

# MACBETH

A GCSE English Resource



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## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

<p><b>Assessment Objectives</b></p> <p><b>AO1 – Personal interpretation of the text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the power dynamic in the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?</li> <li>• Is Lady Macbeth evil or just ambitious?</li> </ul> <p><b>AO2 – Language, form and structure.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of Act 1, Sc 5</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3 – Text and context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of women in feudal Scotland and in Shakespeare's time (inheritance passed through women in feudal Scotland, making them <b>powerful</b>. Women were relatively <b>powerless</b> (other than e.g. Elizabeth I) in Shakespeare's time. What type of woman is Lady Macbeth in this context?</li> <li>• The supernatural (with particular reference to animal imagery)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Event/ Plot summary – Act 1, Sc 5</b></p> <p>Lady Macbeth receives a letter from her husband explaining the weird sisters' prophecies. She worries that Macbeth is too kind and noble to take advantage of the prophecy and vows to <i>unsex</i> herself to give him strength and ambition. A messenger arrives to say that Macbeth and Duncan are heading to the castle. When Macbeth arrives, Lady Macbeth urges him that the visiting Duncan must never leave the Macbeth castle.</p>	<p><b>Alternative interpretations</b></p> <p>3 clips of the scene from SSF BoB playlist <i>Macbeth – Interpretations of Key Scenes</i></p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reciprocal Reading Kit (Instructions/ Role Cards/</b></li> <li>• <b>Reading Journals (not supplied)</b></li> <li>• <b>Balanced argument sentence starters</b></li> <li>• <b>Text and Context teaching points</b></li> <li>• <b>Video clips (see BoB section opposite )</b></li> <li>• <b>Written task (model answer in Appendix of written tasks)</b></li> <li>• <b>Punctuation and Grammar checklist for self and peer assessment (in Appendix of written tasks)</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Lesson 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reciprocal reading task</b> Hand out the <b>Text Extract (Act 1, Sc 5)</b> and complete the reciprocal reading activity. Have each group report back on their reciprocal reading findings. Pupils record class findings in their <b>Reading Journals</b> under headings Scene Summary/Glossary/Key Quotes/Key Questions/ Links <b>See Appendix – Reciprocal Reading Activity Rules.</b></li> <li>• <b>Starter</b> Go through the '<b>letter monologue extract</b>' In groups of three, choose up to five key words that seem to impart Lady Macbeth's strongest wishes and desires in dealing with Macbeth's return. Choose gestures to go with these words and perform back (either in canon or unison) using the key words and gestures only to distil Lady Macbeth's message. What does this say about her character? <b>See Lesson 4 - Teaching and Learning Activities</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Lesson 5</b> A focus on AO1 and AO3 – Personal interpretation of text, and text and context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Starter</b> Display <b>Provocative statement 2 (PS2)</b> and ask pupils to discuss in small groups <b>PS2 Lady Macbeth is more evil than the witches</b></li> <li>• <b>Activity 1 (AO1)</b> Pupils research this statement, using key quotes from the text, Point/Evidence/Explain, and <b>balanced argument sentence starters</b> to structure a debate <b>See Lesson 5– Teaching and Learning Activities</b></li> <li>• <b>Activity 2</b> Complete the 'alternative interpretations' activity based on the <b>3 video clips from BoB</b>. <b>See Lesson 5 – Teaching and Learning Activities.</b> Record in <b>Reading Journal</b> on activity sheet</li> <li>• <b>Home Learning (AO3) – Text, context and alternative interpretations.</b> Teaching input – Hand out the <b>Text and Context teaching points</b> - ask pupils to complete the accompanying Research Activity as a home learning activity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Character Focus – Lady Macbeth</b></p> <p><b>Provocative words</b> strong, powerful, ambitious, womanly, manly, sexless, evil, oppressive, brutal, cunning</p> <p><b>Key Quotes (Act 1, Sc 3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Too full of the milk of human kindness</i></li> <li>• <i>Unsex me here/And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full/ Of direst cruelty</i></li> <li>• <i>Take my milk for gall</i></li> <li>• <i>Look like th'innocent flower /But be the serpent under it</i></li> </ul>
		<p><b>Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Supernatural</b></li> <li>• <b>Men and Women – focus theme</b></li> <li>• <b>Good and Evil – focus theme</b></li> <li>• <b>Loyalty versus ambition</b></li> </ul>
		<p><b>Teacher Notes</b></p>

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

### Teaching and Learning Activities/ Lesson 4

#### Reciprocal reading task – see [Appendix: Reciprocal reading guide](#)

- The reciprocal reading task is based on the same text extract. Pupils' understanding of the text will have been enhanced by the drama exercise. However, anticipate that students may consider the following aspects during the reciprocal reading session

#### Glossary – words that students may need assistance with

**Raven** – a bird with black plumage, which feeds on the dead flesh of animals. Seen as a bad omen and harbinger of death

**Unsex me** – remove my woman's qualities and make me more like a man, or more like a completely sexless and compassionless creature

**The access and passage to remorse** – she is asking that her thickened blood clogs up her veins and arteries to prevent blood reaching compassionate parts of her body

**Compunctious** – feelings of anxiety, regret or sadness

**Gall** – a fluid excreted from the liver, but also meaning something bitter and difficult to cope with or endure: the very opposite of a mother's milk

**Pall thee** – cover yourself

**Dunkest smoke** – thickest smoke

**Keen knife** - finely sharpened, but also suggesting intensity and an eagerness that the knife be used

#### Links (including intertextual links)

Have pupils heard of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*? This could be studied as an extension piece

Pupils may think of other female characters in fiction, tv, film and popular culture who embody traditionally male or non-female roles or take on masculine or androgynous personas.

Pupils may discuss whether (linked to context AO3) these traditional male and female roles continue to have relevance in today's society  
This is an incantation or plea to the powers of darkness – pupils may have seen or heard of similar supernatural or occult incantations, either in popular culture or in other heritage texts studied or read.

Encourage students to ask high order questions using the [question stems](#). Ask them to record key quotes in their [Reading Journals](#)

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

### Drama Starter

- Hand out the letter monologue extract from Act 1, Scene 5.
- With pupils divided into groups of three or six, ask them to choose **five words** that show Lady Macbeth's strongest desires upon Macbeth's return. They will perform the speech as these distilled five words only
- Pupils decide upon a gesture to go with each word that perfectly conveys the meaning of that word to an audience
- Pupils rehearse performing their five word speech with its accompanying actions
- Pupils may choose to perform the actions in unison (all at the same time) or in cannon (with one person leading the movement and the others following, like a Mexican wave)
- Pupils may choose to speak chorally – all together, or choose individual members of their group to speak individual words (perhaps with an echo from the rest of the group)
- The performance should attempt to convey and embody Lady Macbeth's persona at this point in the play
- After a suitable rehearsal period, watch back all the five word speeches
- Make a note on the whiteboard of the words chosen by groups – keeping a tally of words used by multiple groups
- What do the word choices and the gestures/performances say about our understanding of the character of Lady Macbeth?  
Discuss

## Teaching and Learning Activities/ Lesson 5

### Activity 1 - Provocative statement activity

#### PS2 – Lady Macbeth is more evil than the witches

- Display the provocative statement on the whiteboard using the **Scheme PowerPoint**
- Following the previous lesson's reciprocal reading activity, ask students to discuss in small groups whether they agree with the statement or not

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

- Hand out the **Balanced Argument sentence starter cards** and ask students to work to produce a balanced argument that argues both for and against the provocative statement, using evidence from the text to justify their views
- Record the balanced argument points as **For and Against** points in Reading Journals

**Note – as with all the Provocative statements in this scheme of work, it would be useful to return to the statement at the end of the scheme, when the entire play has been taught, to see if views have changed and to look at evidence from elsewhere in the text in support of or in opposition to the statement**



**Pupils may come up with some or all of the following points. If they do not address all these points, then ensure that you draw these out with the class in discussion.**

For	Against
The witches behaviour is ambiguous. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth is very clear in her remorselessness. E.g. she complains that Macbeth is <i>too full of the milk of human kindness</i>	The witches are seen taking part in irreligious ceremonies. We see them chanting and making a <i>charm</i> before Macbeth's entrance. Lady Macbeth calls upon evil spirits but we don't see her interact directly with anything supernatural
And... She immediately talks of the death of Duncan by calling his entrance to the castle <i>fatal</i>	Similarly the witches make prophecies and are able to vanish into thin air.
And... She asks to be filled with <i>direst cruelty</i>	The witches' ambiguous behaviour is exactly what makes them so dangerous and evil. They deliberately speak in riddles and trick Macbeth into thinking that good things will come his way, whilst paving the way for his eventual self destruction. Perhaps they enjoy toying with him in this way.
She actually instructs Macbeth to act like a serpent in the Garden of Eden. The witches do not provide any direct instruction to him or directly tell him to do anything evil, whereas Lady Macbeth comes up with the murderous plan to kill Duncan	(Later in the play) we see further evidence of the witches' ambiguous and confusing messages, designed to trick Macbeth (e.g. indicating that he is invincible because he cannot be killed by one of woman born)

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

(Later in the play) Lady Macbeth is seen as remorseful. She eventually feels bad about what she has done (the sleepwalking scene) and (possibly) kills herself as a result of the guilt. The witches are never shown as having any remorse for what they have done to Macbeth. Their behaviour may be less directly influential than Lady Macbeth, but their intent is much crueller.

### Activity 2 – Alternative interpretations of Lady Macbeth’s reading of the letter

This activity focuses on different filmed interpretations and directorial choices made by film directors in their depiction of Lady Macbeth and her reading of the letter

- These clips are provided via SSF’s partnership with Learning on Screen and BoB. Once you have begun your free trial the clips may be accessed **and downloaded for permanent use** via the links within this and subsequent Teaching and Learning Activities. You should download all clips within one month if you wish to benefit from free downloads during the trial period
  - For each clip, pupils should use the analysis grid to consider aspects of Lady Macbeth’s character and to consider why directors have made particular choices. The clips are all to be found within the bespoke playlist created by SSF entitled Interpretations of Macbeth. The entire playlist can be found [HERE](#). Individual links to clips appear below
- Clip 1 – Justin Kurzel interpretation. Click [HERE](#)<sup>1</sup>
  - Clip 2 – Orson Welles’ interpretation. Click [HERE](#)<sup>2</sup>
  - Clip 3 – BBC TV Shakespeare interpretation. Click [HERE](#)<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> 'Macbeth - Kurzel version', Macbeth, 01:30 03/11/2016, FilmFour, 140 mins. 00:24:32-00:26:40. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/clip/99380> (Accessed 09 Aug 2017)

<sup>2</sup> 'Macbeth - Orson Welles', Macbeth, 01:50 20/12/2009, BBC2 England, 105 mins. 00:09:50-00:11:23. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/clip/99381> (Accessed 09 Aug 2017)

<sup>3</sup> Clip from The BBC Television Shakespeare: Macbeth', The BBC Television Shakespeare, Macbeth, 20:40 05/11/1983, BBC2 England, 150 mins. 00:21:33-00:23:13. <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/clip/99378> (Accessed 09 Aug 2017)

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

### Possible discussion points for each clip

#### Clip 1 – Justin Kurzel interpretation

- Lady Macbeth is reading from an animal skin or similar – what effect does this have in terms of the historical setting/ context of the adaptation?
- The scene is underscored with minimalist orchestral music, which creates an ominous intensity
- Marion Cottillard's delivery is relatively gentle: she is very still and focused
- Lady Macbeth is praying at a candlelit altar in a private chapel– what effect does this have? Although she is praying to a Christian altar and there are images of angels, there are also disturbing images of demons, perhaps reinforcing a link to witchcraft and the three weird sisters (strengthening the mirrored dialogue of Lady Macbeth and the witches – e.g. her repetition of 'All hail')
- Although not apparent from this clip, we see Lady Macbeth persuading Macbeth to kill Duncan at this altar, and she reappears at the altar again when she is sleepwalking. This reinforces the importance of the altar and provides a circularity to Lady Macbeth's fate. She ends where she begins the story (and pupils may note this later)
- The monologue is interspersed with images of Macbeth travelling home to Dunsinane and of Banquo meeting young Fleance. What effect does this have? Pupils may think that it reinforces the link between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth – signposting his approach. It also has a dramatic effect of showing the close relationship between Fleance and Banquo

#### Clip 2 – Orson Welles' version

- The scene takes place in Lady Macbeth's bedchamber
- She begins on the bed, where she is reading the letter. She scrunches up the letter as she finishes reading it
- She subsequently moves to the window – seemingly bewitched by the tumultuous night and its spirits of evil
- There is an orchestral incidental music in the background. This has a 'swelling' and dramatic effect, building to a climax. It contrasts with the minimal, but equally intense music of the Kurzel version
- As she says 'Come thick night...' we move to an image of the tempestuous night outdoors, with the howling wind and billowing mists. This seems to link Lady Macbeth and her speech directly to forces of darkness and night – just as the Kurzel version linked her to witchcraft and irreligious worship

## Lessons 4 and 5 – Act 1. Scene 5

### Clip 3 – BBC Shakespeare interpretation

- The scene also takes place in the bedchamber, with Lady Macbeth initially standing at the window (watching for Macbeth?) and then moving to the bed (a reversal of the Welles' version)
- This is the most sexual of the interpretations. Lady Macbeth speaks mainly from a reclined position on her bed (c.f. at an altar) and she is impassioned and rapturous, as if she is in a lovers' embrace as she speaks. This contrasts with the Marion Cottillard portrayal, which feels more sacred, and with the Welles' version, where Lady Macbeth seems bewitched by the night.
- Here, all the intention seems to come from Lady Macbeth rather than from outside forces (such as God (or the devil) or the external elements)
- There is no underscoring with music here at all – perhaps also suggesting that the entirety of the intention in the scene is delivered by Lady Macbeth herself
- We do not see Macbeth until the very end of the scene, when he enters the bedroom. The focus is on Lady Macbeth throughout
- As with the other BBC clips, it has a 'stagey' rather than a filmic quality – there is a simplicity in the focus being entirely on Lady Macbeth rather than shared with Macbeth – but it also makes her a uniquely strong character in the scene

### Home Learning – Text and context

- Hand out the [text and context teaching point sheet](#) for the lesson. This is to be stuck into pupils' books. Ask pupils to complete the accompanying research activity as a home learning activity

Appendix

# MACBETH GCSE

Resources Pack



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## LADY MACBETH

'They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,  
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crown'd withal.

*Enter a Messenger*

## MESSENGER

The king comes here to-night.

## LADY MACBETH

Thou'rt mad to say it:

Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,  
Would have inform'd for preparation.

## Messenger

So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:  
One of my fellows had the speed of him,  
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more  
Than would make up his message.

## LADY MACBETH

Give him tending;  
He brings great news.

*Exit Messenger*

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

*Enter MACBETH*

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!  
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!  
Thy letters have transported me beyond  
This ignorant present, and I feel now  
The future in the instant.

**MACBETH**

My dearest love,  
Duncan comes here to-night.

**LADY MACBETH**

And when goes hence?

**MACBETH**

To-morrow, as he purposes.

**LADY MACBETH**

O, never

Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,  
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under't

**Lesson 4/ Text extract – Act 1, Scene 5**

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
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Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
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Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

#### Lesson 4/ Letter monologue

**The role of women in Shakespeare's time** – Just before the writing of Macbeth, England had been ruled by a woman – Elizabeth I – for many years. However, despite this example of powerful womanhood, women in Shakespeare's time did not have many rights. They could not

- Own land or property (unless they were widows)
- Act on the stage (all parts were played by men)
- Attend school or university

Unmarried women were expected to obey their fathers

Married women were expected to obey their husbands

Women were unlikely to work.

As such, the character of Lady Macbeth flies in the face of that perceived notion of Elizabethan and Jacobean femininity. She is ambitious, domineering, controlling and forthright: a far cry from the quiet and meek 'ideal' woman. How might audiences have reacted to her?

### **Animal imagery and the supernatural** –

Many of the animals featured in the language of the play have connotations that suggest witchcraft or evil.

These include

Raven

Owl

Cat

Toad

Serpent

**Activity** – Research the significance of the creatures named above in Elizabethan and Jacobean folklore

## **Lesson 5/ Text and context teaching points**

## Lesson 30/ Text Extract - Act 5, Scene 8

### Appendix – Reciprocal reading instructions for all lessons

Reciprocal reading is a type of independent/ collaborative guided reading activity which is pupil-led, with guidance from the teacher.

- Hand out **script extract** to the class.
- Now hand out the reciprocal reading role cards and instructions and put pupils into groups of 6

The roles to be given to the children are as follows:

- Big Boss (**NOTE – these should be your top 6 strongest readers as they will be responsible for troubleshooting/ assisting the rest of the group during the activity**)
  - Summariser
  - Questioner – **who should also be given the Question stem cards to assist with creating questions**
  - Predictor
  - Clarifier
  - Link Maker
- 
- The roles are explained on the **role cards**
  - Each group should read their text in silence
  - They are then given a specified period (say 10 minutes) to make notes on their Reciprocal reading session sheet in their designated section
  - The Boss should check whether any member of the group needs help with their activity and should act as an assistant and general trouble-shooter during the 10-minute period
  - The Boss then asks each person to feedback to the rest of the group. Other members of the group are asked to comment or further contribute. E.g. after the summariser has finished summarising the text, the Boss will ask if anyone else has an additional element of summary to add
  - As each person speaks, the rest of the group should, in addition to listening and contributing, add to the relevant part of their Reciprocal reading session sheet. E.g. when the summariser speaks, the rest should fill in the section on their sheet marked 'My group's summary of events'
  - Once the reciprocal reading session is closed, the entire class should feedback under the teacher's supervision, with children adding to their reciprocal reading session sheet as and when they wish to



# RECIPROCAL READING RULES



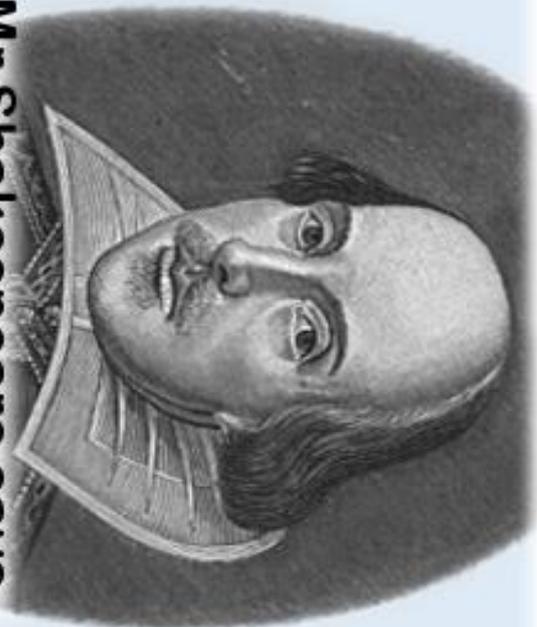
Listen up - you rank onion-eyed moldwarps!

Here are the reciprocal reading rules...

- The Boss makes sure that everyone has a job and introduces the text.
- Read the text together in silence.
- Use your role card to tell you exactly what to do.
- Use highlighters to help you highlight the parts that will help you do your job.
- Make notes as you go
- The Boss then asks everyone to feedback to the rest of the group one at a time
- Each group member makes notes of what the other members have said on the sheet provided.
- Your boss will feed back to the whole class

Reciprocal reading instructions

# The Clarifier

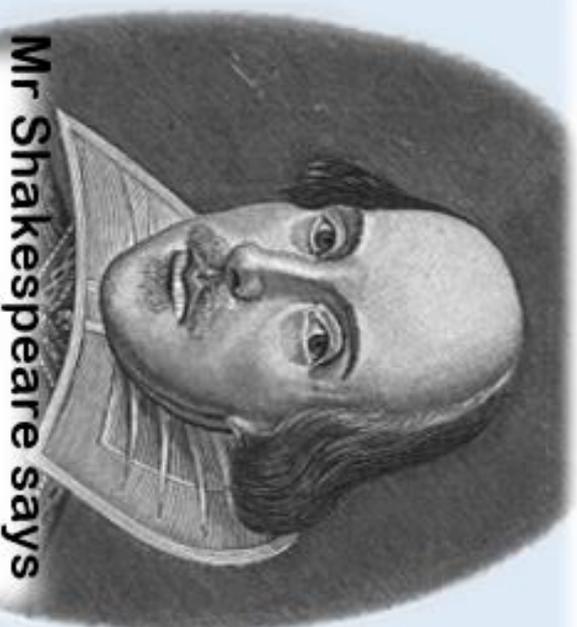


## Mr Shakespeare says

My words can sometimes be tricky to your 21<sup>st</sup> century ears.... So your job is...

1. Find any words you don't understand
2. Look for clues.
3. Read on to see if it makes sense
4. Try using another word in place of the confusing word.
5. Use a dictionary.

# The Link Maker



## Mr Shakespeare says

Many of my stories feature repeated themes and plots. Your job is to...

1. Think about this story.
2. Does it remind you of anything else?
3. It might be something you have seen or read or experienced.
4. Be ready to share with your table group.

## Appendix 2

# MACBETH GCSE

## Appendix of Written Tasks

- Worked examples of all written tasks (short answers and essay answers)
- Punctuation and Grammar checklist for self and peer assessment



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## Appendix of Written tasks



The written tasks that follow are a combination of short paragraph answers and longer essay questions designed to get your pupils thinking about *Macbeth* on a deeper level, in readiness for their exams

The written tasks might be used in a variety of ways in your lessons.

We have provided model answers that touch upon some of the points that may arise in discussion of these tasks with your students. There are, of course, other valid points that may arise during your discussions.

How should I use these written tasks?

- If your pupils are not ready to answer the questions yet, you might use them as a teaching tool to teach specific content covered in the model answers to your pupils
- You might ask your pupils to research parts of a written task individually or in small groups, and create a whole class shared answer by collating and discussing all group responses
- You might use each task as a class or homework written activity, with pupils comparing their answers with the model answer provided (either via peer or self assessment)
- Note that we have also provided a punctuation and grammar checklist for your pupils when peer or self assessing their work

**Short answer - Write a few short paragraphs using Point, Evidence, Explain, Develop about first impressions of the character of Lady Macbeth from her soliloquy in Act I, Scene 5**

**Possible Answer for discussion**

In her soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 5, Lady Macbeth shows numerous qualities: she is loyal to her husband and ambitious for him. She is determined and strong. She is ruthless and cruel. Finally, there is a supernatural link created between her and the weird sisters that makes her seem hellish and evil.

At the beginning of the soliloquy, Lady Macbeth is ambitious for her husband. She wants him to be *what thou art promised* by the weird sisters. She perceives her ambition for Macbeth to be stronger than his own ambition for himself. She knows that he is a noble warrior and that he is too much full of *kindness* and fairness. She wants him to come to her, so that she can influence him. The word *chastise* suggests that she is dominant. It makes us think of a parent criticising a child, and suggests that she holds a lot of sway over Macbeth. Moreover, her lack of respect for Macbeth's kindness might make the audience anxious about her nature, and anticipate her cruelty.

After the messenger departs, the ambitious desires of Lady Macbeth become unashamedly heartless. She asks to be filled with cruelty from the bottom to the top of her being. She asks for all femininity and weakness to be removed from her – so that her breasts produce bitter, acidic *gall* rather than wholesome milk. She also asks that her blood becomes so thick that it cannot travel to the parts of the body that lead to remorse or sadness. She essentially rejects traditional portrayals of femininity (compassion and maternal instincts) that would have been prevalent in Shakespeare's time.

The way that Lady Macbeth speaks in imperatives (*Come, Fill, Shake, Pall* etc) shows her to be commanding and powerful, but also suggests that she is invoking or pleading with something otherworldly. This superstitious element (she calls upon *spirits* and *hell* for example) link her to the witches and make her seem wicked and unreliable like them. It also suggests that, like the witches, she will have a significant influence on the action of the play and the ultimate fate of Macbeth.