

Answers

Macbeth

DO IT! ANSWERS

pp.9–37

p.9 Do it!



- Explore Macbeth's feelings in the extract: his feeling of guilt over murdering his close friend gives him a rising sense of panic. The witches' response mocks his guilt and regret and hints that they 'see through' it, signalling to us that Macbeth is less tormented by guilt than by the sense that Banquo will triumph in the end by having his descendants become kings. (AO1/AO2)
- Examine the language of the extract: eg how Macbeth's exclamations show how disturbed and desperate he feels. Examine effect of 'sear' and 'filthy hags'. (AO2)
- Guilt and sin afflict a person's ability to sleep. Examine the connection between guilt and sleeplessness after Duncan's murder, and when Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking. (AO1/AO2/AO3)
- In Act 5 Lady Macbeth is driven to insomnia and suicide, while Macbeth seems able to numb his own feelings and suppress guilt. However, his guilt is finally punished. (AO1/AO2)

p.13 Do it!



- Explore Macbeth's responses in the extract: is this a ghost or do his feelings of guilt over murdering his close friend lead to these visions? Examine Lady Macbeth's dismissal of the vision. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore Macbeth's language: use of exclamations to show his troubled mind – 'see there! Behold! Look! Lo!'; death imagery 'charnel houses'. (AO2)
- Explore Macbeth's friendship with Banquo in the opening Act – equal in valour and bravery. Banquo present when Macbeth received the first prediction. Examine the difference in response between the two men – Banquo not compelled to kill to ensure his children would be kings. (AO1/AO2)
- Examine Macbeth's growing isolation from Banquo and the other Thanes. Banquo's suspicions reflected by Lennox signals of Macbeth's guilt. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore Banquo's links to King James and Shakespeare's flattery of James through his portrayal of Banquo. (AO3)

p.17 Do it!



- In the extract Macbeth's aggression is in the service of king and country, not himself: his aggression is efficient and 'official' in its 'execution'. Malcolm asks for facts about the battle, and Duncan's response to the report is delighted but ceremonial, formal. (AO1/AO2)
- The sergeant's report is colourful and self-indulgent: he doesn't just admire and commend Macbeth: he revels in the details of physical violence. Explore the sergeant's language and imagery to reveal a delight in violence, not just in its results. (AO2)
- Compare with Ross's battlefield report which is much less graphic, focusing more on the aims and results of the conflict, being much less specific about the details of violence. This gives a picture of contained, legitimate violence. (AO1/AO2)
- Aggression is generally presented as a weakness, a loss of control and authority: eg Macbeth's anger on seeing Banquo's ghost, his angry response to the doctor's report in Act 5. Contrast this with the examples of stealthy, cold-blooded violence such as the planned killing of Duncan, the murders of Banquo and of Macduff's son. (AO1/AO3)

p.21 Do it!



- Examine how Shakespeare uses the theme of appearance and reality in the play as a whole to present a world in chaos caused by regicide. (AO1/AO3)
- Examine the contrast between ‘foul’ and ‘fair’ and how this image reverberates throughout the play. The Macbeths appear ‘fair’ when they greet Duncan but they are foully planning his murder; Macbeth appears ‘noble’ but murders to achieve his ambitions. (AO2)
- Explore how Lady Macbeth uses images of hiding and pretence to conceal the reality of her ‘false face’. She believes that ‘a little water’ will hide the blood and ‘clear’ them of the deed but in reality it is blood that she can’t hide. (AO2)
- Explore the depiction of the witches in the extract and the play as a whole. In the extract they plan to ‘meet with Macbeth’, a seemingly innocent meeting, which in reality will lead to chaos and murder. (AO1/AO2)
- Return to the question. How Shakespeare uses the theme of appearance and reality to examine how characters learn not to trust by the end of the play: Duncan trusts; Malcolm, his son, does not. (AO2)

p.25 Do it!



- In the extract Lennox clearly signals his suspicion of Macbeth’s guilt. He doesn’t just hint though: he uses an irony that is so large and theatrical that it suggests that Macbeth’s guilt is so obvious it is almost funny. Examine Lennox’s tone. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore how Lennox uses irony to contrast the appearance of Macbeth’s righteous anger and the reality of his guilt. (AO2)
- Macbeth does not tolerate suspicion – as is suggested at the end of the extract in relation to Macduff. Suspicion – like other thoughts and emotions in the play – must be concealed. Macbeth presents suspicion as another element in the theme of concealment and secrecy in the play. (AO1/AO3)
- Framing others – directing suspicion towards them – is a key part of the Macbeths’ strategy of ‘False face’. Through the Macbeths’ actions, Shakespeare shows that putting blame on others and appearing innocent are two sides of the same tactic. The apparent guilt of Duncan’s guards, his sons and Fleance are all engineered by the Macbeths. (AO1/AO3)

p.29 Do it!



- Explore how this extract and scene is a turning point in the development of the plot: the murder has been carried out and there is no turning back; Macbeth has moved from hero to murderer (albeit secretly). (AO1/AO2)
- The extract shows the reaction of the Lords to the murder of Duncan. Macbeth’s mild responses contrast to Lennox’s dramatic account of the night’s events full of the language of horror and chaos: ‘Lamentings’; ‘dire combustion’; the earth being ‘feverous’. Yet Macbeth responds mildly: ‘Twas a rough night.’ Sets him apart and isolated in his reaction. (AO2)
- After the extract, Macbeth’s murder of the guards (the only witnesses to the murder) gives cause for Macduff to suspect Macbeth and triggers Macbeth’s isolation from the Lords. Malcolm and Donalbain’s escape allows them to prepare for revenge. (AO1)
- How Macbeth’s murder of Banquo without the knowledge of Lady Macbeth shows how he is acting alone, no longer needing his ‘partner in greatness’. Explore the impact of this on Lady Macbeth. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore the last battle. How Shakespeare presents a defiant and solitary Macbeth. (AO2/AO3)

p.33 Do it!



- The details described in this extract are terrifying – darkness in the daytime, horses eating each other, etc. There is something competitive about the details though – as though the two men are trying to outdo each other. The resulting images, such as horses eating each other, is more laughable than terrifying. (AO1/AO2)
- What is terrifying though is the linking of the horrific events with divine punishment and death. Explore how these ideas are conveyed via the language choices: eg ‘strangles’, ‘entomb’ (death); ‘heavens...threaten’. Horror is also linked to darkness. (AO2/AO3)
- Macbeth has a sense of dread and apprehension that is enhanced by night and darkness: see when he is waiting to murder Duncan, and when he hints to Lady Macbeth that he has planned the murder of Banquo. Lady Macbeth predicts that Duncan’s murder means that ‘never/ Shall sun that morrow see.’ (AO1/AO2)
- Lady Macbeth’s sense of horror and her mental disintegration are accompanied by a dread of God’s punishment for her crimes. Her sense of horror is shown in her desperation and sleep-walking at the beginning of Act 5. By contrast, although Macbeth starts with the horror of feeling like his ‘mind is full of scorpions’, he overcomes his feelings of horror by Act 5. (AO1/AO2/AO3)

p.37 Do it!



- Explore the central ‘lie’ within the extract that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth will kill Duncan and place the blame on the guards. Note how Macbeth does not have moral objections to the murder, only practical ones. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore the imagery of lies and deceit in ‘False face must hide’. This is central to the deceitful world that the Macbeths created: a world where, through lies, others are blamed for evil deeds (eg Duncan’s guards) and the appearance of being ‘fair’. (AO2)
- Link to Duncan’s arrival at the castle. He is impressed by the atmosphere: ‘heaven’s breath’. Explore Shakespeare’s use of dramatic irony to intensify the lies as the audience knows he is in danger. (AO2/AO3)
- Explore how Lady Macbeth is skilled at looking ‘like the innocent flower/ But be the serpent under it’ – advice she gives to Macbeth. How this breaks down by the end of the play with her guilt leading to mental torment. (AO1/AO2)
- Examine how the Witches’ words ‘Fair is foul and foul is fair’ act as a central image for the play and how this deceit is shown through characters hiding their real intentions. (AO1/AO2)

ANSWERS TO EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

pp.38–45

The points offered below are only indicative and highlight some key things that could be included in your response. You may cover other points as well. It's how your response is written and how it fits with the mark scheme that will determine the quality of your answer.

p.38 Question 1



- The depth of her torment is suggested by 'sigh', 'sorely charged', etc. Explore effects of these language choices (AO1/AO2).
- In the extract the doctor and gentlewoman express pity for Lady Macbeth, although they suspect that her torment is a result of her crimes. Details to explore: Lady M's guilt; her need for confession and forgiveness; 'foul', 'infected minds'. (AO2/AO3)
- Guilt and sin are closely bound up with mental torment elsewhere: Macbeth cannot sleep ('murdered sleep'); his guilt over Banquo's murder makes him hallucinate; his mind is 'full of scorpions'. Explore this image. (AO2/AO3)
- Are the Macbeths punished by their torment? Does their suffering redeem them at all in the minds of the audience? In the extract LM is presented more sympathetically than elsewhere. (AO1/AO3)

p.39 Question 2



- Examine how in the extract, Macbeth expresses his fear of Banquo's bravery, wisdom and, by implication, suspicion: 'royalty of nature'. Look at how elements we would consider virtuous are considered 'foul' by Macbeth. (AO2)
- Examine how Macbeth's insecurities as king colour his judgement of Banquo. Macbeth's crown is 'fruitless', 'barren' – Banquo is 'father to a line of kings'. (AO2/AO3)
- Banquo is told that his children will be kings but does not feel that he needs to act on this. Presented as trustworthy and honourable. Flattery for King James, a descendent of Banquo? (AO3)
- Banquo as foil to Macbeth. Examine how he is presented as equally heroic yet his actions contrast. Link to 'foul is fair' and contrasts within the play. (AO1/AO2)
- Banquo as loyal to Duncan. He does not suffer from self-destructive ambition. Purpose to highlight the corrosive effect of ambition on Macbeth. (AO1/AO2)

p.40 Question 3



- Examine the Macbeths' differing reactions to Banquo's ghost in the extract: LM is contemptuous (perhaps because she is trying to hide her fear); M is afraid. (AO1)
- Look at how the language choices here convey the strength of the Macbeths' feelings: her language is chosen to shame and mock; his emphasises horror (bodies, cemeteries, etc.) (AO1/AO2)
- Compare extract with how visions affect Macbeth's feelings (and language) elsewhere (especially the 'dagger of the mind' before killing Duncan, perhaps the visions of kings summoned by the witches at the start of Act 4). (AO1/AO3)
- Consider Macbeth's general tendency to generate imagery that is so vivid as to suggest that he is haunted by visions – especially just before the feast scene ('terrible dreams'; 'torture of the mind'; 'full of scorpions is my mind', etc.). (AO1/AO2)

p.41 Question 4



- Examine the impact of guilt expressed through Lady Macbeth's actions in the extract. (AO1/AO2)
- Examine how language is used to show her mental torment and guilt: internal rhyme 'Thane of Fife had a wife'; use of questions 'where is she now?'; breaks in her thinking shown by dashes; use of exclamations 'Oh, oh, oh!' (AO2)
- Macbeth's guilt also shown through visions: Banquo's ghost; the dagger. (AO1/AO2)
- Examine how killing Duncan is a mortal sin leading to Macbeth's 'deep damnation'. Once Macbeth has started on this course, sinful acts will continue: murder of Macduff's family and Banquo and 'in blood/Stepp'd in so far' suggesting that the bloody acts must continue. (Act 3 Scene 4) (AO2/AO3)
- Explore how by the end of the play, LM has a 'mind diseased' (explore sickness image) by guilt. Macbeth, however, has become so used to horrors that this 'direness familiar' has become a part of him. (AO1/AO2)

p.42 Question 5



- Examine the nature of deception presented in the extract: the deception is crafty, elaborate, deliberate. It is presented as a virtue almost, rather than a mere necessity. LM revels in the act of 'beguiling'. (AO1/AO3)
- The imagery of deception and concealment in the extract: 'thick night', 'pall thee', 'dunest smoke of hell', etc. Association of sin and deception, but LM welcomes it. (AO1/AO2)
- Compare LM's appetite for deception with the witches' elaborate deception. Is she a witch? Macbeth deliberately deceives too, but he fatally trusts the witches and later condemns them for being untrustworthy ('damn'd all those that trust them', 'juggling fiends'). (AO1/AO2)
- Is Shakespeare's moral point that those who commit dreadful deeds can expect these to rebound on them, 'to plague th'inventor'? Macbeth's surrender to temptation and his fate are a warning to all of us. His deceptions rebound on him. (AO1/AO3)

p.43 Question 6



- Examine how Macbeth waivers in his resolve to kill Duncan: 'vaulting ambition which o'er leaps itself'. Explore how Duncan is presented as virtuous and Macbeth's fear of damnation. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore Macbeth's immediate consideration of murder when he hears the prophecy: 'let not night see my black and deep desires'. He knows he needs to hide his plans (darkness and light images), a theme of deception that appears throughout. This is his quest for personal power through ambition. (AO1/AO2)
- Explore Lady Macbeth's ambition for Macbeth. She describes her ambition for Macbeth as 'her illness' suggesting it is self-destructive. Act 1 Scene 5 presentation of negative ambition.
- Consider how Macbeth is impressed by Lady Macbeth's ambition and ruthlessness. She persuades him to kill Duncan, accusing him of cowardice and not loving her. He believes he will not be caught so goes ahead with the murder. (AO1/AO2)
- Consider how ambition is presented positively through Shakespeare's presentation of Macduff, Siward and Malcolm. Compare their ambitions for their country with Macbeth's personal ambition. (AO2/AO3)

p.44 Question 7



- Examine the extract carefully for the bonds of trust, nobility, loyalty and gratitude that the conversation celebrates. Notice that these virtues are two-way: Duncan's duty is to repay these virtues to his subjects. (AO1/AO3)
- Analyse the language in the extract and how this both confirms and also questions the contract between king and subjects: eg the formality of Macbeth's speech suggests something rehearsed as though he is saying what *ought* to be said. Analyse the planting and growing metaphor of the relationship. (AO1/AO2)
- Compare Duncan's dignity and composure here with his words and actions as he receives news of the battle. What image of royalty do we get there? (AO1/AO3)
- Compare Duncan's kingship with the ideal model suggested in Act 4 in the conversation between Duncan and Macduff. To what extent does Duncan live up to that ideal? (AO1/AO3)

p.45 Question 8



- In the extract, compare the view of Macduff from the point of view of the angry wife: 'Wisdom? To leave his wife, to leave his babes,' and Ross's view, 'He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows/The fits o' the season.' (AO1/AO2)
- Compare the presentation of Macduff as honest and reliable with the presentation of Macbeth as the 'butcher'. He acts as a foil to Macbeth and shows the audience how decent people react to power and ambition. (AO2/AO3)
- Examine the significance of his key moments in the play: first introduction – he discovers Duncan's body ('broke ope/The Lord's anointed temple.' – sees this as sacrilege); Macbeth murders his family, an act that drives Macduff to revenge; he heads to England to persuade Malcolm to return; kills Macbeth. Explore how Macduff's power and significance grow as Macbeth's power diminishes. (AO1/AO2)
- Compare how Macduff, like Macbeth, is presented as a man of action; however, Macduff's actions are rooted in 'noble integrity', showing him to restore the natural order even at great personal cost. (AO2/AO3)
- Explore Macduff's role in the witches' prophecies: he was 'from his mother's womb/Untimely ripp'd', representing divine retribution for Macbeth's evil deeds. (AO2/AO3)