

between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE SAMPLE

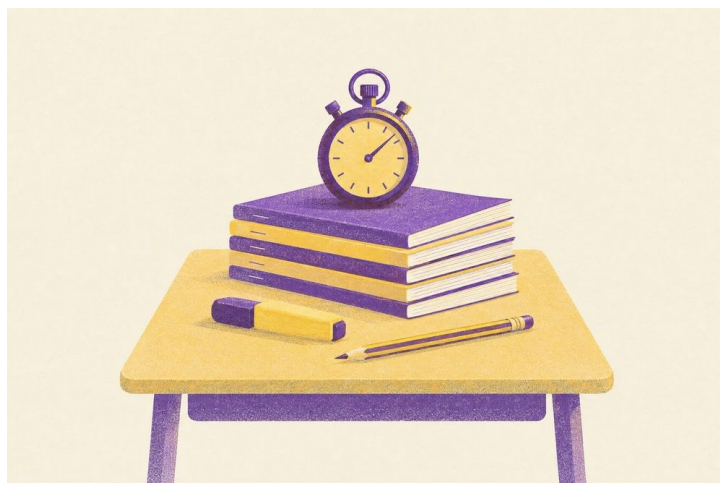
Macbeth: Raising Achievement

Free drill: teacher guide

1 drills of about 25 minutes

Slides, a student sheet and answers for every drill

Written for the AQA specification

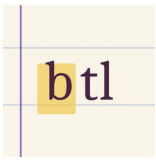


How the drills work

Thirty short Raising Achievement drills for AQA Literature Paper 1, Section A (Macbeth), each built for a 25-minute intervention session. Every drill takes one extract from the play and explodes one important quotation through AO1, AO2 and AO3 questions. Students then plan an answer or write an introduction in 8 minutes, never a full essay, and check it against a model in green pen.

Do Now	Five quick retrieval questions, answered in silence and self-marked.
Focus reminder	What the skill or exam question asks for, in three or four plain points.
Read and check	The extract with line numbers, then quick questions to make sure everyone has understood it.
Quotation explosion	One quotation, exploded with AO1, AO2 and AO3 questions.
Technique	One method or sentence skill, modelled on the extract.
The question	An exam-style question in AQA's wording. Students plan an answer or write the introduction, never a full essay, then compare with a model.
Have a go	A second short task on a new moment or extract.
Green pen	A checklist to improve the answer before the sheets are collected.

Each drill comes as an editable slide deck with notes on every slide and a printable student sheet. Run them weekly in intervention sessions, in any order within a topic.



Topics

Macbeth

These drills track Macbeth from the shaken man of Act 1 to the tyrant of Act 5, one big moment at a time. The most common error is writing about him as a real person ('Macbeth is evil') when they should treat him as Shakespeare's creation ('Shakespeare presents Macbeth as...'). Students also tend to retell the plot; push them to zoom in on one word and say what it suggests. Run each drill at pace: the Quotation Explosion should take no more than four minutes, so there is time for the plan or introduction.

Drills: 1 (Two truths are told)

Drill 1: Two truths are told

Macbeth · How Macbeth reacts when the first prophecy comes true

Do Now	Focus reminder and extract	Quotation Explosion	Technique	The Question: plan	Model and green pen	Have a go
3 min	3 min	4 min	2 min	8 min	3 min	2 min

- Read the aside aloud with a pause at each question mark so students hear how unsettled he is.
- Common error: saying the witches tell Macbeth to kill Duncan. They do not. The “suggestion” comes from his own mind.
- If time is short, set Have a go as home learning.

Do Now answers

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**

Check your understanding

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: “why do I yield to that suggestion Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair”

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.

Technique: Embedding a short quotation

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

The question

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.

Model plan

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.

- The thesis answers the question with an idea, not a retelling of the plot.
- Each point has a short, exact quotation and names a method (verb, rhetorical question, vision).
- The points come from the extract and two other moments in the play.
- Context gets its own line and links back to the thesis.

Have a go

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.

He no longer asks why he yields: he names Malcolm as a “step” he must “fall down, or else o’erleap”. He still hides from himself (“Stars, hide your fires!”), so shame remains, but he is now planning, where before he was only shaken.