



Knowledge organiser	Subject	Year	Term	Unit Title	Version
	English	8	SUMMARY	<i>Macbeth</i> and Non-fiction	June 2024

NARRATIVE: Key characters

Macbeth	A 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.
Fleance	Banquo's son who represents innocence and justice.
Duncan	King at the beginning of the play - a strong, respected leader.
Malcolm	Duncan's oldest son and next in line to the throne.
Donalbain	Duncan's youngest son disappears after Duncan's murder
Macduff	Macbeth's antagonist: A brave warrior who is loyal to Duncan consistently suspicious of Macbeth.
Witches	Supernatural figures that share prophecies of the future.

NARRATIVE: Plot summary

1	Macbeth and Banquo encounter meet 3 witches who prophesize that Macbeth will become king and Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne. Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan to hasten the prophecy. Despite his doubts, Macbeth kills Duncan.
2	Macbeth, now king, begins to unravel mentally, tormented by guilt and paranoia. Banquo, suspicious of Macbeth, is murdered on Macbeth's orders, but Banquo's son, Fleance, escapes. Macbeth is haunted by Banquo's ghost.
3	Macbeth seeks out the witches again, who warn him to beware of Macduff, assure him that no man born of a woman will harm him, and that he will remain king until Birnam Wood moves. Macbeth orders the murder of Macduff's family, but Macduff escapes. Lady Macbeth's mental state deteriorates.
4	Macduff and Malcolm rally support in England to overthrow Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is seen sleepwalking and confessing to the murders in her sleep. Macbeth learns of the approaching English army.
5	Lady Macbeth dies, presumably by suicide, driving Macbeth into deeper despair. The English forces disguise themselves with branches from Birnam Wood, fulfilling the witches' prophecy. Macbeth is ultimately killed by Macduff.

CONTEXTS: History and society

Publication	Written by Shakespeare in the 17 th century, in 1606
Monarchy	King James I was in power. Queen Elizabeth ruled before him. James had Scottish heritage and strongly believed in witches.
Divine Right	Kings & Queens believed that their power was granted by God.
Witchcraft	Science was not developed enough to understand the causes of disasters like floods & droughts, so people blamed witches. Thousands of women were accused of witchcraft and tortured and executed. The witches in the play were frightening.
Patriarchy	A society in which men dominate
Gender roles	Society has often expected people to behave in certain ways depending on whether they are male or female.
Masculinity	Men were stereotypically represented as powerful / confident.
Femininity	Women were stereotypically represented as passive & kind

TERMINOLOGY / VOCABULARY / CONCEPTS

Tragedy	A story ending with death as a result of a character's flaw.
Soliloquy	A speech in which a character talks alone, to themselves.
Foreshadowing	Moments in a story that hint at future events.
Convention	Something that is normal or expected.
Stereotype	A widely held representation – not necessarily true.
Conform	Fits expectations, e.g. He conforms to the stereotype
Challenge	Dispute something, e.g. He challenges the stereotype





Knowledge organiser	Subject	Year	Half-Term	Unit Title	Version
	English	8	1a	<i>Macbeth</i> and Non-fiction	June 2024

NARRATIVE: Key characters	
Macbeth	A 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.
Fleance	Banquo's son who represents innocence and justice.
Duncan	King at the beginning of the play - a strong, respected leader.
Malcolm	Duncan's oldest son and next in line to the throne.
Donalbain	Duncan's youngest son disappears after Duncan's murder
Macduff	Macbeth's antagonist: A brave warrior who is loyal to Duncan consistently suspicious of Macbeth.
Witches	Supernatural figures that share prophecies of the future.

CONTEXTS: History and society	
Publication	Written by Shakespeare in the 17 th century, in 1606
Monarchy	King James I was in power. Queen Elizabeth ruled before him. James had Scottish heritage and strongly believed in witches. His time in power was known as the "Jacobean" era.
Witchcraft	Science was not developed enough to understand the causes of disasters like floods & droughts, so people blamed witches. Thousands of women were accused of witchcraft and tortured and executed. Audiences at the time would have found the witches entertaining but also frightening.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL CONTENT	
Digital Theatre+	Watch the play – and more - on Digital Theatre+ at https://www.digitaltheatre.com/account/login . Ask your teacher for your username and password!

NARRATIVE: Plot summary – Act 1	
1	Macbeth and Banquo meet 3 witches who prophesize that Macbeth will become king and Banquo's descendants will inherit the throne. Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to murder King Duncan to hasten the prophecy. Despite his doubts, Macbeth kills Duncan.

TERMINOLOGY / VOCABULARY / CONCEPTS	
Tragedy	A story ending with death as a result of a character's flaw.
Foreshadowing	Moments in a story that hint at future events. The events of Act 1 foreshadow later events in the narrative.
Gender roles	Society has often expected people to behave in certain ways depending on whether they are male or female.
Representation	The way something is "represented" is the way something is shown to be. For example, the witches help to "represent" women as supernatural and manipulative

KEY QUOTATIONS & TECHNIQUES		
#	Quotation	Technique and analysis
1	"Fair is foul and foul is fair" <i>The witches</i>	A chiasmus – an idea expressed by reversing word orders. This confusing reversal shows how looks can be deceiving, and foreshadows the events that will take place later...
2	"unsex me here" <i>Lady Macbeth</i>	The verb "unsex" shows that Lady Macbeth doesn't want her ambitions held back simply because she is a woman.
3	" Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent beneath it" <i>Lady Macbeth</i>	This simile shows how Lady Macbeth is motivated to betray her King, and is actively encouraging Macbeth to commit murder.



Knowledge organiser	Subject	Year	Half-Term	Unit Title	Version
	English	8	1b	<i>Macbeth</i> and Non-fiction	June 2024

NARRATIVE: Plot summary – Act 2

2	Macbeth, now king, begins to unravel mentally, tormented by guilt and paranoia. Banquo, suspicious of Macbeth, is murdered on Macbeth's orders, but Banquo's son, Fleance, escapes. Macbeth is haunted by Banquo's ghost.
---	---

CONTEXTS: History and society

Masculinity	Men were stereotypically represented as powerful / confident.
Femininity	Women were stereotypically represented as caring, passive & kind.
Divine Right	Kings & Queens believed that their power was granted by God.

TERMINOLOGY / VOCABULARY / CONCEPTS

Personification	Where something is not human is described as if it is human. e.g. "the wind sang"
Soliloquy	A speech in which a character talks alone, to themselves.
Convention	Something that is normal or expected.
Stereotype	A widely held representation – not necessarily true.
Conform	Fits expectations, e.g. He <u>conforms</u> to the stereotype
Challenge	Dispute something, e.g. He <u>challenges</u> the stereotype

KEY QUOTATIONS & TECHNIQUES

#	Quotation	Technique and analysis
1	"Is this a dagger which I see before me...?" <i>Macbeth</i>	This rhetorical question is part of Macbeth's soliloquy. It reveals Macbeth's doubt – he is still not certain about murdering King Duncan. It foreshadows Duncan's murder.
2	<i>"Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep"</i>	This exclamation reveals Macbeth's guilt and paranoia. He cannot sleep properly since murdering his king. "Sleep" is personified . Macbeth has killed his innocence forever.

NON-FICTION: Form features of an article

Headline	Main title, used to grab the reader's intention
Sub-headline	A sub-title that adds more information about the article
Structure	State argument / state counter-argument / evidence / conclusion
Rhetoric	Engage your reader by using rhetorical questions



Knowledge organiser	Subject	Year	Half-Term	Unit Title	Version
	English	8	2a	<i>Macbeth</i> and Non-fiction	June 2024

NARRATIVE: Plot summary – Acts 3 & 4

3	Macbeth seeks out the witches again, who warn him to beware of Macduff, assure him that no man born of a woman will harm him, and that he will remain king until Birnam Wood moves. Macbeth orders the murder of Macduff’s family, but Macduff escapes. Lady Macbeth's mental state deteriorates.
4	Macduff and Malcolm rally support in England to overthrow Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is seen sleepwalking and confessing to the murders in her sleep. Macbeth learns of the approaching English army.

TERMINOLOGY / VOCABULARY / CONCEPTS

Mental health	Mental health refers to someone’s emotional wellbeing. Macbeth’s mental health has been seriously damaged by his decision to commit murder.
Trauma	An emotional or psychological response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event. If you had a very bad experience, you might be left “traumatised”.
Deterioration	Becoming worse. Your health might “deteriorate” if you eat badly and don’t exercise.
Repetition	A technique used by writers to emphasise an important idea or concept.

KEY QUOTATIONS & TECHNIQUES

#	Quotation	Technique and analysis
1	<p>“o, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Macbeth</i></p>	<p>The metaphor reveals how Macbeth is increasingly traumatised and his mental health is deteriorating.</p> <p>The image of the scorpions is frightening and suggests how his mind is being poisoned and attacked.</p>
2	<p>“blood will have blood”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Macbeth</i></p>	<p>Macbeth realises that now that that here has been one death, there will be more.</p> <p>The repetition of “blood” foreshadows future death.</p>
	<p>“something wicked this way comes”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The witches</i></p>	<p>The witches refer to Macbeth as “wicked”.</p> <p>This shows that Macbeth is now evil – his fate is sealed.</p>



Knowledge organiser	Subject	Year	Half-Term	Unit Title	Version
	English	8	2b	<i>Macbeth</i> and Non-fiction	June 2024

NARRATIVE: Plot summary – Act 5

5	Lady Macbeth dies, presumably by suicide, driving Macbeth into deeper despair. The English forces disguise themselves with branches from Birnam Wood, fulfilling the witches' prophecy. Macbeth is ultimately killed by Macduff.
----------	--

TERMINOLOGY / VOCABULARY / CONCEPTS

Unchecked ambition	If you have “unchecked ambition”, you seek power or success without any consideration for other people, laws or morals.
Fate	The concept that our lives are already determined – we cannot escape what has already been planned for us.
Tragic downfall	A “tragic downfall” takes place when a powerful character loses everything – or dies – because of a weakness in their character.
Epiphany	A sudden realisation or new understanding about the world. Macbeth has an epiphany when he realises that his evil and ambition have been a waste of time and have led to nothing. He finally accepts his fate and failure.

KEY QUOTATIONS & TECHNIQUES

#	Quotation	Technique and analysis
1	<p>“What’s done cannot be undone”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Lady Macbeth</i></p>	<p>While sleepwalking, Lady Macbeth admits that there is no way back...</p> <p>She regrets her actions, and accepts that she will die as a result of her unchecked ambition.</p>
2	<p>“Out, out brief candle!”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Macbeth</i></p>	<p>Macbeth uses a candle as a metaphor for life and hope.</p> <p>He experiences an epiphany: he repeats the word “out” as he realises that death is inevitable and that his attempt to secure power was useless.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Lay on, Macduff”</i></p>	<p>This means “Start the fight, Macduff”. Macbeth and finally accepts his fate. In a way, this is quite brave because he faces up to his inevitable death and tragic downfall.</p>