





Macbeth

AQA GCSE English Literature



York Notes Rapid Revision

Macbeth

AQA GCSE English Literature Revision Cards

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How to use your revision cards

These cards will make revising quick, easy and fun!

Boost your revision even further by organising your cards.

Here's how:

- Find the three sorting cards at the front of the box: 'Needs more work', 'Getting there', 'Sorted!'.
- Now read each card from 'Plot and structure' through to 'Language'. You might want to work through them all in one go, or take one section at a time.
- Read the text on the first side of the card and answer the questions. Think carefully before you turn over.
- 4. If you got the answers right or mostly right, move the card to a new pile called 'Getting there'.
- If you got the answer wrong or don't feel confident about it, move the card to a pile called 'Needs more work'.
- Remember to use the extra help on the back of the card, i.e. learn the key quotations and think about how you could use them in the exam.
- Focus on the cards in the 'Needs more work' pile.
 When you feel more confident, move them to the 'Getting there' pile.
- Next, read over all the cards in the 'Getting there' pile to make sure you still know your stuff! If you do, move the cards to a new pile called 'Sorted!'.
- If you don't, move them back to 'Needs more work' and try again.
- 10. The day before your exam, read over all the cards for perfect preparation!

Group revision game

Play this revision game with a friend or in a small group.

- 1. Remove the exam practice and last-minute revision cards from the pack and shuffle the remainder (about 32 cards).
- Deal the cards so that each player has approximately the same number (for two people it will be about 16 cards each, for a group of five players, six cards each or so).
- Player A chooses a card from their set, keeping the contents hidden from the others.
- 4. They read out either a bullet point of information (e.g. from 'What happens?' or 'What do we learn about X?') or a key quotation, then they ask a question such as 'When in the play did this happen?', 'Who is this describing?', 'Who said this?' or 'What theme does this relate to?'. If the card they choose to use is a 'Quick quiz' card, they can ask one of the numbered questions.
- 5. Player B has to answer the question. If they get it right, then Player A passes the card to them. If they get it wrong, Player A gets to keep the card.
- It is now Player B's turn to ask Player C a question based on the information on one of their own cards. The game continues, rotating around the group.
 - The winner is either the person who collects all the cards (very difficult!) or whoever has the most cards in their hands after a set time, such as 15 or 20 minutes.

How to use your exam practice cards

The exam practice cards show you:

- What an AQA exam question will look like
- What you need to do to get a good mark (the Assessment Objectives)
- How to decode the question and plan your answer
- What a Grade 5 answer looks like
- What a Grade 7+ answer looks like
 Plus, you'll find lots of character and theme practice questions to boost your revision!

How can you use these cards to revise?

- Read through each card and make sure you understand what it's telling you.
- Complete the 'Identify' and 'Think' tasks to test your skills.
- Read through the Practice questions and think of at least five key points for each. Or, on a separate piece of paper or in your exercise book, make a plan for each one.
- 4. Check your planned points against the answers.
- 5. Now get writing! On a separate piece of paper, or in your exercise book, write a response for each question. You could complete one a week leading up to your exam.
- Check your answers against the Assessment Objectives and the Grade 5 and Grade 7+ extracts.
- 7. How did you do? Can you find ways to improve? If so, make notes in the margin or rewrite your answers.
- Remember: practice makes perfect! Make some time the week before your exam to practise your writing skills as well as revising key quotations and ideas.

Good luck!

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How to use your last-minute revision cards

Short on time and need a bit of **last-minute revision** before your exam? Here are some tips for using these handy cards.

1, If you have ONE HOUR ...

- Pick an ideas map card.
- What other ideas, links and quotations could you add to the map on side 1?
- Turn over to side 2. Using the ideas given, create your own visual revision aid on one of the given subjects.
- Complete the 'Think' task below by planning five to seven paragraphs, either for the ideas map on side 1 or the visual revision aid you have made yourself.

2. If you have 30 MINUTES ...

- Pick an ideas map card.
- Create your own ideas map for a different part of the plot, or a new setting, character or theme.
- Include as many **quotations** as you can.

3. If you have 10 MINUTES ...

- Pick a **key quotations** card at random.
- Turn to side 2.
- Test yourself by filling the gaps in each quotation.

4. If you only have FIVE MINUTES ...

- Pick a key quotations card.
- Read the quotations on side 1.
- Choose the correct word to fill the gaps in each quotation.

Remember – whether you have five minutes or five hours, the extra bits of revision you do can make a BIG difference!

What happens?

- Scene 1: In the midst of a storm, three witches arrange to meet Macbeth.
- Scene 2: An army captain informs King Duncan that Macbeth and his friend, Banquo, fought courageously in a battle against the king's enemies.
- Scene 3: Macbeth and
 Banquo meet the witches
 who hail Macbeth as 'Thane of Cawdor' and 'king
 hereafter' and tell Banquo that his sons will be kings.
 - One of the witches' prophecies comes true immediately when King Duncan makes Macbeth Thane of Cawdor.
 - Scene 4: We learn that the previous Thane of Cawdor, a man who betrayed King Duncan's 'absolute trust', has been executed.
 - King Duncan names Malcolm, his eldest son, as his heir and Macbeth concludes he will need to 'o'erleap' Malcolm in order to become king.

(Q) Three key questions

- Which supernatural beings are we introduced to and what is the setting?
- 2. How is Macbeth presented in Scenes 1 and 2?
- 3. Which key themes are introduced?

- We are introduced to the three <u>witches</u> who are out in a storm.
- Macbeth is presented in Scenes 1 and 2 as a <u>brave</u> <u>warrior</u>, who appears to be <u>loyal</u> to King Duncan.
- The key themes introduced are the <u>supernatural</u>, <u>ambition</u>, <u>violent conflict</u> and <u>appearance and reality</u>.

💶 Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- Appearance and reality: 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair' (witches) (I.1.12)
- Macbeth's violent conduct: 'his brandish'd steel,/ Which smok'd with bloody execution' (Captain) (I.2.16–17)
- Macbeth's interest in the supernatural: 'Stay, you imperfect speakers. Tell me more' (I.3.68)

(A) Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Macbeth seems fascinated by the witches in Scene 3. He says

What happens?

- Scene 5: At home in Inverness, Lady Macbeth reads a letter from Macbeth about the witches' prophecies.
- She asks dark spirits to fill her with 'direst cruelty' so she can persuade Macbeth to murder King Duncan.
- When Macbeth arrives, the couple discuss the murder.
- Scene 6: King Duncan, Banquo and other royal attendants arrive at Macbeth's castle.
- Lady Macbeth welcomes King Duncan, playing the role of the perfect hostess.
- Scene 7: Macbeth wrestles with his conscience because he knows that 'Vaulting ambition' is his only reason for murdering King Duncan.
- Macbeth tells Lady Macbeth that he will not proceed with the murder.
- Lady Macbeth questions her husband's manliness and persuades him to kill King Duncan.



Q Three key questions

- 1. Where does the action take place?
- 2. Which key female character do we meet and how is she presented?
- 3. Which key themes are developed?

A) Answers

- The action takes place in one of the play's main settings: Macbeth's castle in Inverness.
- We meet <u>Lady Macbeth</u> a <u>strong</u>, <u>ambitious</u> woman who seems to have a <u>close relationship</u> with her husband.
- The key themes of <u>ambition</u> and <u>good and evil</u> are developed.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- 1. The relationship between Macbeth and his wife: 'my dearest partner of greatness' (Macbeth) (I.5.10)
- Lady Macbeth's view of Macbeth: 'too full o'th'milk of human kindness' (I.5.16)
- Ambition: 'Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be/What thou art promis'd' (Lady Macbeth) (I.7.14–15)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

The Macbeths seem to have a close relationship. This is evident when



What happens?

- Scene 1: Banquo tells Macbeth that he dreamt about the witches.
- Macbeth thinks he sees a dagger.
- Scene 2: At night, in their castle, Lady Macbeth waits nervously for Macbeth.
- Having killed Duncan, Macbeth appears carrying two bloody daggers. He is distressed and claims he heard a voice saying 'Sleep no more'. This introduces the motifs of blood and sleep.
- Lady Macbeth returns the daggers and smears the grooms with blood. She claims 'A little water' will wash away the deed.
- · They hear knocking and hurry to bed.
- Scene 3: Macduff and Lennox arrive.
- Macduff discovers Duncan's body.
- Macbeth kills Duncan's grooms.
- The king's sons, Malcolm and Donaldbain, flee for their lives.
- Scene 4: Ross and an old man discuss disturbances in nature.
- Macbeth prepares for his coronation but Macduff decides not to attend.

(Q) Three key questions

- 1. When and where does Duncan's murder take place?
- 2. How does Macbeth feel about killing Duncan?
- 3. What motifs are explored?

A) Answers

- Duncan's murder takes place in the <u>middle of the night</u> inside Macbeth's castle.
- Macbeth's <u>conscience</u> is <u>troubled</u> before and after King Duncan's murder.
- 3. The key motifs explored are blood, water and sleep.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- Macbeth's vision: 'art thou but/A dagger of the mind, a false creation,/Proceeding from the heatoppressed brain?' (II.1.37–9)
- Lady Macbeth taking control: 'Infirm of purpose!' Give me the daggers' (II.2.55-6)
- Disturbance in the natural world: 'On Tuesday last,/A falcon tow'ring in her pride of place/Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd' (Old Man) (II.4.11–13)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Lady Macbeth seems infuriated by Macbeth's distress about killing Duncan. She exclaims

PLOT AND STRUCTURE Act III Scenes 1-3

What happens?

- Scene 1: At Macbeth's castle, Banquo realises that Macbeth has everything that the witches promised and is suspicious. However, he takes no action against Macbeth, which leaves him vulnerable.
- Macbeth invites Banquo to his banquet and discovers that he is going riding with his son, Fleance.
- Macbeth feels threatened by the prediction that Banquo's offspring will become kings.
- He persuades two murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance.
- Scene 2: Lady Macbeth is concerned about Macbeth spending too much time alone.
- Macbeth tells his wife that he is worried about Banquo and Fleance but does not share his plan to kill them.
- Scene 3: The two original murderers are joined by a third.
- When Banquo and Fleance appear, the men try to murder them
- Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes. As Banquo dies, a light symbolising his life and goodness goes out.

Three key questions

- 1. Where is the opening of Act III set and what is happening?
- 2. What do we learn about Banquo?
- 3. Which motifs are explored?

A) Answers

- This act opens in <u>Macbeth's castle</u> as <u>Banquo</u> is getting ready to go <u>riding</u>.
- Banquo takes no action against Macbeth or to make the witches' predictions for his descendants come true. He goes riding with his son and is murdered.
- 3. The motifs of <u>darkness</u> and <u>light</u> are explored.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- 1. Banquo's suspicions: 'I fear/Thou played'st most foully for't' (III.1.2-3)
- Macbeth's troubled mind: 'O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!' (III.2.37)
- The motif of darkness: 'Come, seeling night,/Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day' (Macbeth) (III.2.46–7)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

We learn that Macbeth's mind is troubled. This is evident when

PLOT AND STRUCTURE Act III Scenes 4-6

What happens?

- Scene 4: Macbeth is now king.
- Macbeth and Lady Macbeth host a banquet.
- Macbeth learns that Banquo is dead but Fleance escaped.
- Banquo's ghost appears, sitting in Macbeth's chair.
- Macbeth fears Banquo is there to seek revenge for his murder.
- Lady Macbeth tries to cover up Macbeth's distress then asks the guests to leave.
- Macbeth feels threatened by Macduff's absence and decides to consult the witches.
- Scene 5: Hecate, queen of the witches, reprimands the other witches for their dealings with Macbeth.
- The witches prepare a spell to deceive Macbeth.
- Scene 6: We learn that Malcolm has been welcomed by the English king and that Macduff, the Thane of Fife, plans to join them in overthrowing Macbeth.

(Q) Three key questions

- 1. Where is the beginning of Scene 4 set and what is happening?
- 2. What do we learn about Macduff?
- 3. What themes are developed by the appearance of Banquo's ghost?



- Scene 4 begins in the <u>banqueting hall</u> of Macbeth's castle as <u>his guests arrive</u> for a feast.
- We learn that Macduff <u>refused to attend the banquet</u> and is planning to go to <u>England</u> and <u>gather support</u> for an army to depose Macbeth.
- The themes of the <u>supernatural</u> and <u>revenge</u> are developed through the appearance of Banquo's ghost.

1 Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- 1. The theme of revenge: 'blood will have blood' (Macbeth) (I.4.122)
- The motif of blood: 'I am in blood/Stepp'd in so far that should I wade no more,/Returning were as tedious as go'er' (Macbeth) (III.4.136–8)
- Lennox's use of irony: 'Did he not straight/In pious rage the two delinquents tear ...?' (III.6.11–12)

(A) Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Macbeth suggests that he feels unable to turn back from evil

6

What happens?

- Scene 1: The witches summon apparitions for Macbeth.
- An apparition of an armoured head warns Macbeth to 'beware Macduff' and a bloody child tells him that 'none of woman born/Shall harm Macbeth'.
- A child wearing a crown and carrying a branch suggests Macbeth is safe until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane.
 Eight kings appear, followed by Banquo's ghost.
- Macbeth decides to have Macduff's family murdered.
- Scene 2: Lady Macduff and her children are at their castle. She is a caring mother and feels that her husband has abandoned his family.
- Macbeth's hired murderers kill Lady Macduff and her children.
- Scene 3: In England, Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty and laments the troubled state of Scotland, describing it as sinking under 'a yoke', weeping and bleeding.
- Ross tells Macduff his family have been murdered.
- The rebel Scottish army prepares to attack Macbeth's castle.

(Q) Three key questions

- 1. What do the witches do in Scene 1?
 - 2. Which new character is introduced in Scene 2 and what do we learn about this character?
- What kind of imagery does Malcolm use to represent the state of Scotland in Scene 3?

- The witches <u>summon up apparitions</u> that make predictions for Macbeth.
- We are introduced to Macduff's wife, <u>Lady Macduff</u>.
 She is a <u>caring mother</u> who thinks her husband should not have abandoned his family. She is proved right when they are <u>murdered</u>.
- Malcolm uses imagery of <u>sorrow</u> (weeping), <u>sickness</u> or <u>injury</u> (bleeding) and <u>enslavement</u> (a yoke) to represent Scotland's suffering.

🕕 Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- Macbeth's evil: 'By the pricking of my thumbs,' Something wicked this way comes' (Second Witch) (IV.1.44-5)
- Macduff's distress: 'All my pretty ones?/Did you say all?' (IV.3.218–19)
- Malcolm preparing to attack: 'Macbeth/Is ripe for shaking' (IV.3.240–1)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

The witches acknowledge Macbeth's capacity for evil. This is apparent when

What happens?

- Scene 1: A Doctor and Gentlewoman discuss Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking.
- Lady Macbeth sleepwalks, washing imaginary blood from her hands.
- Scene 2: Malcolm's army prepares to attack Macbeth's castle.
- Scene 3: Macbeth remains confident due to the witches' predictions.
- Scene 4: Malcolm's army cuts down branches from Birnam Wood to use as camouflage.
- Scene 5: Macbeth hears that his wife is dead.
- A messenger claims that Birnam Wood is moving.
- Scene 6: Malcolm's men throw down their branches.
- Scene 7: Macbeth fights and kills Young Siward.
- Scene 8: Macduff tells Macbeth that he was born by caesarean section.
- Macduff fights and kills Macbeth.
- Scene 9: Malcolm is hailed as king.



- 1. What happens to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in Act V?
- 2. What happens at the end of the play in terms of succession?
- 3. What themes are developed throughout Act V?

- Act V sees the <u>downfall</u> and <u>death</u> of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth.
- 2. Malcolm, as rightful king, is restored to the throne.
- The themes of <u>guilt</u>, <u>madness</u> and <u>revenge</u> are developed throughout Act V.

🕕 Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- Lady Macbeth's guilt: 'who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?' (V.1.34-6)
- Macbeth's determination to fight: 'Why should I play the Roman fool and die/On mine own sword?' (V.8.1-2)
- The theme of revenge: 'I have no words;/My voice is in my sword' (Macduff) (V.8.6–7)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Shakespeare develops his theme of revenge when Macduff confronts Macbeth and claims

PLOT AND STRUCTURE Form and structure 8

How does Shakespeare use form and structure in the play?

- This play is a **tragedy**, a form of classical drama associated with the ancient Greeks and Romans.
- In tragedies, the protagonist's tragic flaw results in his downfall: Macbeth's flaw is his ambition.
- The play is in five acts, although Shakespeare may not have written it this way.
- Act I is about Macbeth plotting to overthrow King Duncan.
- Act II sees him killing Duncan.
- Act III is a turning point where Macbeth is king but Fleance's escape and Banquo's ghost distress him.
- From Act IV onwards other characters start to plot against Macbeth.
- In Act V Macduff kills him and Malcolm is hailed as king.



Q) Three key questions

- 1. What type of play is this and what usually happens in this type of play?
- 2. What happens in the first half? What happens in the second half?
- 3. How is the play structured?

- The play is a <u>tragedy</u>. Tragedies deal with the <u>downfall</u>
 of the <u>protagonist</u>, in this case Macbeth, due to a
 tragic flaw.
- We see Macbeth's <u>rise</u> in the first half, as he kills Duncan and becomes king, and his <u>fall</u> in the second, as others plot against him and he is killed.
- The play is in <u>five separate acts</u>, but we do not know if Shakespeare designed it in this way.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- The witches' prediction for Banquo: 'Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none' (Third Witch) (I.3.65)
- The First Apparition's warning: 'beware Macduff,' Beware the Thane of Fife' (IV.1.70–1)
- Macbeth's downfall foreshadowed: 'I bear a charmed life which must not yield/To one of woman born' (V.8.12–13)

(A) Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

The witches' prediction for Banquo foreshadows future conflict with Macbeth because



Quick quiz

- 1. What is the weather like in the opening scene when the witches first appear?
- What vision does Macbeth see just before he kills King Duncan?
- 3. Where does Banquo's ghost sit at the banquet?
- 4. Who tells Macduff that his family have been murdered?
- 5. Which two characters watch Lady Macbeth sleepwalking?
- 6. Why does it look like Birnam Wood is moving in Act V?
- 7. Who does Macbeth fight and kill before he fights Macduff?
- 8. Who is hailed as king at the end of the play?
- 9. What is Macbeth's fatal flaw?
- 10. Which scene in Act III marks the turning point between Macbeth's rise and fall?

Think more deeply

Answer these questions. For each question try to think of two or three points and use at least one quotation from this section.

- 1. What positive characteristics does Macbeth show in Act I?
- Why is the first Thane of Cawdor a significant character in the play even though he has been executed by Act I Scene 4?

A) Answers Quick quiz

- 1. Stormy.
- 2. A dagger.
- 3. In Macbeth's place.
- 4. Ross.
- 5. The Doctor and a Gentlewoman.
- Malcolm's men cut down branches from Birnam Wood as camouflage.
- **7.** Young Siward.
- 8. Malcolm.
- 9 Ambition
- 10. The banquet scene (Act III Scene 4).

A) Answers Think more deeply

Question 1:

- Macbeth fights bravely in a battle against Duncan's enemies and appears to be loyal to the king.
- Lady Macbeth claims that Macbeth is full of 'human kindness', suggesting that he is too kind to kill.
- Macbeth also reveals a strong moral conscience as he debates whether to kill Duncan.

Question 2:

- King Duncan places an 'absolute trust' in the first Thane of Cawdor, but Cawdor betrays him.
- This foreshadows Macbeth's later betrayal.
- When King Duncan awards Cawdor's title to Macbeth, Macbeth turns against him, just like his predecessor, and proves unworthy of his trust by murdering him.

What was Jacobean society like?

- Education was mainly for boys, while girls stayed at home learning domestic skills; very few girls were taught to read and write.
- Most married women looked after the children while their husbands went out to work.
- The nobility enjoyed lavish lifestyles, while poor peasants struggled to survive.
- Masculinity was usually associated with strength and courage, and femininity with nurturing and caring for children.
- Many people believed in witches with magical powers such as the ability to conjure up apparitions and vanish into thin air. The king himself wrote a book called Daemonologie.



 Most people went to church and learnt Bible stories so they would have recognised links such as Lady Macbeth tempting Macbeth to evil like Eve tempting Adam in the Garden of Eden.

Q) Three key questions

- How did life differ for poor and rich people in Jacobean society?
- 2. What was the role of women in Jacobean society?
- 3. What beliefs did most people, and James I, have?

- Poor people <u>struggled</u> to survive while the rich lived lavishly.
- Women's role in society was <u>limited</u> at this time. Few women were <u>educated</u> and their role was to <u>care for</u> their children.
- Most people in Jacobean society went to <u>church</u> and learnt Bible stories. King James I was interested in <u>witchcraft</u> and many people believed in witches.

🕕 Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- Lady Macbeth reverses gender roles: 'put/This night's great business into my dispatch' (I.5.66–7)
- Witches' ability to vanish: 'what seem'd corporal,' Melted into the wind' (I.3.79–80)
- Witches' power to summon spirits: 'raise such artificial sprites' (Hecate, III.5.27)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Many Jacobeans believed that witches could summon apparitions. Hecate calls these

Why are succession and order important issues?

- From Henry VIII's time onwards, there were many uprisings against the monarch. This is reflected in Act I, when we learn about a violent battle between King Duncan's army and the Norwegians.
- Elizabeth I didn't name James I as her successor until she was dying, which caused great uncertainty. In the play, Macbeth's thoughts turn to murder when Duncan names Malcolm as his successor.
- Scottish kings were crowned at Scone.
 - James I faced two plots to seize his throne in 1603, and an attempt to blow up parliament in 1605 (the Gunpowder Plot).
- James I believed in the divine right of kings that the king's power came directly from God. Shakespeare portrays Duncan as saintly and King Edward of England as having the spiritual powers of healing and prophecy.

Q) Three key questions

- 1. In what way is Duncan's murder caused by the issue of succession, and why was succession an issue at the time the play was written?
- 2. What does the play open with and what does this suggest?
- 3. What was the divine right of kings and which character is used to demonstrate this in Macheth?



A) Answers

- When King Duncan names <u>Malcolm</u> as his successor, Macbeth views Malcolm as an <u>obstacle</u> in his path. Succession was an issue at the time because people were not sure who <u>the next ruler of England</u> would be.
- The play opens with a <u>battle</u>, suggesting a <u>society in</u> conflict.
- The divine right of kings was a belief that the king's power came from God. This is suggested when King Edward of England is reported to have divine powers of healing and prophecy.

Learn

Now learn these key quotations to enhance your skills.

- The true line of succession: 'The son of Duncan,/From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth' (Lord, about Malcom) (III.6.24–5)
- The idea that God supports the king: 'Macbeth/Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above/Put on their instruments' (Malcolm, about attacking Macbeth) (IV.3.240–2)
- The rightful heir: 'To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds' (Lennox, about supporting Malcolm) (V.2.30)

Think

How could you use one of the quotations above to complete this paragraph?

Malcolm's supporters suggest that Macbeth has stolen his birthright when