

# Answers: Macbeth

**Answers to the AQA exam-style and practice questions are indicative only and highlight the key things that should be included in your response. You may cover other points. It's how your answer is written and how it fits with the mark scheme that will determine the quality of your answer.**

## CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION

### Act 1

#### p.12 Do it!



You could suggest that they speak slowly and rhythmically as though they are in complete command of themselves and their powers.

#### p.13 Do it!



If possible, take account of what you might have learnt about Duncan from later in the play when deciding what he might be thinking and feeling here.

Some thoughts he *might* have here include: I wonder if they blame me for trusting the Thane of Cawdor and making their task harder; is the Captain – despite his wounds – exaggerating and enjoying his description?; does Macbeth sound worryingly violent? Is he a threat? Can I trust him?; how wonderful that my soldiers risk their lives for me and for Scotland.

#### p.13 Stretch it!



You might explore how he is described by others. In the last speech of the play Malcolm calls him 'this dead butcher'; his refusal to give in and accept defeat; he is a hero at the beginning, but at the end he is a villain, a murderer and a tyrant; his bloodthirstiness; his bravery.

#### p.14 Do it!



The choice is up to you, but Macbeth's reaction is strong. Banquo is able to chat to Angus and Ross, but Macbeth cannot tear himself away from his private thoughts and feelings, so terrified, excited and spell-bound might be the best words to explore.

#### p.15 Do it!



- Macbeth's dagger hallucination before he kills Duncan (Act 2 Scene 1).
- Lennox's speech describing the 'unruly' night while Macbeth was killing Duncan (Act 2 Scene 3).
- The Old Man and Ross's discussion about the dreadful and strange things that happened after the murder (Act 2 Scene 4).
- The witches' role in making Macbeth think he was safe from harm (Act 4 Scene 1).

**p. 15 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the influence of the supernatural in *Macbeth*.

Possible points to include:

- the witches' hypnotic language that casts a spell over people
- Macbeth's and Banquo's different ways of trying to resist the witches' influence
- the witches' evil cunning.

**p.16 Stretch it!**

Try to think of a number of reasons why Macbeth might have been willing to kill his king. Try to find evidence in the play to support your theories.

**p.17 Do it!**

Some quotations you could use as starting points:

Duncan: 'There's no art/To find the mind's construction in the face.'

Macbeth: 'Let not light see my black and deep desires...'

Lady Macbeth: 'Look like th'innocent flower,/But be the serpent under't.'

**p. 18 AQA exam-style question**

At the end of the play, the new King Malcolm calls Lady Macbeth 'fiend-like'.

Starting with this speech, explore how far you agree with this opinion.

- Explore her choice of language makes her sound as though she is enjoying her evil plans.
- Discuss how she seems to be calling on evil spirits as though she commands them.
- Discuss how, on the other hand, she does sound as though the violence and evil is against her real nature: she is forcing herself to become more cruel and ruthless.
- Discuss how her sleepwalking behaviour suggests that she has not been able to crush her conscience: she is suffering guilt.
- Comment on the fact that she seems to love Macbeth, so she is capable of human feelings.

**p.19 Do it!**

For example: He was persuaded by Lady Macbeth; She shamed him into it; He wanted very much to be king; He is a violent, bloodthirsty man who gets what he wants through action; He thinks he can get away with it; He is dominated by his ambitiousness; The witches put a spell on him; He thinks Duncan is a disastrous king who has put Scotland in danger.

**p. 20 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the relationship between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*.

- Explore how Lady Macbeth subtly manipulates Macbeth: she knows how to control him.
- Show how they are 'in tune' with each other: they have an instinctive mutual understanding shown in the way they reply to each other.
- Explore how Macbeth can be assertive, and this is shown also when he doesn't include her in his plan to kill Banquo.
- Discuss how they speak very openly to each other, making their intentions and feelings very clear (see how they raise and develop the topic of killing Duncan).
- Explore how they depend on each other, but in the end Lady Macbeth seems to depend more on Macbeth than he does on her. That is partly what drives her mad.

**p.21 Do it!**

Other scenes you might explore:

Act 2 Sc 2 (the murder of Duncan)

Act 3 Sc 2 (Macbeth leaves Lady Macbeth out of his new murder plans)

Act 5 Sc 5 (How Macbeth reacts to Lady Macbeth's death)

## p.23 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Section A
- 2 55 minutes
- 3 On the heath.
- 4 Macdonald
- 5 Because Macbeth has risked his own life to defeat Duncan's enemies.
- 6 That Macbeth was wearing armour.
- 7 Because the existing Thane of Cawdor fought with Norway. He has been captured and will be executed. Therefore Duncan can give his title to someone else.
- 8 He 'starts' (flinches) and 'seems to fear' (appears to be frightened).
- 9 That his sons will become kings.
- 10 That he has been sentenced to death and cannot expect to live long.
- 11 The idea of killing Duncan has popped into his head, although it is currently no more than an idea – a 'fantasy'.
- 12 Because he had trusted him completely, and because there was no sign in his face that he was a traitor.
- 13 His desires are 'black' meaning evil: his ambition is so strong to become king that he will commit murder to achieve it.
- 14 That he is not willing to achieve his ambitions through illegal and sinful methods. She is afraid he is 'too full o'th'milk of human kindness' to take the most certain steps to becoming king (murder). She is afraid that his ambition is not accompanied by the necessary 'illness'.
- 15 She wants her traditional female gentleness and goodness to be replaced by cruelty and lack of guilt.
- 16 To make sure his face does not give away his murderous plans. He should 'look like th'innocent flower,/ But be the serpent under't.' In other words, he should deceive Duncan with his expressions and behaviour and put him off guard.
- 17 Duncan: 'pleasant seat'; 'recommends itself'/Banquo: 'lov'd mansionry'; 'smells wooingly'; 'heaven's breaths'; 'air is delicate'.
- 18 He might get caught./Taking the crown by violence will leave him vulnerable to violence too. ('Bloody instructions...return/To plague th'inventor.)/It is wrong to kill your own king./It is wrong to kill your guest./Duncan trusts him./Duncan is a good man./Because he is so full of virtues, God will make sure that Macbeth is found out./Overambition inevitably leads the ambitious to try to achieve so much that their downfall is inevitable.
- 19 She means that she would do anything if she had promised to do it: she would not go back on a promise, like Macbeth seems to be going back on his 'promise' to kill Duncan. The words are shocking not just because of the awful action Lady Macbeth is willing to carry out, but also because of the emotive and detailed way she describes it. 'Pluck'd' suggests she would suddenly and unfeelingly remove her nipple from the baby's mouth. 'Dash'd the brains out' as a method of killing the baby is unnecessarily explicit. It informs us not just that she would kill the baby, but would smash its head to pieces, almost as though she would enjoy the violence.
- 20 During this scene, Macbeth has been going back on the decision to murder Duncan on the basis that it is wrong and dishonourable and therefore unmanly. In other words, his objection is on moral grounds. Lady Macbeth fails to re-persuade him to do the murder until she gives him a clever plan that will ensure they are not caught. That is what persuades him. In other words, his real objection is not moral but practical.

p.24 Do it!



Image of mental torment	Explanation
'...heat-oppressed brain' (Macbeth, Act 2 Scene 1)	It sounds as though his mind is over-heating with guilt and fear, and the word 'oppressed' suggests that he feels as though his brain is being crushed. He cannot think clearly, and is in agony.
'...balm of hurt minds' (Macbeth, Act 2 Scene 2)	This is what sleep should be – a sort of ointment that soothes anxieties. Without it, Macbeth will descend into madness.

Other phrases to explore: 'brain-sickly'; 'every noise *appals* me'; 'your constancy/Hath left you unattended'; 'lost/So poorly in your thoughts'.

p.25 Stretch it!



There are many parts of the play you could choose from, but you would need to concentrate on the effect of that part on the audience. It is the effect that makes the scene significant in terms of the play's themes or its dramatic impact. You could choose:

Act 3 Sc 4 when Macbeth sees Banquo's ghost at the banquet; Act 4 Sc 1 when Macbeth visits the witches and they summon spirits; Act 5, Sc 5 when Birnam Wood seems to come towards Dunsinane Castle.

p.25 Do it!



Some of the main differences between Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's feelings:

- Macbeth: frantic, haunted, horrified, regretful
- Lady Macbeth: calm, businesslike, clear-minded, rational, unfeeling. Perhaps she is better at controlling and hiding her feelings. She needed alcohol to make her 'bold'.

p.26 Do it!



There are many you could choose, but you would need to make your case for a scene and support your choice with evidence and reasoned arguments.

Some scenes that might be considered 'pivotal': Act 3 Scene 2, when Macbeth arranges the murder of Banquo without first consulting his wife; Act 4 Scene 1, when Macbeth consults the witches and decides that their prophecies show he can still win; Act 4 Scene 2 when Macbeth has Macduff's family slaughtered. This is the last straw for Malcolm and Macduff who now invade Scotland.

p.27 Do it!



For example: horror, darkness, spirits, devil, hell, bad, wicked, wrong.



**p. 27 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents a sense of horror in Macbeth.

- Explore how Lennox's language creates a sense of irresistible evil forces at work.
- Refer to Macduff's shocked reaction.
- Discuss how Lennox's description might suggest that Macbeth's earlier fearful prediction has come true.
- Explore how nature is described in classic horror terms elsewhere in the play, for example, in Macbeth's speech at the close of Act 3 Scene 2.
- Show how an evil atmosphere is created elsewhere, for example, when the witches work up a 'charm' in preparation for Macbeth's arrival at the start of Act 4 Scene 1.

## p.28 Do it!



The answer is up to you, but you do need to consider evidence to support your ideas. Perhaps this scene just provides a breather for the audience and turns down the tension enough for the audience to recover. Some feel that this scene is unnecessary and feels very artificial. Either view can be justified.

## p.28 Stretch it!



The answers are up to you, but you do need to consider evidence to support your ideas.

## p.29 Do it!



Your translation may be something like this:

Ha, respected sir, you see that sky and heaven – as if disturbed by what men have done – threaten the scene of his violent actions. The clock shows it is daytime, but dark night has strangled the sun. Is it because night is more powerful, or because the day is hiding for shame, that darkness has buried the earth, when the light of life should be kissing it?

## p.31 REVIEW IT!



- 1 A diamond for Lady Macbeth.
- 2 A dagger.
- 3 'The way that I was going', that is, towards Duncan's chamber (bedroom).
- 4 Asleep, Duncan looks like her father.
- 5 He cannot say 'amen'. This implies that he feels that God has outlawed him for the sin of king-killing. He also thought he heard a voice saying that he had murdered sleep: meaning that his conscience would stop him from sleeping ever again.
- 6 By thinking about what he has done, Macbeth will drive himself mentally ill – mad.
- 7 She means that as long as they have no blood on their hands then they will not be linked to Duncan's murder. She is suggesting that their crime – however terrible – need not trouble them in the way that it seems to be troubling Macbeth. She is determined to respond in a practical, rather than a moral, way.
- 8 Hell
- 9 Duncan has ordered Macduff to call on him early.
- 10 By referring to it in religious terms: the murder is 'sacrilegious' (an offence against God); Duncan's body is God's 'anointed temple'.
- 11 Because she is a 'gentle lady' and so she would be shocked to death by the news of Duncan's murder.
- 12 He did it in the heat of the moment before he could stop himself. His love for Duncan and the sight of his murderers still covered in Duncan's blood was too much to bear. He killed the guards on impulse.
- 13 They don't trust the Lords. They believe that the real murderer of their father is among them, and that the real murderer will find it easy to express sorrow that is not genuine. They believe that they will be the next victims if they stay.
- 14 There is darkness in the daytime; a falcon was killed by a much smaller bird of prey, a 'mousing owl'; Duncan's horses turned wild; one horse ate the other.
- 15 Presumably he does not trust Macbeth. He does not openly accuse Macbeth, and he even reports the official explanation for Duncan's murder, but he only hopes ('Well may you') that the coronation will be 'well done' (justified), and fears that their old clothes (the previous situations) will fit better than their new ones (the new regime under Macbeth).
- 16 Talking about what you are going to do undermines your courage to do it. Macbeth often comes back to this idea and sometimes regrets that while thinking about an act – such as murdering Macduff – the opportunity slips away.
- 17 She keeps her presence of mind by focusing on important practical details: falsifying the evidence by planting the daggers on the guards, washing their hands, and appearing to have been asleep throughout. By contrast, Macbeth fails to carry out essential parts of the plan and is full of guilt and regret.
- 18 He is thorough, and his acting is impressive, given his apparent lack of self-control in the previous scene. He kills the guards before they have a chance to profess their innocence and he does it in a way that suggests his love and loyalty to Duncan. He then takes the lead in investigating the crime by telling everyone to arm themselves and meet in the hall. On the other hand, the guards' guilt is clearly not trusted by all.

## p.31 REVIEW IT!



- 19** Ross is an intriguing character. He seems to be trusting both of people and of rumours. He gives no sign that he distrusts Macbeth (he is happy to attend his coronation) and he takes the story of a horse eating another horse on trust. He might be gullible. He is not at all cynical: he is shocked and dismayed by Duncan's sons' unnatural murder of their father.
- 20** We are used to the idea that murderers will get caught and punished, but we are also used – in films and TV in particular – to powerful individuals getting away with their crimes. So we might be unsure about what will happen to the Macbeths. However, we might well expect the witches to be leading Macbeth into disaster for their own pleasure. We might also expect Macbeth's mental instability to make him less cautious than he will need to be to avoid detection and revenge.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION

## Act 3

## p.32 Stretch it!



- He implies that anyone with just 'half a soul' and who is not entirely stupid must realise that Banquo is their enemy.
- He implies that if they do not murder Banquo then they are not real men.
- His explanation that 'I to your assistance do make love' is flattering and suggests that he is seeking a favour that will earn rewards for them.
- He throws in the order to kill Fleance as though it is an afterthought, but a vital one.

## p.33 Do it!



You could choose one of these examples: 'the vile blows and buffets of the world'; 'tugg'd with fortune'; the rhyming couplet that ends the scene. Make sure you explain the effect of your example.

## p.34 Do it!



Note: use of traditional horror ingredients such as 'lamentings' (cries of grief), 'screams of death', the 'obscure bird' (owl); the speech appeals to sight, sound as well as physical feeling ('did shake'); personification of night as 'unruly' as though it is deliberately malicious; the phrase 'some say' at the end, suggesting that Lennox is not giving a first-hand account but reporting a rumour he has heard. Is Shakespeare implying that Lennox is an unreliable witness?

## p.35 Do it!



To 'gild' means to cover something with a thin coat of gold paint. This metaphor is distasteful because it suggests Lady Macbeth is painting with blood, or enjoying some body decorating. This makes her appear shockingly callous. It also suggests that the false evidence she applies is only very thin. The word 'seem' is often used in the play: the Macbeths believe that 'seeming' is more important than truth. They want to fool people into accepting a false ('seeming') reality.

**p. 35 AQA exam-style question**

Explain how deception is presented in the following quotation from Act 2 Scene 2...

- Explore effects of the imagery of concealment in the extract, for example, 'sleek o'er', 'vizards', the extended metaphor of 'lave...in flattering streams'.
- Consider the psychological burden of concealment and deception.
- Discuss how Macbeth is now deceiving Lady Macbeth. Contrast with earlier partnership between them.
- Examine Lady Macbeth's explicit understanding of deception as a powerful tactic.
- Explore how truth cannot be suppressed forever: Lady Macbeth's guilt causes her to sleepwalk.

## p.37 Do it!



The answers are up to you, but your answers need to be supported by evidence and reasoning if they are to be *informed* personal responses.

## p.38 Do it!



In Act 2 Scene 3 it is Lennox who describes Duncan's murder scene. We learn from him what the Macbeths have done to create false evidence. However, an actor could interpret these lines as sceptical or even sarcastic and accusing. He reports that the guards must have carried out the murder '*as it seem'd*' – as though he is not convinced.

**p. 39 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents one or more of the minor Lords as commentators on the action

- Explore how Lennox sums up the official facts about the murders of Duncan and Banquo, like a lawyer summing up for a jury.
- Discuss that, however, Lennox sounds sceptical and probably sarcastic, but does not fully commit himself to one view of the events.
- Consider that we do not learn any new details from Lennox – only a particular perspective on them, but the Lord does give useful new information about Macduff and his mission in England, and Macbeth's style of rule.
- Consider other examples of Lords as messengers and commentators, for example, Ross bringing news of his new honours from Duncan (Act 1 Scene 3).
- Discuss how Shakespeare's language choices allow the 'Lord messengers' to present a particular attitude to the news. (Perhaps stick to a couple of speeches from Lennox.)

## p.41 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Go riding with his son, Fleance.
- 2 Stay on his own.
- 3 Courage and wisdom.
- 4 By accusing them of not fighting against the man who is oppressing him, and of being 'i'th'worst rank of manhood'.
- 5 He cannot afford to alienate people who are his and Banquo's friends, and for 'sundry weighty reasons' that he does not specify for the murderers.
- 6 Not stay on his own brooding over his regrets and worries. She points out that 'what's done is done': there is no point worrying about things that cannot be undone.
- 7 The plan to murder Banquo.
- 8 He doesn't trust them.
- 9 He intends to 'mingle' with them in order to 'play the humble host'. He wants to show that despite being king he is still 'one of them' and that he respects them.
- 10 He is not a threat while he is so young. Macbeth is implying that there will be time and opportunity to murder him later.
- 11 He is suggesting that Banquo is more likely to have not attended due to rudeness ('unkindness') rather than some accident. He is deflecting attention away from his own guilt so that later on he will appear not to have known that Banquo would not be at the feast.

## p.41 REVIEW IT!



- 12 That he is often like this, and has behaved like this since his youth. She explains his behaviour as a fit that will pass quickly, but will be worsened and extended by being commented on.
- 13 By claiming that he is only hallucinating like he did with the dagger before killing Duncan. Also, she suggests that he is scared of something that is no more frightening than an old woman's fireside story, thus implying that he is a coward and unmanly in not controlling himself.
- 14 That while the blood has drained from his face so that he is white with fear, she is red-cheeked, suggesting she is completely relaxed. He assumes that she can see the ghost too.
- 15 Sleep
- 16 Some examples: 'if't please you', implying that Lennox doesn't really believe it himself; 'Men must walk too late', as though such people can only blame themselves for being murdered; 'How it did grieve Macbeth!' though it didn't really seem to, especially as it enabled him to become king.
- 17 He fears that Macbeth killed Duncan and committed other crimes in order to make the witches' prediction for him come true. He suspects Macbeth of 'foul play'. He hushes himself as Macbeth enters, again suggesting that he no longer trusts Macbeth even though he is his close friend.
- 18 The snake is probably Duncan's royal family. They have 'scorch'd' this snake – injured and angered it – but it will recover and be a danger again. The snake – in the form of Duncan's sons – will seek revenge.
- 19 Macbeth is again telling himself that he should carry out his plans quickly, rather than overthinking or overtalking them. These 'things' are 'strange' which indicates that again he will not be sharing his plans with Lady Macbeth. The significance of that is that she is being excluded more and more. The 'hand'/'scann'd' rhyming couplet makes Macbeth's thoughts sound even more decisive and a specific lesson he has learned through experience.
- 20 There is not much direct evidence. The evidence is in the form of comments from characters such as Lennox and the Lord in Scene 6 about the style of Macbeth's rule. Macbeth's erratic behaviour at the feast might worry his Thanes that he is going to be a violent and unpredictable leader. Macbeth's own rule ('hand') is accur'd by his sinful murder of Duncan, and by his association with the witches' evil.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION

## Act 4

## p.43 Do it!



He is not intimidated by the witches' powers: he commands and even insults them (for example, 'midnight hags'). There is a reckless 'do your worst' tone to his words when he tells the witches to call their masters. He jokes when the second apparition addresses him three times: 'Had I three ears. I'd hear thee.' His rhetorical questions shore up his confidence: for example, 'Macduff, what need I fear of thee?' He asks for information even when he fears the answers.

## p.45 Stretch it!



In Act 3 Scene 4, Macbeth uses prose when he is welcoming his guests informally and emphasising that he is only a 'humble host'. When he switches to a more formal opening of the feast he sounds grander and more regal by switching to verse.



## p. 45 AQA exam-style question

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a brave man in Macbeth.

- Explore how his decisive, bold statements and use of imperative verbs show that he is standing up to the power of the witches.
- Discuss how iambic pentameter and rhyme give authority and confidence to Macbeth's words.
- Show how his confidence and fearlessness here is also reflected in the reports of his fighting in Act 1 Scene 2.
- Explore how his bravery is shown at the end when he is willing to fight on, even though he knows he will be defeated.
- Contrast how, on the other hand, he is terrified just before and after killing Duncan. Lady Macbeth accuses him of cowardliness and 'womanliness'.



## p.46 Stretch it!



Some gains: no need for three actors (Lady Macduff, her son, Messenger); leave the events of the scene entirely to the audience's imagination.

Some losses: the scene's events dramatically impress on the audience just how savage Macbeth has become; we are intrigued by the mystery of the messenger's purpose and identity.

## p.46 Do it!



Done well: has used some evidence from the text – relevant words have been chosen from the text; has implied the effect on the audience by pointing out that this scene fulfils Macbeth's pledge immediately. Improve: the evidence is almost a quotation but some words are changed and the quoted words should be marked with quotation marks ('...'); the writing here is in one long sentence that becomes unclear. The ideas need to be broken down and expressed more clearly.

## p.47 Do it!



He is a traitor to what he really believes in: fear (presumably of Macbeth) makes him do things that he would normally disagree with. He could also be referring to Macbeth's tendency to brand people traitors if they disobey him. Whatever the case, Ross points out to Lady Macduff that none of them have control over their destinies and can only hope for improved circumstances. He is explaining why Macduff's flight to England without his family should not be judged by the standards of more normal times.

**p. 49 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the idea of manliness in Macbeth

- Look at what Malcolm and Macduff assume to be appropriate behaviour for a man (and woman).
- Examine the way they express themselves, especially the 'manly' dignity of their style of speaking here.
- Show how Macduff's distress in this scene could be compared with Macbeth's emotional turmoil early in the play.
- Explore the death of Lady Macbeth: she seems to finally fail to suppress her 'female tenderness' while Macbeth's response to her death is very hard, dismissive.
- Consider what does Shakespeare want us to value? Are Macbeth's brave refusal to surrender, and Macduff's virtue and courage presented as heroic, and therefore as models of masculinity?

## p.51 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Presumably it is Macbeth, who the witches are waiting for, and who arrives just after.
- 2 'Secret, black, and midnight hags!'
- 3 The First Witch tells him he cannot give the apparitions orders.
- 4 Great Birnam Wood must move to Dunsinane Hill.
- 5 Even more kings, presumably looking like Banquo/King James.
- 6 Kill Macduff's family, and do it 'before this purpose cool'.
- 7 Fear, and lack of love and wisdom.
- 8 He suggests that Macduff might have acted as he did for good reasons of his own. He tells her that although he is leaving he will return soon, and assures her that although things are bad now, they will return to how they were.
- 9 Because they outnumber the honest men who would hang them, so they should beat the honest men and escape their punishment.
- 10 A messenger
- 11 He says Macduff might be trying to trap Malcolm into going back to Scotland where he will be murdered. He also suggests that he might not be a suitable replacement for Macbeth as he also has some of Macbeth's vices.
- 12 Voluptuousness (lust) and avarice (greed)
- 13 The Evil (scrofula)

## p.51 REVIEW IT!



- 14 He says that people are dying all the time, so that the country is like a huge grave. People are desperate and grief-stricken but their 'sighs, and groans, and shrieks' are ignored, presumably because everyone has to look out for themselves, trust and care for no one else.
- 15 He tells Macduff to express his feelings or his heart will break. Then he recommends Macduff 'cure this deadly grief' by taking revenge on Macbeth. He urges Macduff to take the news 'like a man'.
- 16 They will understand that Macbeth has a growing sense of urgency and also decisiveness. This is likely to make him appear more monstrous and dangerous than ever: clearly he will now act brutally without a second thought. The audience might be revolted and shocked by Macbeth's callous and savage intention to kill Macduff's family, including 'his babes', by 'giving them' 'to th'edge o'th'sword.' There is something shockingly clinical/surgical about this expression when used in the context of murder.
- 17 She seems strong and brave and independent. She feels that she and her family have been deserted by Macduff, but instead of wishing his return, she vows to do without him. On the other hand, her conversation with her son suggests she has humour and parental affection.
- 18 We don't know the answer to this. It is interesting to consider the Messenger's identity and his purpose. He knows that Lady Macduff is about to be murdered. Who other than Macbeth knows this? Presumably Macbeth has employed someone to do it. The witches know his intention to kill Macduff. What is interesting is that Shakespeare has deliberately put in the character of the Messenger although it is not necessary to the plot.
- 19 A king should: trust loyal subjects; be restrained in their sexual appetites; be trustworthy, keeping their word; not be greedy; never betray anyone; worship God, not the devil; be a servant to his country.
- 20 He means that however long a night is, daylight always comes eventually. This is fitting because in the play darkness symbolises evil and deception; it is the realm of witchcraft and treachery. Scotland has apparently become a desperate, terrified, 'benighted' place. Malcolm reminds his hearers that light (goodness, truth, things once again being what they seem) will inevitably return. His metaphors of light and dark are therefore just right.

## CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION

## Act 5

## p.53 Do it!



You could explore: 'I have a strange infirmity...': Macbeth's explanation of his odd behaviour at the feast when he sees Banquo's ghost (Act 3 Scene 4) / '...heat-oppressed brain' (Act 2 Scene 1).

## p.53 Stretch it!



Prose: Perhaps because prose is less ordered than poetry, and so it matches Lady Macbeth's mental state better. What Lady Macbeth says is rambling and repetitive – poetry would be too formal to capture it.

Poetry: Perhaps here the Doctor is trying to pull himself together and impose some order on his own mind and on the servant. Perhaps poetry is more authoritative, and at this point he wants to draw some serious conclusions from their experience and give some clear instructions.

## p.54 Do it!



The choice is yours. He is probably both but you just have to justify one of them. 'Justify' is the key word: you need to choose some evidence to support your choice.

Mad evidence: his erratic behaviour; his unnecessary and extreme abuse of the servants whose support he needs.

Brave evidence: His determination to fight on to the very end despite the possibility of a brutal end ('till from my bones my flesh be hack'd'); his bold expressions of independence – 'fly false Thanes'; 'Bring me no more reports'.

## p.54 Stretch it!



For example, Menteith's words in scene 3; Macbeth's madness and torment; his bravery which is heroic in other circumstances; his concern for his wife's health; his sense that nothing he has gained is worth anything if he cannot look forward to a happy old age.

**p. 55 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents the attitudes of other characters to Macbeth.

- Explore how there is an offhand tone to each character's report of Macbeth that suggests they don't have any sympathy with him. They sound satisfied by Macbeth's failure.
- Discuss how the imagery Shakespeare chooses to describe Macbeth's situation is unflattering: it belittles him (for example, 'dwarfish').
- Explore how two characters do refer to Macbeth's distressed feelings, and Shakespeare emphasises Macbeth's mental torment earlier in the play, implying that we should assume it is real, not put on.
- Consider how Lady Macbeth's attitude towards him is varied: she loves and supports him, but also accuses him and mocks him. Although she is a villain, she is a fully-formed character and so her views carry some weight with the audience.
- Explore how, at the start of the play, Shakespeare introduces us to Macbeth as a brave and brutal hero via the reports of Ross and the Captain. He makes Macbeth sound impressive, but alarming too.

## p.57 Do it!



'A poor player': Poor could mean in poverty, or to be pitied. Macbeth is probably feeling sorry for himself at this point – especially as he has recently been gloomily looking to an old age without friends. He is a player – an actor – because he probably feels like he is playing someone else's part: his wife and the witches have controlled him. He realises now that for all his ambition and action, his life is ending and he will be forgotten – 'heard no more'.

'A tale told by an idiot': he knows that he has been fooled by the witches, and so he is an idiot. 'Tale' suggests not just story but 'lie' – something made up to deceive. His own recent life has been full of noise and anger ('sound and fury') and he fears that nothing of his ambition will be left behind when he dies ('signifying nothing'). His metaphors are very pessimistic, and he is probably applying them to himself and to his wife.

## p.58 Do it!



It is up to you how you interpret Macbeth here, but your explanation to the actor must be justified by reference to details in the text. For example:

I want you to imagine that at this point in the play Macbeth is bitter and defiant. He knows he is heading for defeat but he is determined to fight on. Here he feels a sense of triumph that boosts his confidence so he spits his lines out with a cruel enjoyment, heavily emphasising the two rhymes to show his contempt ('scorn') for his enemies. He should drag Young Siward's body off in an uncaring way, trailing blood across the floor.

## p.60 Do it!



This image recalls a butcher at work, hacking the meat from the bones of a carcass. Clearly Macbeth expects the same brutality in his own death that he has treated his victims to. The word 'hacked' is a more emotive choice than other synonyms such as sliced, cut or even chopped. Macbeth seems to relish the savagery implied in 'hacked'.

**p. 61 AQA exam-style question**

Starting with this extract, explore how Shakespeare presents soldiers and war in *Macbeth*.

- Discuss how fighting bravely in a war is presented as honourable, manly and holy, but soldiers should not expect special honours: they are carrying out their 'soldier's debt' (duty).
- Consider how it is a relief when wars do not lead to many deaths but 'good' deaths should be accepted as a matter of pride. However, Siward's rejection of 'sorrow' might be going too far – especially for Malcolm.
- Explore how the play's early scenes present gruesome war descriptions with relish. The language seems to celebrate brutality if it is for a right cause.
- Explore how Macbeth seems to look forward to the physical reality of battle as he prepares for the invading army. His violence and madness tend to suggest Shakespeare does not support his enthusiasm for war.
- Explore how the approach of the English army is dignified and strategic by contrast with Macbeth's preparations. Shakespeare seems to support war heroism that is in proportion to the cause.

**p.63 REVIEW IT!**

- 1 A Gentlewoman, presumably Lady Macbeth's personal servant.
- 2 That she is in the habit of doing this. She seems to be washing her hands, and she does this for as long as 15 minutes.
- 3 To look after Lady Macbeth and to keep dangerous objects out of her reach (presumably objects she might use to kill herself).
- 4 He has a 'file' that lists all the noblemen in the army. Donalbain is not listed.
- 5 According to Angus, there are constant 'revolts' (uprisings) in Scotland, and Macbeth's soldiers only carry out orders; they are not motivated by love of Macbeth.
- 6 Because the witches have told him he cannot be beaten by any man 'born of woman' and not until 'Birnam Wood remove to Dunsinane'.
- 7 Because he cannot expect the comforts of old age: 'honour, love, obedience' and plenty of friends, but he can expect to be cursed or at least to be respected only insincerely.
- 8 Because the Doctor has no cure for his wife's condition or for mental torment more generally.
- 9 To cut down branches as camouflage so that the enemy will not know how large the army is.
- 10 We don't know, although we assume she killed herself. In his final speech, Malcolm reports the belief that she 'by self and violent hands/Took off her life.'
- 11 Birnam Wood moving
- 12 The first wave of attack will be led by Siward and his son. Malcolm and Macduff will lead the second wave of the attack. He doesn't explain his decision but presumably he knows it is important that he – as next king – should reduce his risk of being killed. The first wave of the attack will weaken Macbeth's defences and make the second wave safer.
- 13 That Young Siward is afraid of him.
- 14 Because then it can be Macduff who kills Macbeth and in doing that, Macduff will avenge his family and exorcise their ghosts who are haunting him.
- 15 He will display him at public fairs as a sort of unusual monster. The show will be advertised by a picture of Macbeth painted onto a pole with a caption informing people that they can come and stare at the tyrant (Macbeth) as an exhibit in the fair.

## p.63 REVIEW IT!



- 16** Because his son's death is not something to be sad about: he died 'like a man', bravely in battle, doing his duty as a soldier and to God. He died in the best way possible. **17** The 'cruel ministers' are presumably the witches. What is interesting about that is that Macbeth's association with the witches is not a secret. 'Producing forth' means bringing out into the open, so Malcolm seems to be saying he will have the witches captured. It's not clear what Malcolm thinks will be achieved by arresting the witches. Perhaps he will put them on trial and execute them, if they are found guilty, a procedure that King James I was familiar with and had actively supported earlier in his life.
- 18** At the beginning of the play, Macbeth was tortured by mental images and the slightest sudden sound would shatter his nerves. For example, he is terrified by the 'terrible shadow' of Banquo's ghost and after Duncan's murder he complains that 'every noise appals me.' However, by Act 5 he hardly flinches at startling sights and sounds, and even the report of his wife's death hardly disturbs him. He has suppressed his own conscience and feelings as much as he has suppressed his own country. **19** The simile, 'bear-like', seems to predict Macduff's threat to put him on display in a fair to be taunted by the public. Elizabethan audiences were used to 'bear-baiting' which involved tying a bear to a stake and then provoking it for sport. Despite Macbeth's defiance, he does seem to expect captivity and humiliation. His choice of the word 'must' for fighting on, rather than 'will' implies that he feels that his situation is hopeless: he will fight because he has no choice, not because it will lead to victory. The word 'course' reinforces this defeatist outlook: a course is set out and it confines competitors to a very limited range of outcomes.
- 20** The answer is up to you. You should not necessarily assume that Scotland will now return to peace and happiness. How do we know that Malcolm will be a good king according to the kingly graces that he listed in Act 4? Why did his brother not join in the overthrow of Macbeth? Will the witches work on someone else? Are there any other Thanes who might be as cunning and evil as Macbeth? How will Banquo's son, Fleance, become king? What about Macduff?

## CHARACTERS SECTION

### p.65 Do it!



The rank order will depend on your judgement about Macbeth, based on evidence in the play. Look for precise evidence to support top choices. For example, here is some evidence to support the idea that Macbeth is brave:

He is called 'brave' in the Captain's battlefield report and Duncan calls him 'valiant' (Act 1 Scene 2). He is brave enough to endure his mental torment and stick to his ambition to be the unchallenged king. At the end of the play he fights on, even when he knows that defeat is certain, and even though Macduff offers him the chance to surrender.

### p.65 Stretch it!



Shakespeare's own audiences might have had more sympathy with Macbeth when he blames the witches for deceiving him. (However, belief in and fear of witches was much weaker in London than in Scotland.)

### p.67 Do it!



Look for precise evidence to support your two choices. For example, here is some evidence to support the idea that Lady Macbeth is *brave*:

She doesn't accept 'normal' and limiting views of what is appropriate and natural for a woman. Macbeth is impressed by her 'undaunted mettle' (Act 1 Scene 7), meaning he admires her strength of spirit that is never discouraged.

She goes back to the murder scene with the knives even though Macbeth cannot bring himself to do it. Her own courage makes her ashamed that her husband has 'a heart so white' (Act 2 Scene 2) – a white heart symbolising cowardice.

## p.69 REVIEW IT!



- 1 The Captain describing Macbeth in battle.
- 2 It suggests Macbeth's strength, determination and violence, and those things are confirmed throughout the report. ('Carv'd out his passage', 'unseam'd him', 'fix'd his head upon our battlements'.)
- 3 Duncan about the Thane of Cawdor.
- 4 He is rewarding Macbeth with a new title and showing him respect by calling him 'noble'.
- 5 Lady Macbeth to Macbeth.
- 6 That she wants to deceive others in order to put them off their guard. She often stresses the importance of not showing your real thoughts and feelings on your face.
- 7 Macbeth about Duncan.
- 8 Macbeth keeps returning to this idea that it is best to act quickly before your determination cools or the opportunity passes.
- 9 Macduff to Lady Macduff.
- 10 He believes that a woman is too sensitive to hear the news and description of Duncan's murder. It would kill her with shock.
- 11 Macbeth (to Lady Macbeth).
- 12 He uses a snake as a metaphor for Duncan's family. He means that although Duncan is dead, his heirs are still alive, and the pain of their injury will make them more dangerous.
- 13 Macbeth
- 14 Because the witches have just told Macbeth that he cannot be beaten by anyone 'of woman born.' He assumes that means everyone.
- 15 Malcolm calls him 'black Macbeth'. Macduff calls him a 'devil'. Malcolm calls him a string of other things in Act 4 Scene 3 ('bloody, luxurious...'). Duncan called him 'noble' (Act 1 Scene 2). The Captain called him 'brave'. Banquo called him 'worthy' (Act 1 Scene 3).
- 16 Malcolm is pretending that he is far more evil than Macduff in order to test out just how much Macduff really wants Malcolm to help him overthrow Macbeth. Malcolm fears that Macbeth may have sent Macduff to lure Malcolm into a trap.
- 17 It depends on your interpretation of Macbeth. You might concentrate on his moral defects: he is evil, cruel, selfish and violent. You could concentrate on weaknesses that undermine his evil acts: he is impulsive, erratic, he enjoys violence more than its results (bloodthirsty).
- 18 For example, that he lacks the 'illness' that should go with ambition: he lets morality and legality stand in the way of his ambitions and so he will never achieve them.
- 19 Macbeth could be seen as a good, brave, loyal man who is weak enough to be misled by his wife and/or the witches who put a spell on him that makes him behave in a way that is not natural to him. An actor could emphasise the efforts Lady Macbeth makes to 'unsex' herself and suppress her gentle side, suggesting that she makes herself evil rather than being naturally so. Her comment about having previously had (and presumably lost) at least one baby could be emphasised, as could the pain of her abandonment by Macbeth and her torment that makes her sleep walk. We could see the witches as controlled reluctantly by Hecate, their leader, as though they are her slaves. Actors *could* also present their spells and chants more as games than as something serious.
- 20 Explain the role of your chosen character in the development of the drama. For example, does Lennox fulfil a particular role, perhaps as an agent of Macbeth, or as an ironic commentator on events? Is Banquo important as a contrast with Macbeth, showing that the witches' influence did not excuse murder?

## THEMES AND CONTEXTS

## p.71 Stretch it!



She turns accepted values on their head: she *fears* that Macbeth has ‘th’ milk of human kindness’ rather than praising it.

She doesn’t want him to be *very* ambitious but have the ‘*illness* that *should*’ go with it. The word ‘should’ jars with conventional values: illness is something we would never welcome. Illness has negative connotations, and if it implies madness then it sounds as though she approves of an ambition that will become unreasonable and out of control.

## p.71 Do it!



Macbeth expresses a depth of love and loyalty to Duncan who he is already planning to betray. ‘The service and the loyalty I owe, In doing it, pays itself.’ (Act 1 Scene 4)

Malcolm apologises to Macduff for not trusting him, explaining that he has to protect his own safety: ‘Let not my jealousies be your dishonours, But mine own safeties.’ (Act 4 Scene 3)

## p.72 Do it!



For example, Act 1 Scene 5 when Lady Macbeth is looking forward to nightfall: ‘Come, thick night...’, ‘Hold, hold’.

This one long sentence suggests a sinister snake-like quality to Lady Macbeth’s words. You can imagine her hissing ominously and quietly as she waits for her prey.

Also explore the effect of her earthy, physical word choices: ‘*thick* night’, ‘*pall* thee’, ‘*dunnest smoke*’.

## p.73 Do it!



You could, for example, explore: how Lady Macbeth persuades Macbeth to kill Duncan (Act 1 Scene 7)/how Malcolm persuades Macduff to turn his grief into anger and join Malcolm in overthrowing Macbeth (Act 4 Scene 3).

## p.75 Do it!



camouflage – a form of disguise, often used by soldiers to avoid being seen

cunning – clever and scheming

deceive – fool

disguise – change the appearance of something to make it look like something else

fake – not real, but appearing to be real

false – not real, but appearing to be real

treachery – an act of betrayal, turning someone’s trust against them

trick – fool, deceive

gullible – easily fooled



## p.77 REVIEW IT!



- 1 a Something the play is about.
- 2 Faith, belief, dependence
- 3 Force, influence, authority, command, control
- 4 Wickedness, foul, villainous, bad
- 5 Insanity, torment, mania, lunacy, infirmity, fit
- 6 Duncan, Macbeth, Malcolm
- 7 He is not willing to do whatever it takes to achieve the ambition. He lacks the 'illness' that should go with ambition.
- 8 She is telling him to have an innocent expression on his face so as not to arouse suspicions.
- 9 He would then have the courage and determination to murder Duncan so as to become king.
- 10 He thinks that a woman is too gentle and sensitive to hear such news without being dangerously shocked by it.
- 11 Madness and guilt.
- 12 Duncan rewarding Macbeth's brave service with a new title, the Thane of Cawdor.
  - Duncan praising Lady Macbeth's qualities when he arrives at her castle: he calls her 'fair and noble'.
  - Malcolm urging Macduff to express his sorrow when he hears of his family's slaughter.
- 13 Even if he wanted to undo his evil he couldn't. More acts of violent evil are justified from the point he has reached.
- 14 This reminds us of Lady Macbeth's earlier advice to Macbeth to stop agonising over what cannot be undone: 'what's done, is done' (Act 3 Scene 2)
- 15 Examine:
  - the series of images make Lady Macbeth's point clear and dramatic: his face is 'a book'. He should 'look like th'innocent flower' but really be a 'serpent' (snake)
  - symbolism of serpent, a traditional symbol of evil and temptation
  - the choice of the word 'strange' which implies that Macbeth should be planning evil deeds, but Lady Macbeth only hints at it: strange has many possible meanings.
- 16 You could choose Lady Macbeth's speech in Act 1 Scene 5 just after she has read Macbeth's letter, from 'Glamis thou art' to 'should be undone.'
- 17 You could choose Macbeth's first speech in Act 1 Scene 7 from 'He's here in double trust' to 'his taking off.' Here Macbeth thinks about how the murder of Duncan would be unforgivable.
- 18 You could choose Macbeth's explanation to the Murderers of why he does not dare use 'bare-fac'd power' against Banquo. Act 3 Scene 1, from 'So is he mine' to 'weighty reasons.'
- 19 You could explore how the witches deceive Macbeth without his realising: Act 4 Scene 1 from 'Now I see 'tis true' (Macbeth) to 'welcome pay' (First Witch).
- 20 You could choose Macbeth's spell-like speech in which he looks forward to Banquo's murder in Act 3 Scene 2, from 'Come, seeling night' to 'themselves by ill.'

## LANGUAGE, STRUCTURE AND FORM SECTION

## p.79 Do it!



'To alter favour ever is to fear.' (Lady Macbeth, Act 1 Scene 5) Lady Macbeth means that if you allow your true feelings to show on your face then you will always have to live in fear of being found out. 'To show an unfelt sorrow is an office/ Which the false man does easy.' (Malcolm, Act 2 Scene 3) Malcolm means that you can't trust someone according to the emotions they show on their face because dishonest people are very good at pretending they are upset about something that they have secretly caused.

## p.80 Do it!



Act 2: Duncan's murder  
 Act 3: Suspicions and covering tracks.  
 Act 4: Macbeth the tyrant  
 Act 5: The downfall of Macbeth

## p.81 Do it!



These are up to you, but they are likely to include some of these:

- not to put personal gain/ambition above the interests of king and country
- if you are good and loyal then you will be rewarded either on earth or in heaven (as in the case of Young Siward)
- witches (and wives?!) should never be listened to.
- Act 1 Scene 3 (Banquo: "Were such things...reason prisoner")
- Act 3 Scene 4 (Macbeth: 'My strange and...in deed')
- Act 5 Scene 5 (Macbeth: 'It is a tale....signifying nothing').

## p.81 Stretch it!



This question is designed to get you thinking about how Shakespeare *presents* Macbeth and the themes of the play. For example, if we feel sorry for the Macbeths in Act 5, then we might see the meaning of the play as more subtle than a simple condemnation of evil and disloyalty to kings. We might even consider that there was an element of nobility in the killing of Duncan that triggered the tragedy for Macbeth. Perhaps Macbeth's loyalty to his country made him disloyal to an incompetent king.

## p.83 REVIEW IT!



- 1 you
- 2 your
- 3 have
- 4 do
- 5 The writer's *choice* of words and the effects of those choices.
- 6 You can get by without understanding every word or phrase.  
The effort to understand is worth it.
- 7 Comparing two things using 'like' or 'as'. For example: 'look *like* the innocent flower' (Lady Macbeth, Act 1 Scene 5); 'his great love, sharp as his spur' (Duncan, Act 1 Scene 6).
- 8 Comparing two things as though they are literally the same thing. For example: 'Their hand and faces were all *badg'd* with blood' (Lennox's description of Duncan's guards, Act 2 Scene 3). They were not *literally* wearing badges made of blood.
- 9 Treating an object as though it is alive. For example: Night's 'bloody and invisible *hand*' (Macbeth, Act 3 Scene 2).
- 10 Ordinary writing: not poetry.
- 11 Poetry that does not rhyme.
- 12 iambic pentameter
- 13 'tied me to a stake' (He is not literally tied to a stake.)
- 14 The effect is to emphasise just how and in what way Macbeth feels trapped: it is as though he has already been captured and can now be fought and tormented for sport.
- 15 The apostrophe shows that the 'e' should not be pronounced – as it was often in *Macbeth* and other plays. Cutting out the 'e' sound takes one syllable out of the line and protects the iambic pentameter.
- 16 The imperative verb, 'let', is commanding – especially coupled with the previous imperative verb, 'be'. It makes you imagine Malcolm raising his sword to gather his troops to his cause. Also, by not using 'your' between 'let' and 'grief', Malcolm makes the advice apply to everyone rather than just Macduff. It is a general rallying cry, using Macduff's situation only as an example.
- 17 Macbeth's use of 'filling' suggests that the sons are deceitful because they are not just telling their story, but actively 'filling' their hearers with their lies so that the hearers can't help absorbing the lies.
- 18 The crown and the sceptre are symbols of monarchy. Macbeth is complaining that the witches have promised that it is Banquo's sons who will succeed Macbeth, not Macbeth's sons, so Macbeth is in a sense infertile ('barren', 'fruitless').
- 19 There are many places you will find this switch. It might be to emphasise a point in a summing-up way. It might be to signal the end of something – a transition point.
- 20 You could mention a number of factors including:
  - the chronology and constant forward motion of the action
  - the way Macbeth covers the tracks from one evil act by committing another
  - how the audience develops an understanding of/bond with some characters
  - how the audience's pessimistic expectations are intensified by Macbeth's dependence on the witches (and perhaps his wife)
  - traditional expectations of tragedy and tragic heroes
  - patterns of imagery repeated through the play.

## DOING WELL IN YOUR AQA EXAM

## p.88 Do it!



Student A sets out the basic position that they are going to support in the following paragraphs. The introduction fixes in the mind of the student and the examiner that this answer is going to be completely relevant to the question. Student B's introduction is really a waste of time: rather than explaining what they are going to do, this student should just get on and do it! No introduction would be better than this one, which just uses up valuable time.

## p.91 REVIEW IT!



- 1 Read the question.
- 2 So that you read the extract with the question focus in mind.
- 3 10–15 minutes
- 4 Your key, relevant ideas; the content of each of four or five main paragraphs; the order of the paragraphs.
- 5 To make sure you do not get stuck on one point and fail to cover the question focus in enough breadth.
- 6 Four or five (plus an introduction and conclusion if you want those).
- 7 To know what your examiner will be looking for so that you can make sure you give them enough evidence to award the mark you are aiming for.
- 8 Yes – as long as they are useful and add something to your answer, not if they merely repeat things in the main part of your answer.
- 9 No. Writing about the extract first will provide a firm platform for answering the question, but the best answers compare the extract with other parts of the play, and early on in the answer.
- 10 An aspect (subtopic) of the question focus.
- 11 It is a good idea to do so, and to explore the effects of language in a couple of quotations.
- 12 Quotations and/or references to details in the text, used to support the points you make.
- 13 Planning and writing answers to exam questions.
- 14 The exam question.
- 15 R Relevant I Insightful P Precise E Exploratory
- 16 Because it adds nothing to the answer and is therefore a waste of precious time.
- 17 Because it sums up and makes clear the central focus of the student's answer. It still doesn't add much though.
- 18 Make sure you 'pin down' what the question requires of you. Note the focus of the question: evil and superstition. Be clear about what is involved with the idea of 'how Shakespeare presents': his methods, his attitudes towards the topic, and how he influences us towards a particular point of view.
- 19 Plan the main paragraphs of your answer. In your first sentence state clearly what *relevant* point the paragraph will develop through argument and evidence.

## AQA EXAM-STYLE QUESTIONS SECTION

**p. 92 Practice Question 1**

Starting with this moment in the play, explore how far Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a loyal and supportive partner to Macbeth in *Macbeth*.

- Examine the extract for evidence of Lady Macbeth being helpful to Macbeth – saving him from embarrassment and discovery, but also evidence of her harshness to him.
- Look at how Lady Macbeth's attitudes come out in the language Shakespeare gives her. Consider our impressions of Lady Macbeth.
- Compare Lady Macbeth's attitudes to Macbeth here with her soliloquies in Act 1 Scene 5 when she hears of the witches' predictions.
- Her loyalty: evidence of it. What inspires it? Love? Dependence on Macbeth to achieve her ambitions which as a woman she can only achieve by controlling a man?
- Explore evidence of the Macbeths' 'partnership' and how this dissolves.

**p. 93 Practice Question 2**

Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents evil and the supernatural in *Macbeth*.

- Consider the extract's impact on the audience as the opening of the play: how it sets a tone of cruel evil right from the start; how the witches reinforce this tone in Scene 3.
- Look at how the supernatural mood is established in the extract through rhythm and rhyme and language choices, especially the last two lines.
- Compare tone and language of the witches in the extract with the language and tone of speeches by Macbeth and/or Lady Macbeth where they evoke the powers of witchcraft.
- Significance of King James I's own public attitudes towards witches; how Shakespeare might be drawing on these.
- To what extent does Shakespeare suggest evil and the supernatural are to blame for the Macbeths' actions and their fate?