

Social/Historical Context

King James I

- King James I was the monarch when Macbeth was written and first performed.

Witchcraft

- King James I was convinced by the reality of witchcraft and its great danger to him, leading to trials that began in 1591.
- It was likely that the witches were included to please him as Shakespeare wanted his approval.

Divine Rights of Kings

- King James I believed in The Divine Right of Kings.
- This meant any attempt to kill a king went directly against God.

The Great Chain of Being

- This was the idea that everyone was ordered by God with the king at the top.
- By killing the king and taking his place, Macbeth was broke this natural order.

Gunpowder Plot

- The Gunpowder Plot was a failed assassination attempt against King James I.
- Disgruntled Catholics planned to blow up the Parliament on the 5th November 1605.
- Guy Fawkes was discovered guarding the explosives in the basement of the House of Lords.
- The traitors were sentenced to death, and this day is still celebrated in England as Guy Fawkes Day.

Characters

Macbeth

- a loyal warrior who becomes duplicitous as he becomes obsessed with the witches prophecies of power.

Lady Macbeth

- Macbeth's wife who drives his ambition in the beginning but loses her control by the end.

Banquo

- Macbeth's close friend and ally who also receives prophecies from the witches.

Fleance

- Banquo's son who escapes his attempted murder.

King Duncan

- King of Scotland who is portrayed as a strong and respected leader at the start of the play.

Macduff

- A brave warrior who is loyal to Duncan and is constantly suspicious of Macbeth.

Malcolm

- Duncan's son who is next in line to the throne.

Three Witches

- Weird sisters who are portrayed as forces of nature who seem to know the future.

Themes

Ambition

- Ambition is the strong desire to do or achieve something.
- Macbeth's ambition for power leads to his downfall.

Kingship

- Kingship is the state or position of being a king.
- Macbeth becomes king through immoral means and his rule continues in this way.
- Whilst Duncan is fair, Macbeth is tyrannical and his rule is a brutal dictatorship.

Fate and Free Will

- Fate is the development of events outside a person's control predetermined by a supernatural power.
- Macbeth may be fated to be king, but he decides all on his own that he will murder Duncan to obtain the crown.
- His actions suggest that fate may be predetermined, but free will determines how a people reach their destinies.

Masculinity

- Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth equate masculinity to violence and aggression.
- They both believe that in order to be a real man, then a man must perform violent acts when necessary.

Vocabulary

Prose- written or spoken language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure.

Soliloquy- speaking thoughts aloud when by oneself.

Dramatic Irony- when the audience or readers know more about a situation than the character does.

Tragedy- a play that involves tragic events and unhappy ending.

Tragic Hero- the central character of a play who starts as a noble figure and later experiences a tragic downfall.

Hamartia- a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero.

Prophecy- a prediction of what will happen in the future.

Hubris- excessive pride or self-confidence.

Pathetic Fallacy- attaching emotion or mood to things found in nature that are not human.

Duplicitious - intentionally hiding true feelings or intentions behind false words or actions.

Plot

Act 1

- Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches who give them prophecies.
- The Thane of Cawdor is executed.
- Lady Macbeth receives a letter from Macbeth and then persuades him to kill King Duncan

Act 2

- Macbeth sees a dagger reflecting his doubts about the murder.
- He kills Duncan with help from Lady Macbeth.
- Malcolm flees and Macbeth is chosen to be king.

Act 3

- Banquo suspects Macbeth.
- Macbeth has Banquo murdered but his son Fleance escapes.
- Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost.

Act 4

- The witches make another set of prophecies.
- Macbeth orders the killing of Macduff's family.
- Macduff and Malcolm agree to invade Scotland.

Act 5

- Lady Macbeth's mental state deteriorates eventually committing suicide.
- Malcolm's army invades through Burnham wood.
- Macbeth is killed by Macduff and Malcolm is proclaimed king.

Metre

Metre- the rhythmic pattern of a poetic line.

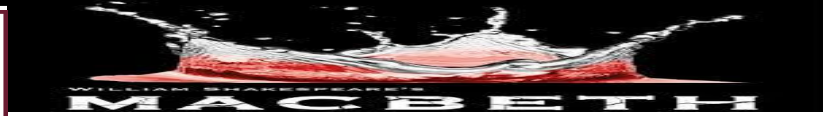
Metrical Foot- a group of 2 or 3 syllables forming the basic unit of poetic rhythm.

Iamb- is a metrical unit that combines an unstressed syllable, and a stressed (emphasized) syllable (da-DUM).

Iambic Pentameter- a rhythm structure that combines unstressed syllables and stressed syllables in groups of five.

Trochees- the exact opposite of an iamb. Instead of following the unstressed-stressed (da-DUM) pattern it goes stressed-unstressed (DUM-da).

Trochaic Tetrameter- a metrical structure written with eight syllables per line that are structured as stressed and unstressed pairs.



Social/Historical Context

Characters

Plot

1. Who was the King of England when Shakespeare wrote 'Macbeth'?
2. Why did Shakespeare include 'witches' in the play?
3. What is 'The Divine Right of Kings'?
4. What is 'The Great Chain of Being'?
5. What are 5 facts about 'The Gunpowder Plot'?

- Who is who in the play?**
1. Duncan's son who is next in line to the throne.
 2. Banquo's son who escapes his attempted murder.
 3. Weird sisters who are portrayed as forces of nature who seem to know the future.
 4. A loyal warrior who becomes duplicitous as he becomes obsessed with the witches prophecies of power.
 5. King of Scotland who is portrayed as a strong and respected leader at the start of the play.
 6. Macbeth's wife who drives his ambition in the beginning but loses her control by the end.
 7. Macbeth's close friend and ally who also receives prophecies from the witches.
 8. A brave warrior who is loyal to Duncan and is constantly suspicious of Macbeth.

1. Put in the correct chronological order and Act the following deaths:
 - Macduff's family
 - Macbeth's death
 - Banquo's death
 - The Thane of Cawdor's death
 - Lady Macbeth's death
 - Duncan's death
1. How do these deaths affect the story and/ or characters?

Themes

Vocabulary

1. There are 4 main themes in the play. What are they?
2. Explain in 1 sentence what each theme means?
3. Write 1 point on each theme on how it relates to the play, 'Macbeth'?

1. Why would Shakespeare use a soliloquy in the play?
2. What is 'Dramatic Irony'?
3. How does hamartia and hubris contribute to the downfall of the tragic hero in 'Macbeth'?

Meter

1. What is a metrical foot?
2. What is an iamb?
3. What is a trochee?
4. What is a dactyl?
5. Pentameter means?
6. Tetrameter mean?