**Act 1, Scene 1 – The Witches**

**A desert place.**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. What does the adverb ‘again’ suggest about the witches?
3. What mood is established at the beginning of the play? How is this mood established? Answer as annotations, highlighting specific examples of language that help to create this mood.
4. Who or what are Graymalkin and Paddock? What does this tell you about the world of the play?
5. How would a contemporary audience react to this opening? Why do you think this is? Consider what life was like at the time and how this would dictate what people believed in.
6. Why do you think Shakespeare has the witches talk in rhyming, **paradoxical** couplets? What is the effect and what does it tell you about the witches?

**\*Paradoxical** – Contradictory

*Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches*

**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.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**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.

**Act 1, Scene 2 – The Aftermath**

**A camp near Forres.**

**DUNCAN**

What bloody man is that? He can report,  
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt  
The newest state.

**MALCOLM**

This is the sergeant  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!  
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil  
As thou didst leave it.

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. Highlight the simile the sergeant uses to describe the two armies. Why does the sergeant make this comparison? What does it tell you about the armies?
3. How is the villain, Macdonwald presented here? Highlight Shakespeare’s language choices and explain what they imply.
4. How is Macbeth presented by Duncan and the Sergeant? Highlight the adjectives used and explain what they suggest.
5. ‘Brandish’d steel, which smoked with bloody execution’ – What can we infer about the world Macbeth’s world. What does the past participle ‘smoked’ imply?
6. The Sergeant personifies Macdonwald’s luck in the battle. Highlight this example of personification. What does the Sergeant compare luck to and why?

**Sergeant**

Doubtful it stood;  
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together  
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald--  
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
The multiplying villanies of nature  
Do swarm upon him--from the western isles  
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;  
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,  
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:  
For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--  
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion carved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave;  
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,  
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,  
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**DUNCAN**

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

**Act 1, Scene 3 – The Prophecies (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. Why do you think Macbeth’s first line recalls the first scene where we meet the witches? (‘Fair is foul and foul is fair’)
2. Highlight Banquo’s description of the witches. What does the language used suggest about them? Explain your ideas as annotations.
3. What does Macbeth’s use of the imperative, ‘speak’ suggest about him?
4. What is Macbeth’s initial reaction to the prophecies?
5. What is Banquo’s reaction to the prophecies?
6. How will a contemporary audience react to the prophecies given to Macbeth? Why would they react in this way?
7. **Extra Challenge:** Do you think these prophecies are true or do you think Macbeth uses them as an excuse to carry out his evil deeds later in the play? Explain your ideas.

**MACBETH**

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

**BANQUO**

How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these  
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,  
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught  
That man may question? You seem to understand me,  
By each at once her chappy finger laying  
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

**MACBETH**

INCREASING CHALLENGE

Speak, if you can: what are you?

**First Witch**

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

**Second Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

**Third Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

**BANQUO**

Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear  
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,  
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed  
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner  
You greet with present grace and great prediction  
Of noble having and of royal hope,  
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.  
If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow and which will not,  
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear  
Your favours nor your hate.

**Act 1, Scene 3 – The Prophecies (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1. What is a ‘thane’? Look up the definition and write it on this sheet.
2. What are the connotations of the noun, ‘King’? Why is this prophecy going to be appealing to Macbeth?
3. Why do you think Banquo’s prophecies are more confusing than Macbeth’s? What does it imply about the future of the play?
4. The witches ignore Macbeth’s command to stay. What does this tell you about a)the witches and b)Macbeth?
5. Highlight the supernatural elements in this scene. What language devices are used to present them? What is the effect?
6. How does Shakespeare register the psychological responses of Banquo and Macbeth? What do the questions ‘Whither…?’, ‘Were…?’ and ‘Have we…?’ tell the audience about Macbeth and Banquo’s reaction to the prophecies?

**First Witch**

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

**Second Witch**

Not so happy, yet much happier.

**Third Witch**

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:  
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

**First Witch**

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

**MACBETH**

Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:  
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;  
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,  
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king  
Stands not within the prospect of belief,  
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence  
You owe this strange intelligence? or why  
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way  
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you. *Witches vanish*

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**BANQUO**

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

**MACBETH**

Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted  
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

**BANQUO**

Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?

**MACBETH**

Your children shall be kings.

**BANQUO**

You shall be king.

**Act 1, Scene 3 – The Prophecies (Part 3)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening here?
2. What are the connotations of the noun, ‘Devil’? How could you argue that Banquo is aware of some supernatural force at work here?
3. Highlight the metaphor used by Macbeth. What does it mean/suggest?
4. The witches ignore Macbeth’s command to stay. What does this tell you about a)the witches and b)Macbeth?
5. Why do you think it is important for one of the prophecies to quickly come true? What do you think this news does to Macbeth?
6. Why do you think Macbeth’s final line in this section is spoken as an ‘aside’? What would it imply about the way he is feeling and what he is thinking?

**ROSS**

And, for an earnest of a greater honour,  
[Duncan] bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:  
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!  
For it is thine.

**BANQUO**

What, can the devil speak true?

**MACBETH**

The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me  
In borrow'd robes?

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**ANGUS**

Who was the thane lives yet;  
But under heavy judgment bears that life  
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined  
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel  
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both  
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;  
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,  
Have overthrown him.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!  
The greatest is behind.

*To ROSS and ANGUS*

Thanks for your pains.

**Act 1, Scene 3 – The Prophecies (Part 4)**

**Activities:**

1. Highlight the warning that Banquo issues to Macbeth. What does this tell us about Banquo’s character?
2. Highlight the rhetorical questions used by Macbeth in this part of the scene. What does it suggest about Macbeth’s state of mind?
3. What are the ‘instruments of darkness’ that Banquo talks about?
4. What is Macbeth already thinking about doing in this scene? How does he feel about this thought? What does ‘present fears are less than horrible imaginings’ actually mean?
5. What does Macbeth say about fate in this scene?
6. ‘Macbeth is completely at the mercy of the witches and their prophecies by the end of Act 1, Scene 3.’ Discuss.

**BANQUO**

That trusted home Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,  
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange: And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths, Win us with honest trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence. Cousins, a word, I pray you.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] Two truths are told,  
As happy prologues to the swelling act  
Of the imperial theme.--I thank you, gentlemen.

*Aside*

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:  
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:  
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.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**BANQUO**

Look, how our partner's rapt.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me, Without my stir.

**BANQUO**

New horrors come upon him, Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould  
But with the aid of use.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] Come what come may,  
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

**Act 1, Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. ‘I fear thy nature; it is too full o’the milk of human kindness’ – What does Lady Macbeth think about her husband here?
3. ‘Pour my spirits in thine ear’ – What is Lady Macbeth planning on doing here?
4. What would a contemporary audience think of Lady Macbeth? Why would they think this?
5. How is Lady Macbeth critical of her husband?
6. Why do you think Macbeth mentions nothing of Banquo’s prophecy in his letter?
7. How is Lady Macbeth presented as ambitious in this scene? Answer as annotations on your sheet using quotations to back up your ideas.

*Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter*

**LADY MACBETH**

'They met me in the day of success: and I have  
learned by the perfectest report, they have more in  
them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire  
to question them further, they made themselves air,  
into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in  
the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who  
all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title,  
before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred  
me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that  
shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver  
thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou  
mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being  
ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it  
to thy heart, and farewell.'  
Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,  
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crown'd withal.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**Act 1, Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. Lady Macbeth calls on the supernatural to ‘unsex me here’. What is Lady Macbeth asking for and why?

3. ‘Take my milk for gall’ – What is gall? How is Lady Macbeth segregating herself from the traditional role of a woman at this point in the play?

4. In Greek mythology, ravens are associated with Apollo, the god of prophecy. How does Macbeth’s prophecy link to the ‘fatal’ entrance of Duncan? What is Lady Macbeth suggesting here?

5. Why does Lady Macbeth command ‘thick night’ to ‘pall these in the dunnest smoke of hell’? What are the connotations of ‘hell’?

6. How does Lady Macbeth begin to fuel Macbeth’s egotistical nature in this scene?

7. Label anything else that presents Lady Macbeth as cunning and ambitious. Explain your choices.

8. **EXTRA CHALLENGE**: ‘There is a huge relationship between cruelty and masculinity in the play.’ Discuss.

**LADY MACBETH**

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*Enter MACBETH*

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!  
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!  
Thy letters have transported me beyond  
This ignorant present, and I feel now  
The future in the instant.

**Act 1, Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth (Part 3)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this part of the scene?

2. Who do you think is in control in this scene? Explain your ideas using quotations from the text.

3. Lady Macbeth says Macbeth must look ‘like an innocent flower’ but be a ‘serpent’. What are the connotations of ‘flower’ and ‘serpent’

4. What does Shakespeare’s use of half-line do to the pace of the scene? What impact does it have and how does it reflect the feelings of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?

5. Lady Macbeth does not hide her feelings in the same way Macbeth does. Why do you think this is?

6. ‘Your face… is a book where men may read strange matters’ and ‘Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under’t’ are both metaphors of concealment. What do they suggest?

**MACBETH**

My dearest love,  
Duncan comes here to-night.

**LADY MACBETH**

And when goes hence?

**MACBETH**

To-morrow, as he purposes.

**LADY MACBETH**

O, never  
Shall sun that morrow see!  
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,  
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming  
Must be provided for: and you shall put  
This night's great business into my dispatch;  
Which shall to all our nights and days to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACBETH**

We will speak further.

**LADY MACBETH**

Only look up clear;  
To alter favour ever is to fear:  
Leave all the rest to me.

*Exeunt*

**Act 1, Scene 7 – Before The Murder (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. Look up the word ‘soliloquy’ and write down the definition at the top of the sheet.
2. Highlight the following words:

* If
* Were
* Done
* But
* Be
* Here

Each word is repeated at least twice in the first few lines. What does this tell you about Macbeth’s state of mind?

1. Look at the highlighted lines. What do these lines tell you about Macbeth’s ambition?
2. Highlight at least TWO lines that reveal Macbeth’s internal conflict. (HINT: What does Macbeth say about Duncan’s leadership?)
3. ‘Macbeth is a weak man manipulated by others.’ Discuss.

**MACBETH**

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind**. I have no spur****To prick the sides of my intent, but only****Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself****And falls on the other.**

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**Act 1, Scene 7 – Before The Murder (Part 2)**

**MACBETH**

**Activities:**

1. Highlight a quotation that suggests Macbeth is worried what could happen to his reputation if they move forward with their plan.

2. What do Lady Macbeth’s use of rhetorical questions suggest about the way she feels towards Macbeth here?

3. How would a contemporary audience react during this scene? See if you can use the following words/phrases in your answer:

*- Patriarchal society*

*- Challenging conventions*

4. Could you argue that Lady Macbeth is taunting Macbeth rather than persuading him? Use quotations from the text to back up your ideas.

5. Look at the highlighted text. What does Lady Macbeth say she would be willing to do if she had to?

6. Look at the second half of the extract. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have very different ideas about what makes a ‘man’. What are these ideas and what do these views suggest about these characters at this point in the play?

7. ‘Regardless of his doubt, Macbeth is not a good man at this point in the play.’ Discuss.

We will proceed no further in this business:  
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

**LADY MACBETH**

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely? From this time  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACBETH**

Prithee, peace: I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.

**LADY MACBETH**

What beast was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now  
Does unmake you**. I have given suck, and know****How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:****I would, while it was smiling in my face,****Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,****And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you****Have done to this.**

**Act 1, Scene 7 – Before The Murder (Part 3)**

**MACBETH**

**Activities:**

1. Summarise Lady Macbeth’s plan. What are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth going to do in order to kill Duncan?

2. Look up the word ‘regicide’ and write down its definition on this sheet. How does it relate to this scene?

3. What does Macbeth’s ‘If we should fail?’ line tell the audience about how he is feeling? What does Lady Macbeth’s reply tell you about her state of mind?

4. Highlight the line where Macbeth has made up his mind. Do you think Macbeth is truly evil at this point? Explain your ideas.

5. How is moral order presented in this extract?

If we should fail?

**LADY MACBETH**

We fail!  
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep--  
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey  
Soundly invite him--his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACBETH**

Bring forth men-children only;  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two  
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
That they have done't?

**LADY MACBETH**

Who dares receive it other,  
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar  
Upon his death?

**MACBETH**

I am settled, and bend up  
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.  
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

**Act 2, Scene 1 – ‘Is This A Dagger…?’**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. What are the connotations of a ‘dagger’? What does this suggest about Macbeth’s state of mind?

3. ‘Thou marshall’st me the way I was going’ – Do you think Macbeth is in control of his own actions here? Explain your ideas with reference to the text.

4. ‘Witchcraft celebrates’ – What tone/atmosphere is established here? How would a contemporary audience, with their religious beliefs, react here?

5. Highlight language that relates to the senses. Macbeth talks about the sense of ‘sight’ throughout. Why?

6. ‘On thy blade… gouts of blood’ – Blood becomes a recurring motif throughout the play. What could blood represent and/or symbolise?

7. In the final lines, Macbeth imagines himself as murder itself. Do you think this is the part of the play where Macbeth transitions fully from a bad man to an evil man? Explain your ideas.

**MACBETH**

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,  
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*A bell rings*

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

**Act 2, Scene 2 – After The Murder (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. Identify a metaphor in Lady Macbeth’s first speech. Explain what it means.

3. Look at the first half of the extract. What do the repeated use of exclamation marks suggest to us about Lady Macbeth’s thoughts?

4. Although Lady Macbeth claims she has been given ‘fire’, her confident façade seems to crumble somewhat in this scene, especially when she fears discovery. Highlight words/phrases that show this is true and explain your choices as annotations.

5. The second half of the extract contains shorter lines with a series of questions and answers. What does this do to the pace of the scene and what effect does it have?

6. Why do you think the murder of King Duncan happens off stage if it is such an integral plot point? What do you think is Shakespeare’s intention here?

**LADY MACBETH**

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;  
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.  
Hark! Peace!  
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,  
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:  
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms  
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd  
their possets,  
That death and nature do contend about them,  
Whether they live or die.

**MACBETH**

[Within] Who's there? what, ho!

**LADY MACBETH**

INCREASING CHALLENGE

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,  
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't.

My husband!

**MACBETH**

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

**LADY MACBETH**

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.  
Did not you speak?

**MACBETH**

When?

**LADY MACBETH**

Now.

**MACBETH**

As I descended?

**LADY MACBETH**

Ay.

**Act 2, Scene 2 – After The Murder (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. Shakespeare seems to highlight Macbeth’s weakness here compared to the strength of Lady Macbeth. Highlight words/phrases suggesting Macbeth is weak and explain your choices.

3. The motif of blood is present in this extract. Look at the highlighted section of the extract. What is Macbeth saying here?

4. At the end of the extract, Lady Macbeth compares her hands to her husband’s, saying they are of a similar colour, but what is she saying about his heart?

5. ‘’tis the eye of childhood that fears a painted devil’ – Why does Lady Macbeth refer to childhood here? How does the idea of childhood link to Macbeth’s feelings?

6. Do you think Macbeth shows elements of regret once he has killed Duncan? Explain your ideas using evidence from the text.

**LADY MACBETH**

You do unbend your noble strength, to think  
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,  
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.  
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?  
They must lie there: go carry them; and smear  
The sleepy grooms with blood.

**MACBETH**

I'll go no more:  
I am afraid to think what I have done;  
Look on't again I dare not.

**LADY MACBETH**

Infirm of purpose!  
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead  
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood  
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;  
For it must seem their guilt.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*Exit. Knocking within*

**MACBETH**

Whence is that knocking?  
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?  
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.**Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood****Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather****The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,****Making the green one red.**

*Re-enter LADY MACBETH*

**LADY MACBETH**

My hands are of your colour; but I shame  
To wear a heart so white.

**Act 3, Scene 1 – Planning Banquo’s Murder (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. Summarise what Macbeth is saying in this scene.
2. What qualities does Macbeth identify in Banquo which makes him a possible threat?
3. Highlight the pronouns in Macbeth’s soliloquy. How do they emphasise the divide between Macbeth and Banquo?
4. What makes Macbeth’s crown ‘fruitless’ and his sceptre ‘barren’? What are connotations of ‘fruitless’ and ‘barren’?
5. Macbeth questions his actions, implying that everything he has done is for the benefit of Banquo’s sons and not himself. Find a quotation which shows this and highlight it.
6. Look at the highlighted lines. What is Macbeth saying about fate here? What is he planning to do?

**MACBETH**

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.--Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my grip,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
**Rather than so, come fate into the list.****And champion me to the utterance! Who's there!**

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers*

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

**Act 3, Scene 1 – Planning Banquo’s Murder (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. Pick THREE words and complete single word analysis on them. See if you can link your ideas to Macbeth’s characterisation and Shakespeare’s purpose.
3. Could it be argued that Macbeth truly becomes a hubristic character in this scene? Explain your ideas using ideas from the extract.
4. How does the final couplet recall Macbeth’s lines just before he kills Duncan? Why do you think Shakespeare uses couplets to signal the commencement of violent acts?
5. Why do you think the entrance of hired murderers presents Macbeth as politically powerful but morally weak? How has his approach to his enemies changed?

**MACBETH**

**Both Murderers**

We are resolved, my lord.

**MACBETH**

I'll call upon you straight: abide within.

*Exeunt Murderers*

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,  
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

*Exit*

Both of you  
Know Banquo was your enemy.

**Both Murderers**

True, my lord.

**MACBETH**

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,  
That every minute of his being thrusts  
Against my near'st of life: and though I could  
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight  
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,  
For certain friends that are both his and mine,  
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall  
Who I myself struck down; and thence it is,  
That I to your assistance do make love,  
Masking the business from the common eye  
For sundry weighty reasons.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**Second Murderer**

We shall, my lord,  
Perform what you command us.

**First Murderer**

Though our lives--

**MACBETH**

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most  
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;  
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,  
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,  
And something from the palace; always thought  
That I require a clearness: and with him--  
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work--  
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,  
Whose absence is no less material to me  
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate  
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:  
I'll come to you anon.

**Act 3, Scene 4 – Banquo’s Ghost (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1.What is happening in this scene?

2.Why would Macbeth be worried that Fleance is not dead?

3.If both Banquo and Fleance had been killed, Macbeth would be ‘whole as the marble, founded as the rock’. What do these similes imply?

4. Identify the metaphor Macbeth uses to describe Banquo and Fleance. Why does Macbeth compare Banquo to what he does? What are the connotations of this?

5.Look at the highlighted section of the extract. What is the effect of the alliteration of the hard ‘c’ sounds? What does it suggest about Macbeth’s feelings here?

**MACBETH**

There's blood on thy face.

**First Murderer**

'Tis Banquo's then.

**MACBETH**

'Tis better thee without than he within.  
Is he dispatch'd?

**First Murderer**

My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

**MACBETH**

Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good  
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,  
Thou art the nonpareil.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**First Murderer**

Most royal sir,  
Fleance is 'scaped.

**MACBETH**

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,  
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,  
As broad and general as the casing air:  
**But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in****To saucy doubts and fears.** But Banquo's safe?

**First Murderer**

Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,  
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;  
The least a death to nature.

**MACBETH**

Thanks for that:  
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled  
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,  
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow  
We'll hear, ourselves, again.

**Act 3, Scene 1 – Banquo’s Ghost (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1.What is happening in this scene?

2.Banquo’s ghost is so hideous that it ‘might appal the devil’. What are your initial impressions of Banquo’s ghost and Macbeth’s reaction to it?

3. What could the banquet itself be a symbol of? (Consider what banquets are usually like. How will Macbeth and Lady Macbeth want their guests to view the banquet?)

4. What does Banquo’s ghost symbolise about the state of Macbeth and the state of Scotland?

5. How does Shakespeare present a loss of control in this scene?

6. Analyse and discuss anything else of interest in this scene.

**MACBETH**

Those that we bury back, our monuments  
Shall be the maws of kites.

*GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes*

Which of you have done this?

**Lords**

What, my good lord?

**MACBETH**

Thou canst not say I did it: never shake  
Thy gory locks at me.

**ROSS**

Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

**LADY MACBETH**

Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,  
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;  
The fit is momentary; upon a thought  
He will again be well: if much you note him,  
You shall offend him and extend his passion:  
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACBETH**

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that  
Which might appal the devil.

**LADY MACBETH**

O proper stuff!  
This is the very painting of your fear:  
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,  
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,  
Impostors to true fear, would well become  
A woman's story at a winter's fire,  
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!  
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,  
You look but on a stool.

**MACBETH**

Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!  
how say you? Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.  
If charnel-houses and our graves must send

**Act 3, Scene 1 – Banquo’s Ghost (Part 3)**

**Activities:**

1. What does Macbeth find so terrifying in the ghost’s appearance?

2. What are the connotations of the word ‘glare’?

3. Explain the following quotations:

‘You have displaced the mirth’

‘Can such things be and overcome us like a summer’s cloud’

‘You can behold such sights and keep the natural ruby of your cheeks when mine is blanched with fear’.

4. How does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a man torn apart by guilt in this scene? Explain your ideas using quotations from the text.

5. Who is in control in this scene? Explain your ideas using quotations from the text.

*Re-enter GHOST OF BANQUO*

**MACBETH**

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!  
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with!

**LADY MACBETH**

Think of this, good peers,  
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;  
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

**MACBETH**

What man dare, I dare:  
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,  
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;  
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves  
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,  
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;  
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me  
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!  
Unreal mockery, hence!

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes*

Why, so: being gone, I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

**LADY MACBETH**

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting, With most admired disorder.

**MACBETH**

Can such things be, And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder? You make me strange  
Even to the disposition that I owe,  
When now I think you can behold such sights,  
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,  
When mine is blanched with fear.

**Act 4, Scene 1 – The New Prophecies (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. How does Macbeth describe the witches? What are the connotations of these adjectives? Highlight them and explain as annotations on the sheet.

3. Macbeth’s entrance is incredibly bold compared to the first time he met the witches. Why do you think this is? What does it suggest about him?

4. Macbeth ‘conjures’ the witches to answer him. What is the significance of this verb?

5. Why do you think Macbeth has gone to visit the witches again? (Consider whether he is greedy for more knowledge or whether he fears his power may not last).

6. Look at the highlighted section. How does Macbeth acknowledge the power of the witches here? How do you think an audience would respond to the witches when they learn more of what they can do?

**MACBETH**

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!  
What is't you do?

**ALL**

A deed without a name.

**MACBETH**

I conjure you, by that which you profess,  
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:  
**Though you untie the winds and let them fight****Against the churches; though the yesty waves****Confound and swallow navigation up;****Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;****Though castles topple on their warders' heads;****Though palaces and pyramids do slope****Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure****Of nature's germens tumble all together,****Even till destruction** sicken; answer me  
To what I ask you.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**First Witch**

Speak.

**Second Witch**

Demand.

**Third Witch**

We'll answer.

**First Witch**

Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,  
Or from our masters?

**Act 4, Scene 1 – The New Prophecies (Part 2)**

**Second Apparition**

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn  
The power of man, for none of woman born  
Shall harm Macbeth.

*Descends*

**MACBETH**

Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?  
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,  
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;  
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand*

What is this  
That rises like the issue of a king,  
And wears upon his baby-brow the round  
And top of sovereignty?

**ALL**

Listen, but speak not to't.

**Third Apparition**

Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care  
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:  
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until  
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill  
Shall come against him.

*Descends*

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?

2. The first apparition to appear is that of an ‘armed head.’ What are the connotations of armour?

3.The second apparition to appear is that of ‘a bloody child’. What could blood symbolise here? What are the connotations of ‘child’?

4.The third apparition to appear is a ‘child crowned with a tree in his hand’. What are the connotations of ‘crown’ and what do you think the ‘tree’ could symbolise?

5. After hearing the new prophecies, how do you think Macbeth will be feeling at this point? Try and use the following words in your answer:

*-hubristic*

*-unrivalled*

*-powerful*

6. Why do you think Shakespeare juxtaposes the image of youthful innocence (children) with death, warfare and blood through the apparitions? What effect does this have?

7. How does this scene act as the catalyst which drives the play to its end?

**ALL**

Come, high or low;  
Thyself and office deftly show!

*Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head*

**MACBETH**

Tell me, thou unknown power,--

**First Witch**

He knows thy thought:  
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

**First Apparition**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;  
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*Descends*

**MACBETH**

Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;  
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one  
word more,--

**First Witch**

He will not be commanded: here's another,  
More potent than the first.

*Thunder. Second Apparition: A bloody Child*

**Second Apparition**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

**MACBETH**

Had I three ears, I'ld hear thee.

**Act 4, Scene 1 – The New Prophecies (Part 3)**

**Activities:**

1. Macbeth has no children meaning he has no heir to inherit his throne once he is dead. How do you think the image of children in these prophecies will cause him to react?

2. ‘Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls’ – What are the connotations of ‘sear’?

3.Highlight the punctuation in this scene. What do you notice? What does this tell you about how Macbeth is feeling and the mood Shakespeare wishes to create in this scene?

4. ‘What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?’ – The line Macbeth talks about is the line of inheritance. What is Macbeth realising about the future of Scotland’s monarchy?

5. ‘Banquo smiles upon me’ – Why is Banquo smiling?

6. Discuss Macbeth’s visions in this extract. What role do they play in the development of his character?

**MACBETH**

I will be satisfied: deny me this,  
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.  
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?

**First Witch**

Show!

**Second Witch**

Show!

**Third Witch**

Show!

**ALL**

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;  
Come like shadows, so depart!

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*A show of Eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand; GHOST OF BANQUO following*

**MACBETH**

Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!  
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,  
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.  
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!  
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!  
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?  
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:  
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass  
Which shows me many more; and some I see  
That two-fold balls and treble scepters carry:  
Horrible sight! Now, I see, 'tis true;  
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,  
And points at them for his.

*Apparitions vanish*

**Act 4, Scene 3 – Macduff and Malcolm (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. Highlight the adjectives used to describe Macbeth in this scene. Complete single word analysis on them. What are the connotations of these adjectives?
2. What is ‘tyranny’ and how does this link to Macbeth’s character?
3. What qualities does Macduff identify as causing the downfall of Kings? Why do you think these qualities in particular are dangerous?

**MACDUFF**

Not in the legions  
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd  
In evils to top Macbeth.

**MALCOLM**

I grant him bloody,  
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,  
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,  
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust, and my desire  
All continent impediments would o'erbear  
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth  
Than such an one to reign.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACDUFF**

Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
To take upon you what is yours: you may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.  
We have willing dames enough: there cannot be  
That vulture in you, to devour so many  
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclined.

**Act 4, Scene 3 – Macduff and Malcolm (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1. Macduff is doing his best to persuade Malcolm to fight Macbeth yet Malcolm seems reluctant. How would Macduff be feeling here?
2. Highlight the qualities of a good King that Malcolm identifies. Complete single word analysis on them. What are the connotations of these qualities?
3. Look at the highlighted lines. What is Malcolm saying here and is he telling the truth to Macduff? Why might he have reason to lie?

**MALCOLM**

**With this there grows****In my most ill-composed affection such****A stanchless avarice that, were I king,**I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels and this other's house:  
And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more; that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth.

**MACDUFF**

This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root  
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;  
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will.  
Of your mere own: all these are portable,  
With other graces weigh'd.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MALCOLM**

**But I have none:** the king-becoming graces,  
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,  
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,  
I have no relish of them, but abound  
In the division of each several crime,  
Acting it many ways**. Nay, had I power, I should****Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,****Uproar the universal peace, confound****All unity on earth.**

**MACDUFF**

O Scotland, Scotland!

**MALCOLM**

If such a one be fit to govern, speak:  
I am as I have spoken.

**Act 5, Scene 1 – Out Damned Spot**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. Blood is a recurring motif in the play. What do you think the blood that Lady Macbeth imagines on her hand symbolises here?
3. Choose THREE words and completing single word analysis, highlighting connotations and explaining Shakespeare’s language choices.
4. What do the dashes suggest about Lady Macbeth’s delivery of her speech? What is her state of mind?
5. ‘All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand’ – Which line of Macbeth’s is Lady Macbeth recalling here? (HINT: Act 2, Scene 2)
6. Note down anything else about Lady Macbeth in this scene that you find interesting.

**EXTRA CHALLENGE**: What can we, as an audience, learn about the corrupting influence of power, based on this scene?

**Doctor**You see, her eyes are open.

**Gentlewoman**Ay, but their sense is shut.

**Doctor**What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

**Gentlewoman**It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus  
washing her hands: I have known her continue in  
this a quarter of an hour.

**LADY MACBETH**Yet here's a spot.

**Doctor** Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from  
her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

**LADY MACBETH**Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two: why,  
then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell is murky!--Fie, my  
lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we  
fear who knows it, when none can call our power to  
account?--Yet who would have thought the old man  
to have had so much blood in him.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**Doctor**Do you mark that?

**LADY MACBETH**The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?--  
What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o'  
that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with  
this starting.

**Doctor**Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

**Gentlewoman**She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of  
that: heaven knows what she has known.

**LADY MACBETH**Here's the smell of the blood still: all the  
perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little  
hand. Oh, oh, oh!

**Doctor**What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

**Gentlewoman**I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the  
dignity of the whole body.

**Doctor**Well, well, well,--

**Gentlewoman**Pray God it be, sir.

**Doctor**This disease is beyond my practise: yet I have known  
those which have walked in their sleep who have died  
holily in their beds.

**Act 5, Scene 5 – Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow**

**Activities:**

1. Summarise the meaning of Macbeth’s speech.
2. Why does Macbeth respond with such indifference to the death of his wife?
3. What is the effect of the repetition of ‘tomorrow’? What does it suggest about how Macbeth is feeling at this point in time?
4. How does this scene correspond with Macbeth’s increasing desperation?
5. Discuss the metaphors used: “out, out, brief candle,” “poor player who struts and frets…heard no more,” “it is a tale told by an idiot…signifying nothing.” What is the significance of these metaphors?
6. What are Macbeth’s opinions on life and death? How about his own mortality?
7. What do we as an audience learn about Macbeth through these short glimpses into his soul? Do they contradict what he portrays on the outside? Explain.
8. **EXTRA CHALLENGE**: Now try to explain how Macbeth’s multiple soliloquies in the play relate to the witches’ quote, “Fair is foul and foul is fair.”

**SEYTON**

The queen, my lord, is dead.

**MACBETH**

She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time for such a word.  
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

*Enter a Messenger*

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

**Messenger**

Gracious my lord,  
I should report that which I say I saw,  
But know not how to do it.

**MACBETH**

Well, say, sir.

**Messenger**

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,  
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,  
The wood began to move.

**Act 5, Scene 8 – The Final Scene (Part 1)**

**Activities:**

1. What is happening in this scene?
2. Who do you think is in control in this scene? Explain your choice using quotations from the text.
3. Macduff’s choice of the epithet, ‘hell-hound’ confirms the true nature of the tyrant king. What is an ‘epithet’ and what are the connotations of ‘hell-hound’?
4. At what point do you think Macbeth realises his struggle for survival is over? Explain your ideas.
5. ‘I bear a charmed life’ – How is Macbeth’s hubristic nature demonstrated here?
6. Identify the simile used by Macbeth and explain what it means. What is Macbeth saying to Macduff? (HINT: Macbeth implies Macduff would have more luck trying to cut…)

**MACBETH**

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die  
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes  
Do better upon them.

*Enter MACDUFF*

**MACDUFF**

Turn, hell-hound, turn!

**MACBETH**

Of all men else I have avoided thee:  
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged  
With blood of thine already.

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MACDUFF**

I have no words:  
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out!

*They fight*

**MACBETH**

Thou losest labour:  
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:  
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;  
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield,  
To one of woman born.

**MACDUFF**

Despair thy charm;  
And let the angel whom thou still hast served  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb  
Untimely ripp'd.

**Act 5, Scene 8 – The Final Scene (Part 2)**

**Activities:**

1.What is happening in this scene?

2. What is a ‘usurper’ and what does this tell us about how the others viewed Macbeth’s rule?

3. Malcolm describes Macbeth as a ‘butcher’ and Lady Macbeth is a ‘fiend-like queen.’ In your opinion, who is more to blame for the events that transpire in the play? Explain your ideas.

4. The final act of ‘Macbeth’ is structured differently to the others in that the scenes are very short compared to the others. Why do you think Shakespeare has done this?

5. Do you think ‘Macbeth’ is a moral play? Do you think justice has been served at its conclusion?

**EXTRA CHALLENGE**: Fleance escaped his murder earlier in the play meaning the prophecy about Banquo’s children could still come true. In fact, this prophecy is the ONLY prophecy that remains unfulfilled by the end of the play. Why do you think this is? Is Shakespeare trying to tell his audience anything here?

*Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH's head*

**MACDUFF**

Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands  
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:  
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,  
That speak my salutation in their minds;  
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:  
Hail, King of Scotland!

**ALL**

Hail, King of Scotland!

*Flourish*

INCREASING CHALLENGE

**MALCOLM**

We shall not spend a large expense of time  
Before we reckon with your several loves,  
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,  
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland  
In such an honour named. What's more to do,  
Which would be planted newly with the time,  
As calling home our exiled friends abroad  
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;  
Producing forth the cruel ministers  
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,  
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands  
Took off her life; this, and what needful else  
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,  
We will perform in measure, time and place:  
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,  
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

*Flourish. Exeunt*