between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

# Macbeth: The witches

How does Shakespeare make the witches unsettling, and why open with them?

**Lesson 3 of 33 from the scheme of learning**

**Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels**

Written for the AQA specification



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# What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Macbeth scheme for Literature Paper 1, Section A. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Teacher notes** | Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages). |
| **Slides** | The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 3, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file). |
| **Student pages** | The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document). |

## How every lesson works

| | |
|---|---|
| **Know** | Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 and 2 of the full scheme. |
| **Apply** | Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding. |
| **Master** | One shared task, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model and an exit ticket. Most Master tasks are What–How–Why paragraphs, and some are creative or other forms: in this lesson, a spell and commentary. |

## Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Securing** | The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters. For students working towards a grade 4. |
| **Strengthening** | Prompts for What, How and Why, a paragraph planner and a checklist. For students working at grades 5 and 6. |
| **Soaring** | A debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner. For students aiming at grades 7 to 9. |

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

## In the full scheme

- 33 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- Four Feedback Loop progress checks with whole-class feedback sheets and improvement tasks

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- An exam-style end-of-unit essay with a teacher guide, level guidance and annotated model answers
- A Soaring stretch booklet for students aiming at the top levels
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson
- The revision workbook and the model answer pack, to print for every student
- Every licence for the scheme also includes its 30 Raising Achievement drills for intervention sessions

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# Lesson 3: The witches

SEQUENCE 1: CONTEXT AND ACT 1 · 60 MINUTES

## How does Shakespeare make the witches unsettling, and why open with them?

### By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how paradox, rhyme and rhythm make the witches sound different from everyone else in the play
- Analyse the paradox at the heart of the play's opening scene
- Write a chant in the witches' style and explain what its choices do to an audience

### Lesson at a glance

| Time | Phase | What happens | Slides |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0–8 | Know | Do Now: five quick questions on Lesson 1 and KS3 terms. Students self-mark from the answer slide. | 2–3 |
| 8–20 | Know | Pre-teach "paradox", "hurlyburly", "prophecy" and "supernatural". Read the scene aloud with three students as the witches, then read it again and ask students to clap the beat of the last two lines. | 4–7 |
| 20–30 | Apply | Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about why a statement that cannot be true is the first thing the audience hears, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box. | 8 |
| 30–35 | Apply | Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support. | 9–10 |
| 35–53 | Master | Students write a chant in the witches' style and a three-sentence commentary, using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model chant in the last five minutes and ask three students to read theirs aloud together. | 11–12 |
| 53–60 | Master | Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of Lesson 4. | 13 |

### Do Now answers

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What does regicide mean? | The killing of a king |
| 2 | What did James I believe the divine right of kings meant? | That a king was chosen by God and answered only to God |
| 3 | What happened in November 1605? | The Gunpowder Plot to blow up the king and Parliament was discovered |
| 4 | What is a paradox? | A statement that seems to contradict itself but may hold a truth |
| 5 | Which book about witchcraft did James I write in 1597? | Daemonologie |

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## Vocabulary

| | |
|---|---|
| **paradox** | a statement that seems impossible because it contradicts itself |
| **hurlyburly** | noisy confusion, like a battle |
| **prophecy** | a prediction about the future |
| **supernatural** | beyond the laws of nature; magic, spirits and witches |

## Reading

### Act 1 Scene 1: the witches meet

*The play opens on an open place in a storm. Three witches plan to meet Macbeth.*

**FIRST WITCH.**
When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

**SECOND WITCH.**
When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

**THIRD WITCH.**
That will be ere the set of sun.

**FIRST WITCH.**
Where the place?

**SECOND WITCH.**
Upon the heath.

**THIRD WITCH.**
There to meet with Macbeth.

**FIRST WITCH.**
I come, Graymalkin!

**SECOND WITCH.**
Paddock calls.

**THIRD WITCH.**
Anon.

**ALL.**
Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

William Shakespeare, Macbeth (1606), Act 1 Scene 1

**Word help** **ere**: before · **Graymalkin**: a grey cat, the First Witch's familiar spirit · **Paddock**: a toad, another familiar spirit · **Anon**: at once, I am coming

## Explode the quotation

**Method**
A paradox, spoken by all three witches together, in a chant that rhymes.

**Zoom in**
"foul" means dirty, evil and ugly. The witches say that good and evil have swapped places.

**"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"**

**Effect**
The audience is warned that nothing in this world can be trusted. What looks good may be deadly.

**Purpose**
Shakespeare opens with witches because his audience believed in them and feared them. He sets up a play in which a brave man, a loving wife and a trusted thane all turn out to hide something foul.

## Hinge question

**The witches chant "Fair is foul, and foul is fair". What does the line tell the audience?**

A. The witches think they are beautiful.

B. The weather is both fine and stormy.

**C. In this world, good and evil cannot be told apart.** **(the right answer)**

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**What the answers tell you**

B shows a literal reading of the words: these may be your students who start on Securing; re-teach paradox. A means the student has missed that the line is about the whole world of the play, so return to the Zoom in note before they write.

**Why the answer is right**

"foul" means evil and "fair" means good, so the witches announce a world where the two have swapped places and appearances cannot be trusted.

## Master task: spell and commentary

**Write a short chant for the three witches in their style: short lines, rhyming couplets and at least one paradox. Then explain in three sentences what your choices do to an audience.**

### Securing aiming for a 4

A frame for the chant and the commentary, the witches' lines as models and a word bank.

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"

"Hover through the fog and filthy air"

"When the battle's lost and won"

"In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

### Strengthening aiming for grades 5 to 6

Prompts for the chant and the commentary, and a success checklist.

Give each witch a line, then let all three speak together at the end

Keep every line short, with a falling beat: DUM-da, DUM-da, DUM-da, DUM

Rhyme in couplets and build in one paradox

Write three sentences on what your rhythm, rhyme and paradox do to an audience

### Soaring aiming for grades 7 to 9

Write the chant so that it hides a prophecy that sounds good and will turn out badly, as the witches' greetings do. Then write your three sentences comparing your choices with Shakespeare's.

## Model chant and commentary

FIRST WITCH. Where the river runs to stone,

SECOND WITCH. There we three shall meet alone.

THIRD WITCH. Bring the feather, bring the bone.

ALL. Kind is cruel, cruel kind: Fill the eye and blind the mind. Sleep by day and walk by night; Crown the wrong and kill the right. What is high shall soon be low; What is crowned the worms shall know.

Commentary: My chant uses short lines with a falling beat, so it sounds like a spell and nothing like the steady verse of the nobles. The paradox 'Kind is cruel, cruel kind' echoes "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" and warns the audience that kindness in this play may hide a knife. The last couplet sounds like a curse on a king, so an audience in 1606, who believed witches were real, would hear a threat to the throne before the story has begun.

**What makes it work**

- Every line has seven syllables and a falling beat, and the lines rhyme in pairs, as the witches' lines do
- The paradox turns two opposites round, the same shape as "Fair is foul, and foul is fair"
- Each sentence of the commentary names a method and says what it does to the audience, with context in the last one

## Exit ticket

***Shakespeare opens the play with the witches because…***

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