

'Macbeth' Knowledge Organiser

Context	Key things to remember		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> King James I – Macbeth was written in 1606, early in the reign of James I, who succeeded to the English throne in 1603 after being King of Scotland. The play pays homage to the king's Scottish lineage and hatred of witches. Additionally, the witches' prophecy that Banquo will found a line of kings is a nod to James' family's claim to have descended from the historical Banquo. The Divine Right of Kings – the idea that kings got their power from God and not from their subject. James I was a believer in this, and the idea meant that any treasonous activity was a crime against God. Only a century earlier, England had suffered under the massive disorder of the Wars of the Roses, so many supported the idea to avoid civil unrest. Patriarchy – patriarchal societies are those in which men dominate, and inheritance passes through male heirs. Gender – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth switch between having masculine and feminine characteristics. In the play, gender is often linked to ambition and a willingness to do anything to achieve power. Women – Women were expected to follow social expectations with their behaviour towards men. They were meant to obey all men, be faithful and respectful, not be violent and be religious. They would have been regarded as a possession, first owned by the father, then given to and owned by the husband. Women were considered the delicate, 'fairer' sex and they should be quiet and reserved, always respecting the wishes and opinions of the males in their lives. Lady Macbeth subverts these expectations in the play to manipulate Macbeth in getting what she wants. Adam, Eve and the serpent – in the bible, Adam and Eve live peacefully in the Garden of Eden until Eve is tempted by the serpent and eats the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. She convinces Adam to eat as well, and God curses them and banishes them to Earth. The serpent is frequently alluded to in Macbeth. Witchcraft – in Shakespeare's time there was no scientific knowledge to explain natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and droughts. One of the ways they accounted for the unexplained was the idea of witches. In Elizabethan England, hundreds of thousands of women were tortured and executed in Europe because they were accused of witchcraft. The King wrote a book on the subject entitled 'Daemonologie' and appealed to parliament to pass the following act in 1563 which was still a part of English law until 1951. At the time Shakespeare was writing, many people thought that witches were real, so the weird sisters would have seemed believable and frightening to an audience in the 1600s. The 5 Acts: Macbeth is a typical tragedy. The first part builds up the turning point (Duncan's murder), and the second part deal with the consequences of this, which leads to the main character's downfall. Tragic Conventions: Macbeth is one of Shakespeare's Tragedies and follows specific conventions. The climax must end in a tremendous catastrophe involving the death of the main character; the character's death is caused by their own flaw(s) (hamartia); the character has something the audience can identify with which outweighs their flaws so we care about them. The Real Macbeth: Macbeth is loosely based on true events in feudal Scotland in the 11th Century and would have been known to King James. King James inherited the throne through his ancestors Banquo and Fleance who appear in the play. Healthcare and Medicine – Healthcare and medicine were not as advanced in Shakespeare's age as they are today – there were numerous ailments and diseases that were not yet understood. Furthermore, there were a many wars in which scores of men were killed. Therefore, death was a much more frequent thought for people at the time. The high death count in the play would therefore seem slightly more ordinary! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The play was written in 1606 but was set in the 11th century (Medieval period). In the play, King Duncan was a benevolent king and loved by all. In real life he was a weak king. Banquo is intrigued by the prophecies and does have ambitious thoughts, but he does not choose to act on these thoughts. There are many similarities between Banquo and Macbeth. They are both soldiers, they are both very patriotic at the start of the play and they are both considered to be brave and noble. Shakespeare believed the human nature is prone to evil and that people are greedy. He illustrates this in the Macbeths' desire to become King and Queen. This greed led them to resort to extreme measures such as regicide. In Macbeth's case, his greed led him to kill others, too. Macbeth kills Macdonald, Duncan, Duncan's guards and Young Siward himself. Macbeth orders the deaths of Lady Macduff, her family and household and Banquo. Macbeth is the only Shakespearean play set in Scotland. Macbeth's castle is in Inverness. The Royal Palace is in Dunsinane. The Gunpowder Plot occurred in 1605, one year before the play was written 		
	Characters		
	Macbeth	A loyal warrior who becomes duplicitous as he becomes obsessed with the witches' prophecies of power.	
	Lady Macbeth	Macbeth's wife who drives his ambition in the beginning but loses her control by the end.	
	Duncan	King of Scotland at the beginning of the play - a strong, respected leader	
	Macduff	Macbeth's antagonist: A brave warrior who is loyal to Duncan and is consistently suspicious of Macbeth.	
	The Witches	The witches represent trickery, manipulation and the supernatural. They use charms, spells and prophecies to prompt Macbeth into murdering Duncan.	
	Banquo	Macbeth's close friend and ally who also receives prophecies.	
	Fleance	Banquo's son who represents innocence and justice.	
	Malcolm	Duncan's oldest son and next in line to the throne. Joins the English army to defeat Macbeth at the end of the play	
	Donalbain	Duncan's youngest son disappears (to Ireland) after Duncan's murder	
	Key terms		Key Themes
	Dramatic irony	When the audience knows things that the characters don't.	Ambition
	Apparitions	A ghost/ ghost- like image of a thing or person	Violence/ Death
	Hamartia	A fatal flaw- a defect/ weakness in a character.	Fate vs Free Will
Jacobean	The period of history under King James	Appearance vs Reality	
Tragedy	A play with tragic events	Guilt	
Regicide	Killing the King	Gender	
Noble	Belonging to aristocracy	Kingship	
Thane	A man with land granted by the King	The Supernatural	
Monologue	A speech by one character	Loyalty	
Treason	Betraying one's country.	Good and Evil	
Hallucination	Seeing something that isn't really there	Morality	

Plot and Key Quotes						
Act 1 Scene 1	Three witches meet on a heath. They plot to trick Macbeth at a later time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1) Witches • "For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name" (1.2) The Captain • "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (1.3) Macbeth • "Stars hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires" (1.4) Macbeth • "Come you spirits...unsex me here and fill me from the crown to the toe top full of direst cruelty." (1.5) Lady Macbeth • "Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under'it" (1.6) Lady Macbeth • "When you durst do it, then you were a man" (1.7) Lady Macbeth • "But screw your courage to the sticking place and we'll not fail." (1.7) Lady Macbeth 	Act 3 Scene 1	Macbeth, fearing the witches' prophecies about Banquo's descendants sitting on the throne, arranges to have Banquo and Fleance killed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Thou has it all now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all, as the weird sisters promised, and I fear though play'st most foully for't." (3.1) Banquo • "To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo stick deep" (3.1) Macbeth • "Of full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife" (3.2) Macbeth • "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, fill thou applaud the deed" (3.2) Macbeth • "Thou canst not say I did it; never shake they gory locks at me" (3.4) Macbeth • "My lord is often thus, and hath been from his youth" (3.4) Lady Macbeth • "I am in blood stepp'd so far, that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'ver" (3.4) Macbeth 	
Act 1 Scene 2	King Duncan is told of Macbeth's bravery in battle. He tells a messenger to award him Thane of Cawdor.		Act 3 Scene 2-3	Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth of his plan to kill Banquo. Elsewhere, the murderers kill Banquo, but Fleance escapes.		
Act 1 Scene 3	The witches confront Macbeth and Banquo and deliver their prophecies. The messenger arrives to tell Macbeth that he is the Thane of Cawdor.		Act 3 Scene 4	Macbeth holds a banquet. He sees the ghost of Banquo and becomes hysterical. The guests are eventually asked to leave by Lady Macbeth.		
Act 1 Scene 4	At the Kings' Palace, Duncan names Malcolm (his eldest son) as his successor.		Act 3 Scene 5-6	The witches are scolded by Hecate for their meddling. Elsewhere, Lennox tells of Macduff gathering an army to fight Macbeth.		
Act 1 Scene 5	At Macbeth's castle, Lady Macbeth receives a letter from Macbeth detailing the witches' prophecies. She plans Duncan's murder, but fears that Macbeth is too kind to fulfil his ambition.		Act 4 Scene 1	Macbeth again visits the witches, and through terrible apparitions is given several new prophecies regarding his fate. The witches then vanish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Something wicked this way comes" (4.1) Witches • "Speak, I charge you" (4.1) Macbeth • "From this moment, the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstling of my hand" (4.1) Macbeth • "The castle of Macduff I will surprise; seize upon Fife." (4.1) Macbeth • "Let grieve convert to anger. Blunt not the heart, enrage it" (4.3) Malcolm • "Macbeth is ripe for shaking, and the powers above put on their instrument" (4.3) Malcolm 	
Act 1 Scene 6	Duncan arrives at Macbeth's castle. He professes his love for Macbeth as a dear friend.		Act 4 Scene 2-3	Macduff's wife and children are murdered by Macbeth's assassins. Macduff and Malcolm unite in order to fight Macbeth.		
Act 1 Scene 7	Macbeth has doubts about the assassination. Lady Macbeth tells him of the plot and he then agrees to it.		Act 5 Scene 1	A doctor and gentlewoman watch Lady Macbeth sleepwalk. She talks of the murders of Duncan and Banquo, and imagines stubborn blood on her hands.		
Act 2 Scene 1	Banquo and Fleance arrive. When they depart to bed, Macbeth sees a vision of a dagger leading him towards Duncan's chamber.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Is this a dagger I see before me, the handle towards my hand?" (2.1) Macbeth • "Give me the daggers. The sleeping and the dead are but as pictures" (2.2) Lady Macbeth • "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?" (2.2) Macbeth • "A little water clears us of this deed" (2.2) Lady Macbeth • "Wake Duncan with thy knocking, I would thou couldst." (2.2) Macbeth • "Oh horror! Horror! Horror! Tongue nor heart cannot conceive, nor name thee" (2.3) Macduff • "There's daggers in men's smiles" (2.3) Donaldbain 	Act 5 Scene 2	Lords discuss how the rebel army will gather at Birnam Wood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Out, damned spot! Out, I say!... Will these hand ne'er be clean?" (5.1) Lady Macbeth • "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand" (5.1) Lady Macbeth • "My name's Macbeth" (5.7) Macbeth • "Turn, hell-hound, turn...I have no words; my sword is my voice" (5.8) Macduff • "I bear a charmed life which must not yield to one of woman born" (5.8) Macbeth • "Macduff was from his mother's womb untimely ripp'd" (5.8) Macduff • "I will to yield to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet" (5.8) Macbeth • "Behold where stands the usurper's head" (5.9) Macduff • "His fiend-like queen who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands took off her life" (5.9) Malcolm
Act 2 Scene 2	Macbeth emerges from the chamber, visibly shaken. He has forgotten to place the daggers with the chamberlains to absolve the blame. Lady Macbeth must return them			Act 5 Scene 3-4	Inside, Macbeth boasts that none of woman born can harm him. Macduff and co gather at Birnam Wood	
Act 2 Scene 3	Macduff arrives and finds Duncan dead. Macbeth explains that he killed the chamberlains in rage. Duncan's sons flee.			Act 5 Scene 5	A scream is heard at Macbeth's castle. It is announced that Lady Macbeth is dead (suicide). Macbeth reacts numbly. A messenger reveals that the trees of Birnam Wood are advancing.	
Act 2 Scene 4	Macduff tells Ross, a thane, that Macbeth has been named King.	Act 5 Scene 6-7		The battle begins. Macbeth fights without fear, as he believes no man born of woman can harm him. The castle is breached.		
		Act 5 Scene 8-9		Macbeth and Macduff finally meet. Macduff reveals that he was born by caesarean section (not 'by woman born.') He kills Macbeth. Malcolm is proclaimed King.		

How to answer the questions			
How will the question look:	Explore how Shakespeare presents in this extract. Refer closely to the extract in your answer.	How will the question look:	In this extract, (don't refer to the extract here though- must be elsewhere) Explain the important of (theme/ character) elsewhere in the play. In your answer, you must consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where Is shown • The effects Has within the play You must refer to the context of the play in your answer.
What do you need to do:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the extract carefully 2. Read the question carefully 3. Answer the question simply (give three or four words to describe how the character/s are presented) 4. Find three or four quotes from across the extract to support your points 5. For each quote, find two or three techniques you could pick out to strengthen your ideas 6. Start writing your response 	How to structure your response:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the question carefully 2. Make sure you don't talk about anything from the extract 3. Plan your ideas. You need at least four points that answer the question from across the play 4. Write your four points down and ensure you have at least one quote to support each one 5. Make sure you have context for each point 6. Try and create an argument- think about what links all of your points together and why Shakespeare presents this theme in his play as important 7. Ensure you think about the audience response too 8. Write your response
How to structure your response:	At least 3 paragraphs. In each paragraph you must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear point 2. At least one quote in each paragraph- don't repeat quotes 3. Specific language and structural techniques from each quote. (eg. Metaphor or short sentence) 4. Explain the effect the techniques have on how the character/s are presented 5. Explain the effect on both a modern audience (us now) and a Jacobean audience (the audience of the time) 	What do you need to do:	
How many marks is it worth? How long should I spend on the question?	20 marks 30 minutes	How to structure your response:	An introduction and at least 3 paragraphs. Introduction: What is the message of the play and why is the theme important. Main Body: In each paragraph you must include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear point 2. At least one quote in each paragraph- don't repeat quotes 3. Explain how this relates to the theme/ question 4. Link to context (what influenced Shakespeare) 5. Explain the effect on both a modern audience (us now) and a Jacobean audience (the audience of the time) 6. Go back to the question again and consider Shakespeare's intention
What assessment objective is assessed here?	AO2- analysis of language, form and structure	How to structure your response:	
Literary techniques			
Verb - action words (ran)	How many marks is it worth? How long should I spend on the question?		
Noun - person, place or thing (castle)			
Adjective - words to describe a noun (sparkling)	Declarative - makes a statement		
Adverbs - words to describe a verb (quickly)	Exclamatory - sentence with an exclamation mark		
Connotations - the words or ideas that come to mind when you hear a word	Short sentence - single word or phrase for impact		
Alliteration - using the same letter to begin more than one word	Repetition - repeated words, phrases or ideas		
Imagery - describing an idea using an image with similar qualities	Listing - a number of connected items written one after another (separated by commas or semi colons)		
Simile - comparison using like or as	Juxtaposition - placing two opposite ideas close to each other		
Metaphor - a comparison where something is something else	Shift - where tone or ideas change	How many marks is it worth? How long should I spend on the question? What assessment objectives are assessed here?	20 marks 30 minutes AO1- showing your understanding of the play AO3- can you make links to context
Personification - giving non- human objects human qualities	Trochaic tetrameter - used by the witches- DUM- da sound		
Onomatopoeia - the sounds of words to express their meaning	Iambic pentameter - most of the play is written this way- da-DUM sound		
Pathetic fallacy - when the weather reflects the mood	Dramatic irony - when the audience knows more than the characters		
Motif - repeated idea or image throughout the play.	Foreshadowing - hints at the events that will happen later in the play		