friend his are sons prophesied to rule. Macbeth kills him and he returns as ghost, James I could trace his lineage back to Banquo.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'to win us harm, the instruments of darkness tell us truths'</li> <li>2. 'restrain in me the cursed thoughts'</li> <li>3. 'I fear thou play'st most foully for it'</li> </ol>		
	<p><b>Duncan</b>  </p> <p>Is a good king, showing us what this looks like as a comparison to Macbeth. He is murdered by Macbeth in Act 2.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face'</li> <li>2. 'honour, like stars, shall shine on all deservers'</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Fate and free will</b>              Explores the ideas of whether we have a choice over our actions or if they are already laid out. This brings into question if Macbeth's actions are his choice.</p>	<p><b>Malcolm</b>  </p> <p>Is Duncan's son and heir to the throne. Like his father he is a good man. He flees to England after his father's murder and returns with an army, finally crowned.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'wisdom plucks me from overcredulous haste'</li> <li>2. 'Let every soldier hew him down a bough and bear't'</li> <li>3. 'we reckon with your several loves and make us even'</li> </ol>		
	<p><b>The Witches</b>  </p> <p>Supernatural beings who provide prophecies to Macbeth and Banquo. They could represent conscience and individuals free will. They have a clear appeal to James I - Shakespeare's patron.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair; hover through the fog and filthy air'</li> <li>2. 'By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes'</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Kingship and Manhood</b>              Ideal kings and men should be honest, fair and have integrity. Shakespeare contrasts Macbeth with Duncan, Malcolm, Banquo and Macduff to show what makes a good king and man.</p>	<th>Writer's Methods</th>		Writer's Methods	
	<p><b>Tragic Structure</b></p> <p>Also known as the five act structure, is made up of the exposition (introduction to the characters), rising action, climax, falling action and the resolution.</p>	<th>Key Context</th>		Key Context
	<p><b>Foil</b></p> <p>Something or someone that makes another's good or bad qualities more noticeable.</p>	<p><b>Scotland V England</b>  </p>	<p>They were traditional enemies who were united by James I (James VI of Scotland). The union was unpopular with many English lords, so the play attempts to promote Scotland.</p>	
<p><b>Supernatural</b>              A force beyond science or the laws of nature. This is seen as evil through the Witches and Lady Macbeth, as well as a demonstration of guilt.</p>	<p><b>Soliloquy</b></p> <p>One character speaking to audience sharing genuine thoughts and feelings; Macbeth uses to make audience complicit</p>	<p><b>Witchcraft</b>  </p>	<p>James I was intensely fascinated by witchcraft, he was terrified they would threaten his reign. Also popular among Jacobeans.</p>	
	<p><b>Setting</b></p> <p>The place or surroundings where a scene takes place. It often highlights a key idea or tone for the scene.</p>	<p><b>Divine Right of Kings</b>  </p>	<p>It was believed that Kings were appointed by God as God's representative on earth. James I promoted this view to help secure his reign and stop attempts to dethrone him.</p>	
<p><b>Violence</b>              Many conflicts throughout the play – both large and small scale. It is linked to Macbeth's character whose violence increases as the play develops.</p>	<p><b>Character arc</b></p> <p>The transformation, or inner journey, of a character over the course of a narrative.</p>	<p><b>Plots/ treason</b>  </p>	<p>In James I early reign, there were many plots against him due (in part) to dissatisfaction with the monarchy and having a Scottish King. Most notable amongst these was the Gunpowder Plot led by Guy Fawkes.</p>	

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Key Word Glossary			
Word	Definition	Example	Word in Action
<b>Atypical</b>	Not the norm	Lady Macbeth was <b>atypical</b> for women at the time.	
<b>Berate</b>	to tell someone off.	The teacher was <b>berating</b> me for throwing paper across the room.	
<b>Dichotomy</b>	A division or contrast between two things that have polar or opposite qualities (e.g. good and bad, fair and foul).	There is often a <b>dichotomy</b> between what politicians say and what they do.	
<b>Divine Right</b>	the idea of God giving human beings their place in the “Great chain of being” therefore, if you were poor then you must accept it as it is God’s will.	Duncan’s position on the throne is his <b>Divine Right</b> .	
<b>Dramatic irony</b>	A type of irony, in which the significance of a character’s words or actions are clear to the audience but unknown to the character.	The fact that the audience is aware of Macbeth’s misdeeds but the other characters on stage are not is <b>dramatic irony</b> .	
<b>Equivocation</b>	To say one thing while meaning something different; to use ambiguous language so as to conceal the truth or to avoid categorical statements.	He was told to do without <b>equivocation</b> .	
<b>Fatal flaw</b>	A fatal flaw in one’s character, usually leading to the downfall of the hero or heroine. Also known by the Greek term <i>hamartia</i> .	Macbeth’s <b>fatal flaw</b> was his hubris and ability to be manipulated by his malevolent wife.	
<b>Foreshadowing</b>	To hint at events that are to come.	The witches prophecies <b>foreshadowed</b> events to come.	
<b>Hierarchy</b>	The order of things	Macbeth forced his way to the top of the <b>hierarchy</b> .	
<b>Malevolent</b>	Spiteful or wicked.	Lady Macbeth’s <b>malevolence</b> forced her husband to commit regicide.	
<b>Pathetic fallacy</b>	Using the weather to set the tone or atmosphere (e.g. fog and thunder symbolise the turmoil caused by the witches.)	Shakespeare uses <b>pathetic fallacy</b> to illustrate the evil of the three weird sisters.	
<b>Recompense</b>	Compensation for loss or harm done; also a reward for efforts or work performed.	King Duncan’s sons were in some way <b>recompensed</b> by the Divine Right of Kings being restored at the end of the play.	
<b>Regicide</b>	The killing of a king.	Macbeth’s first malevolent act was <b>regicide</b> .	
<b>Tumultuous</b>	Wild and riotous.	It was a series of <b>tumultuous</b> events that eventually brought about Macbeth’s downfall.	

