

RAISING ACHIEVEMENT • MACBETH • DRILL 1

Two truths are told

Macbeth

Today: how Macbeth reacts when the first prophecy comes true

25 minutes

Do Now

Know

- 1 Who tells Duncan about “brave Macbeth” in Act 1 Scene 2?
- 2 Which title does Macbeth already hold at the start of the play?
- 3 What three things do the witches call Macbeth in Act 1 Scene 3?
- 4 In which year was Macbeth probably first performed?
- 5 What does ‘the divine right of kings’ mean?

Do Now: answers

Know

1

Who tells Duncan about “brave Macbeth” in Act 1 Scene 2?

The wounded Captain (a sergeant) who fought in the battle

2

Which title does Macbeth already hold at the start of the play?

Thane of Glamis

3

What three things do the witches call Macbeth in Act 1 Scene 3?

Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and king hereafter

4

In which year was Macbeth probably first performed?

1606

5

What does ‘the divine right of kings’ mean?

The belief that a king is chosen by God and answers only to God

Focus reminder

Know

What the Macbeth question asks you to do

Start with the extract. Pick a short quotation and zoom in on one word or method.

Write 'Shakespeare presents Macbeth as...'. He is a character Shakespeare built, not a real person.

Then link to the play as a whole: how is Macbeth different earlier or later?

Say why: what does Shakespeare want his Jacobean audience to think or feel?

Macbeth's aside after Ross's news

Read

William Shakespeare · 1606 · Act 1 Scene 3

- 1 MACBETH.
Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.
- 5 I thank you, gentlemen.
This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor:
- 10 If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
- 15 My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man
That function is smother'd in surmise,
And nothing is but what is not.

Check your understanding

Know

- 1 What news has Macbeth just heard?
- 2 Which “two truths” does he mean?
- 3 What does the “horrid image” do to his body?
- 4 Who hears this speech?

Check your understanding: answers

Know

1

What news has Macbeth just heard?

Ross has told him he is now Thane of Cawdor.

2

Which “two truths” does he mean?

The first two prophecies: Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor.

3

What does the “horrid image” do to his body?

It makes his hair stand on end and his heart knock against his ribs.

4

Who hears this speech?

Only the audience. It is an aside.

Quotation explosion

Apply

**"why do I yield to that suggestion Whose
horrid image doth unfix my hair"**

Copy the quotation into the middle of your page. Explode it: answer each question around it.

Explode it

Apply

AO1

What is the “suggestion”, and what does it show about Macbeth?

AO2

What does the verb “yield” suggest?

AO2

Why does Shakespeare use an aside here?

AO3

Why would a Jacobean audience find this “horrid image” so shocking?

Explosion: answers

Apply

AO1

What is the “suggestion”, and what does it show about Macbeth?

The thought of murdering Duncan. It shows the idea of murder is in his mind moments after the prophecy, before anyone has suggested it to him.

AO2

What does the verb “yield” suggest?

Giving in or surrendering, like a soldier losing a fight. The warrior praised in Scene 2 is already losing a battle inside his own head.

AO2

Why does Shakespeare use an aside here?

Only the audience hears his thoughts, so we know about murder before anyone on stage does. This creates dramatic irony: the others just see him lost in thought.

AO3

Why would a Jacobean audience find this “horrid image” so shocking?

Under the divine right of kings, killing a king was a sin against God as well as treason. After the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the audience is watching a plot against a king begin in a man’s mind.

Embedding a short quotation

Technique

Put two to five words of quotation inside your own sentence so it reads smoothly. Short quotations let you zoom in on a single word.

And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,

Your task Write one sentence that embeds “knock at my ribs” and says what it shows about Macbeth’s fear.

The question

Plan

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 3 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Macbeth has just been told he is Thane of Cawdor, so the witches' first prophecy has come true.

Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a man tempted by murder?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents Macbeth in the play as a whole.

Today: plan your answer. No essay. About 8 minutes.

Plan it

Plan

Plan

1. Today: plan your answer in 8 minutes. No essay.
2. Thesis: one sentence on what Shakespeare shows about temptation through Macbeth.
3. Points: 1 from this aside, 2 from the dagger soliloquy in Act 2 Scene 1, 3 from Macbeth in Act 5. A short quotation for each.
4. Context: one line on the divine right of kings or the Gunpowder Plot.

Top tips

- A plan is notes: short lines, not full sentences.
- Write 'Shakespeare presents Macbeth as...', not "Macbeth is..."
- Spelling counts (AO4): Shakespeare, prophecy, ambition, aside.

Your turn

8 minutes

Today: plan your answer in 8 minutes. No essay.

Model plan

Master

Thesis: Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a man tempted by murder the moment the prophecy comes true. He is horrified at first, but the horror wears away.

Point 1 (extract): “why do I yield to that suggestion”. The verb “yield” makes murder an enemy he is already losing to, and the rhetorical question shows a divided mind.

Point 2 (Act 2 Scene 1): “Is this a dagger which I see before me”. Temptation now has a shape and points him towards Duncan’s room.

Point 3 (Act 5 Scene 5): “I have almost forgot the taste of fears”. The fear that made his heart knock at his ribs has gone.

Context: under the divine right of kings, killing a king was a sin against God as well as treason, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 was fresh in the audience’s minds.

Have a go: Macbeth hears that Malcolm is heir

Read

William Shakespeare · Act 1 Scene 4

1 MACBETH.

The Prince of Cumberland!

That is a step

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,

5 For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!

Let not light see my black and deep desires.

The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be,

Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

Have a go

Practise

Read this short moment from later in Act 1. Answer in two or three sentences.

How has Macbeth's attitude to murder moved on since his aside in Act 1 Scene 3? Use one quotation.

Green pen

Check your work and improve it in green pen.



My thesis gives an idea about Macbeth, not a summary of the plot.



Each point has a short, exact quotation and a named method.



My context is linked to my argument.



I checked the spelling of Shakespeare, prophecy, ambition and aside (AO4).