

Shakespeare Study Pack: Macbeth

Plot, characters, key quotations, themes and an essay opening on Macbeth.

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Learning objective: I can explain the plot, characters and themes of Macbeth using quotations.

✓ I can order the plot ✓ I can match quotations ✓ I can analyse language

1 The plot

Number the events in order (1-7).

☐

A Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan.

☐

B Macduff kills Macbeth, and Malcolm becomes king.

☐

C Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches, who predict that Macbeth will be king.

☐

D Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, overcome by guilt, and later dies.

☐

E Macbeth kills Duncan and becomes king.

☐

F Macduff's wife and children are murdered on Macbeth's orders.

☐

G Macbeth has Banquo murdered, then sees his ghost at a banquet.

2 Who says it?

Match each quotation to its speaker.

1 "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"

☐

A Macbeth (Act 2)

2 "Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light
see my black and deep desires"

☐

B Lady Macbeth (Act 5)

3 "Look like th' innocent flower, / But
be the serpent under't"

☐

C the Witches (Act 1)

4 "Is this a dagger which I see before
me"

☐

D Lady Macbeth (Act 1)

5 "Out, damned spot!"

☐

E Macbeth (Act 1)

3 Characters

Match each character to a description.

1 Banquo

☐

A the King of Scotland at the start of the play

2 Duncan

☐

B a nobleman who discovers Duncan's body and
opposes Macbeth

3 Macduff

☐

C Duncan's son, who flees and later becomes king

4 Malcolm

☐

D Macbeth's friend; the witches say his descendants
will be kings

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4 Analyse a quotation

- 1 “Look like th’ innocent flower, / But be the serpent under’t”. What is Lady Macbeth telling Macbeth to do? [2 marks]

- 2 What does the image of the ‘serpent’ suggest? Think about other meanings of serpents. [3 marks]

- 3 How has Lady Macbeth changed by the time she says “Out, damned spot!”? [2 marks]

5 Themes Give one event or quotation as evidence for each theme.

Theme	Evidence
ambition	
guilt	
the supernatural	
appearance and reality	

6 Essay plan

How does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a character who changes? Write your opening paragraph. [6 marks]

Answer Key

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Question	Answers
1 The plot	Correct order: C, A, E, G, F, D, B Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches, who predict that Macbeth will be king. → Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan. → Macbeth kills Duncan and becomes king. → Macbeth has Banquo murdered, then sees his ghost at a banquet. → Macduff's wife and children are murdered on Macbeth's orders. → Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, overcome by guilt, and later dies. → Macduff kills Macbeth, and Malcolm becomes king.
2 Who says it?	1 C; 2 E; 3 D; 4 A; 5 B
3 Characters	1 D; 2 A; 3 B; 4 C
4 Analyse a quotation	1. To appear innocent and welcoming to Duncan while secretly planning to kill him. 2. Danger and deceit – a hidden, poisonous threat; it also links to the serpent (Satan) in the Garden of Eden, suggesting evil and temptation. 3. She has gone from controlling and ruthless to guilt-ridden and broken; she imagines blood she cannot wash off.
5 Themes	ambition – Evidence: e.g. Macbeth's 'black and deep desires'; murdering Duncan to become king guilt – Evidence: e.g. the dagger vision; Banquo's ghost; 'Out, damned spot!' the supernatural – Evidence: e.g. the witches' prophecies; the dagger; Banquo's ghost appearance and reality – Evidence: e.g. 'Fair is foul'; 'Look like th' innocent flower'
6 Essay plan	Look for: - Starts as a brave soldier, then is tempted by the prophecy and Lady Macbeth - Becomes a murderous, paranoid tyrant - Uses quotations and comments on Shakespeare's methods and the Jacobean context (e.g. the divine right of kings)

Teaching note: quotations are from Shakespeare's Macbeth, which is out of copyright; line references vary between editions, so acts are given instead.