

YORK NOTES for GCSE

AQA PRACTICE TESTS

New for GCSE (9–1)



MACBETH

AQA PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANSWERS



YORK NOTES



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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

How to use these practice tests

This book contains seven GCSE English Literature exam-style practice tests for *Macbeth*. All the York Notes tests have been modelled on the ones that you will sit in your AQA GCSE 9–1 English Literature exam.

There are lots of ways these tests can support your study and revision for your AQA English Literature exam on *Macbeth*. There is no 'right' way – choose the one (or ones) that suits your learning style best.

1 Alongside the York Notes Study Guide for *Macbeth*

Do you have the York Notes Study Guide for *Macbeth*?

These tests will allow you to try out all the skills and techniques outlined in the Study Guide. So you could:

- choose a question from this book
- read the sections of the Study Guide relevant to the question, i.e. Plot and Action; Characters; Themes, Contexts and Setting; Structure, Form and Language
- use the Progress Booster exam section of the Study Guide to remind yourself of key exam techniques
- complete the question.

2 As a stand-alone revision programme

Do you know the text inside out and have you already mastered the skills needed for your exam?

If so, you can keep your skills fresh by answering one or two questions from this book each day or week in the lead-up to the exam. You could make a revision diary and allocate particular questions to particular times.

3 As a form of mock exam

Would you like to test yourself under exam conditions?

You could put aside part of a day to work on a practice test in a quiet room. Set a stopwatch so that you can experience what it will be like in your real exam. If some of your friends have copies of this book then several of you could all do this together and discuss your answers afterwards.

Or, you could try working through Part Two of this book slowly, question by question, over a number of days as part of your revision, and save the further questions in Part Three to use as a mock test nearer the exam.

How to use the answer sections

This book contains a mixture of annotated sample answers and short (indicative content) answers that will help you to:

- identify the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work
- understand how the Assessment Objectives are applied
- grade your own answers by comparing them with the samples provided.

The answers can also give you additional ideas for your responses and help you to aim high.

QUESTION 1, MID LEVEL ANSWER

A01
Clear reference to historical context, though rather simplistic

A01
Personal, if informal, response

about how he could get more power for himself that would drive him to kill the king. However Lady Macbeth is also ambitious and she is the one who persuades Macbeth to kill Duncan especially when she calls him a 'coward'. He might not have betrayed the king if it wasn't for his wife.

In Shakespeare's day, killing the king would be a particularly bad crime because they had the Divine Right of Kings which meant that the king was next to God. So killing the king was thought to be the same as killing God. In the gunpowder plot Guy Fawkes had tried to blow up parliament. This was a real life attempt to overthrow the king. The audience at that time would know about this and link it to Macbeth.

But as the play goes on, Shakespeare shows Macbeth getting worse. He betrays Banquo by having him murdered and also betrays his wife's trust when he stops confiding in her. He also betrays Macduff by having his wife and children murdered. Macbeth becomes hated by everyone.

At the end of the play Macbeth pays for his betrayal when he himself is betrayed. Macduff, who used to be his friend, kills Macbeth in the final battle and Malcolm is crowned king. Personally I think the message that Shakespeare wanted to get across is that betrayal is not good and people should honour their friends and commitments.

A01
Relevant selection from elsewhere in the play

A03
Another reference to context, but needs a clearer connection to the question

A01
References to elsewhere in play, though these are unsupported

MID LEVEL

Comment:
A clear and generally well-structured response, which shows knowledge of the text as a whole. The theme is explored, though at times the points being made could be developed. There is also limited use of literary terminology. There are some useful comments on Shakespeare's language and the overall structure of the play, and quotations are embedded. Appropriate references to historical context are included, though these are a little basic.

For a Good Level:

- Comment more frequently on how Shakespeare uses language, structure, or aspects such as characters and symbols to convey ideas.
- Vary the openings of paragraphs.
- Link all ideas closely to the text, using examples to support answers.
- Try to include more quotations from other sections of the play and use these to track the way the theme develops.

Points for improvement are given to show the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work.

Sample answers show the key points and ideas you could have included, with examiner-style annotations linked to the Assessment Objectives.

Each annotated sample is awarded a level with an examiner-style comment.

Assessment Objectives and weightings

Your work on *Macbeth* will be examined through the four Assessment Objectives (AOs) listed below:

AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts. You should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response • use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
AO4	Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

The marks allocated by AQA for each Assessment Objective are as follows:

AO1	12 marks
AO2	12 marks
AO3	6 marks
Total (per question)	30 marks*

* Plus an additional 4 marks for AO4.

Knowing the number of marks allowed for each AO is important, as this will help you to achieve the right balance of key skills and techniques in your answer.



Mark scheme

The annotated sample answers that follow Questions 1 to 4 in this book have been given a Level based on the mark schemes below.*

Lower Level

AO1	You give some relevant responses to the set task and use some suitable references.
AO2	You identify some of the writer's methods but do not always comment effectively on them.
AO3	You show some awareness of contextual factors but find it difficult to link them to the text.
AO4	Your use of spelling, grammar and punctuation is rather inconsistent but does not usually impede meaning. Sentences and vocabulary are straightforward, with little variation.

Mid Level

AO1	You give a clear response and select suitable references and quotations.
AO2	You make clear references to the writer's methods to support your points.
AO3	You make clear links between some aspects of context and the text.
AO4	You spell and punctuate with general accuracy and use a range of vocabulary and sentences.

Turn to page 8 for the mark schemes for Good to High and Very High Levels.

* These are 'student-friendly' mark schemes and are a guide only.

Good to High Level

AO1	You demonstrate very effective understanding of the task and text, and choose references and quotations carefully.
AO2	You analyse carefully and comment consistently well on the writer's methods, interpreting ideas.
AO3	You make very effective links between context and the text.
AO4	Your spelling, punctuation and grammar is very consistent and shows generally excellent control of meaning.

Very High Level

AO1	You have a broad, conceptualised idea of the text, and make well-judged and wide-ranging use of references and quotations.
AO2	You are analytical and explore the text precisely and convincingly. You comment in finely tuned detail on the writer's use of language, form and structure.
AO3	You write convincingly and relevantly about a wide range of contextual factors.
AO4	Your spelling, punctuation and grammar is very accurate and shows excellent control of meaning.

Now you know what you're aiming for, you can begin the practice tests.

Turn to page 10 for Question 1.

PART TWO: YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANNOTATED SAMPLE ANSWERS

Question 1

Read the following extract from Act I Scene 7 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth is speaking. He is questioning his own reasons for wanting to murder King Duncan.

MACBETH

He's here in double trust:

- First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
5 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
10 And Pity, like a naked new-born babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless curriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
15 To prick the sides of my intent but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of betrayal.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of betrayal in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of betrayal in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

[illegible]

Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. Conversely, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

Sample answer A

<p>AO1</p> <p>Uses words from the question but focuses on content not technique</p>	<p>Shakespeare presents the theme of betrayal in this speech from Act I Scene 7 by showing Macbeth speaking about the king and explaining why he has doubts about killing him. This speech is a soliloquy.</p> <p>The first line of this speech explains that the speech is about betrayal. When he says 'he's here in double trust', Macbeth means that King Duncan thinks he is safe at the Macbeths' house. He trusts him for two reasons, firstly because Macbeth is his 'kinsman' or relative and secondly because Macbeth is his 'subject' and has recently shown his loyalty on the battlefield.</p> <p>In this speech Macbeth goes on to say that a host should be the one to protect a guest, rather than the one to murder them. He is also saying that Duncan is kind and meek and has been a good king: 'his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against the deep damnation.' This quotation has a simile that says Duncan is like an angel. This shows that Macbeth doesn't want to betray him.</p> <p>Other things in this speech that show Duncan is good are the words 'heaven's cherubim' and 'new-born babe' which show that Duncan is innocent and does not deserve to be betrayed. At the start of the play Macbeth was made Thane of Cawdor because the old thane was a traitor. So the king has already been betrayed once and now he is about to be betrayed again.</p> <p>In this speech, Macbeth makes the audience feel that Duncan is a good person. Shakespeare shows the audience that the king is good, so they are on his side. Later when Macbeth murders Duncan in his sleep, the crime seems even worse because we know how good the king is. This soliloquy prepares the audience to be even more horrified by the betrayal.</p> <p>At the end of this speech Macbeth explains that his reason for betraying Duncan is not a very nice one. Macbeth quotes that his real reason is 'only vaulting ambition'. This means it is only Macbeth's ideas</p>	<p>AO2</p> <p>Uses terminology, but does not explain it</p>
<p>AO1</p> <p>Well-chosen and embedded quotation</p>		<p>AO4</p> <p>Repetition of same word within sentence</p>
<p>AO1</p> <p>Relevant quotation but rather long given lack of analysis</p>		<p>AO1</p> <p>Some explanation, but misses the opportunity to link to other parts of play</p>
<p>AO2</p> <p>Basic analysis which could be expanded</p>		<p>AO2</p> <p>Use of terminology</p>
<p>AO1</p> <p>Links to the wider text</p>		<p>AO1</p> <p>Relevant quotations embedded</p>
<p>AO4</p> <p>Repetition of 'good'</p>		<p>AO2</p> <p>Relevant terminology and some analysis of structure</p>
<p>AO4</p> <p>Paragraphs openings could be more varied</p>		<p>AO4</p> <p>Weak expression – use more formal language</p>
<p>AO1</p> <p>Inaccurate – Shakespeare writes, we quote him</p>		

A03

Clear reference to historical context, though rather simplistic

A01

Personal, if informal, response

about how he could get more power for himself that would drive him to kill the king. However Lady Macbeth is also ambitious and she is the one who persuades Macbeth to kill Duncan especially when she calls him a 'coward'. He might not have betrayed the king if it wasn't for his wife.

In Shakespeare's day, killing the king would be a particularly bad crime because they had the Divine Right of Kings which meant that the king was next to God. So killing the king was thought to be the same as killing God. In the gunpowder plot Guy Fawkes had tried to blow up parliament. This was a real life attempt to overthrow the king. The audience at that time would know about this and link it to Macbeth.

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Relevant selection from elsewhere in the play

A03

Another reference to context, but needs a clearer connection to the question

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References to elsewhere in play, though these are unsupported

MID LEVEL

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For a Good Level:

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Sample answer B

AO1

Relevant quotation from elsewhere in the play

AO2

Uses literary terminology and explains its effect

AO2

Clear response to quotation

AO2

Clear explanation of effect of language

AO4

Varies sentence structures

AO1

Good example of a well-chosen single word quotation

Betrayal, where 'fair is foul', is a key theme in 'Macbeth'. In this extract, part of Macbeth's soliloquy from Act I Scene 7, we see him questioning the plot to kill the king. Macbeth talks about how 'innocent' King Duncan is and how it would be 'horrid' to betray him.

This speech is a soliloquy, revealing Macbeth's inner thoughts. Shakespeare uses this technique to show the audience the protagonist's internal struggle. The speech reveals Macbeth's human side and makes him sympathetic as a character. He might be very certain and ruthless on the battlefield, where killing a man is a matter of duty. But this speech reveals that he is not entirely cold-hearted. He does have a conscience and the capacity to doubt. This insight to Macbeth's emotions makes his betrayal of Duncan more unsettling for the audience.

At the start of this extract Macbeth examines his responsibility to the king, who is a guest in Macbeth's castle. Macbeth says that a host should look after his visitors and against 'his murderer shut the door, / Not bear the knife'. This shows that he knows betrayal would be wrong on many levels.

Shakespeare uses this speech to present Duncan as kind and honourable, further intensifying the horror of Macbeth's planned betrayal. Macbeth will kill a good king who 'hath borne his faculties so meek'.

The adjective 'meek' reminds us of the Bible where the 'meek shall inherit the earth' and emphasises Duncan's innocence. James I wrote about the Divine Right of Kings, a system in which kings were answerable only to God, suggesting that Macbeth's betrayal would be against both the king and God.

In this extract Macbeth uses euphemisms such as 'horrid deed' and avoids more honest words like 'death', 'murder' or 'kill'. This suggests that he is unwilling, or unable, to face the immensity of the task he intends to undertake. The adjective 'horrid' shows that Macbeth understands how heinous it would be to kill the king. It also shows he feels disturbed by the plan.

Throughout the play Macbeth betrays Banquo, Macduff, and the people of Scotland. He is described as a 'devil' by other characters, which shows that he is associated with hell. In this way, Shakespeare shows Macbeth to be the opposite of the good King Duncan, suggesting that Macbeth's betrayal has led to a reign of terror.

When Macbeth betrays his friend Banquo his motive is paranoia. The witches prophesised that Banquo

Clear appreciation of the extract's significance

AO1

Explanation of character

AO1

Effect of drama

AO2

Embedded quotation

AO2

Builds on previous point

AO2

Links historical context to play

AO3

Varied use of subject terminology

AO2

Selects and explores individual word

AO2

Refers to rest of play

AO1

Repetition of 'shows' – a different verb would be preferable

AO1

AO1

Sudden change in focus, lacks fluency

AO1

Interesting approach to the question

AO1

Conclusion feels rushed

would 'get kings'. He does not even do his friend the service of a warrior's death, but sends murderers to hunt down Banquo and Fleance. In the context of the play this betrayal seems cowardly. Shakespeare presents Macbeth as increasingly unscrupulous in his actions.

In the end, it seems that Lady Macbeth commits suicide, which is itself a kind of betrayal: suicide was an insult to God in Shakespeare's time. Her death seems linked to remorse and in her final appearance she is seen trying to wash blood from her hands. It could be argued that she betrays her gender when she asks the spirits to 'unsex' her and this demise is her punishment.

Overall the theme of betrayal runs right through the play, and Shakespeare uses a range of techniques to show how 'horrid' it is.

Refers to context, but point could be expanded

AO3

Reference to cultural context

AO3

GOOD LEVEL
Comment:

This is a sustained and generally fluent response, which is detailed and thoughtful and shows understanding of the whole play. There is evidence of deeper understanding and an ability to interpret ideas. Relevant comments are made on Shakespeare's techniques and their effects, and some good examples are selected from the rest of the play, though these could be examined more closely. There are also some relevant connections made to wider context.

For a High Level:

- Plan in more depth, considering where points can be linked together.
- Consider how to further meet AO3 by commenting on the context of the play – this can be literary as well as social.
- Aim to work at a high level of detail throughout the response.
- Maintain the fluency of expression to the end.

Sample answer C

AO1

Relevant reference to literary context

AO1

Refers to elsewhere in play

AO1

Use of embedded quotations

AO1

Awareness of writer's craft

AO2

Close analysis of language

AO3

Relevant and interesting reference to context

'Macbeth' is a tragedy in which the hero's downfall begins with betrayal, a theme that is central to the play. In the very first scene three witches warn that 'Fair is foul and foul is fair', an incantation that sets the tone for foul-play and treachery. Betrayals range from the first Thane of Cawdor's traitorous behaviour in battle, to Lady Macbeth's betrayal of her gender, and Macbeth's betrayal of the king.

Prior to this extract, Lady Macbeth has called on 'spirits' to 'unsex' her. She invokes supernatural forces, demanding a masculine strength that could be seen to betray her gender. She accuses her husband, lauded for his fearlessness, of being 'too full o'the milk of human-kindness'. Her ambition leads her to manipulate, and in a sense betray, her husband. She will 'pour [her] spirits in [his] ear' and pushes Macbeth to murder Duncan, to meet her own desire to be queen.

In this particular extract, Shakespeare uses a soliloquy to present Macbeth's internal struggle over the proposed betrayal. Earlier in the speech, Macbeth's language is euphemistic: 'If it were done when 'tis done'. Macbeth's use of the pronoun 'it' shows his inability to name the act: 'murder', indicating his discomfort.

Through Macbeth, Shakespeare presents Duncan as a paragon of leadership who is 'clear in his great office'. The adjective 'great' suggests both the high calibre of Duncan's rule, and also the importance of the king in society. According to James I's guidebook to sovereignty, 'Basilikon Doron', kings were so significant that 'by God himself they are called gods'. Shakespeare appears to support (or pander to) this view when Macbeth claims Duncan's 'virtues / Will plead like angels', a simile implying Heaven will be distraught at his death. Macbeth acknowledges the seriousness of the assassination plot: he will betray a friend who's 'here in double trust' as the king and, as a consequence, God.

Another of Macbeth's concerns about the betrayal is related to Duncan's innocence. The simile 'like a naked new-born babe' presents an image of defencelessness and purity. The assonance of the long 'a', coupled with the alliteration, suggests wailing or sobbing. Later in this scene Lady Macbeth says she knows 'how tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me', suggesting that the Macbeths have lost a child. These images of babies combine to fill the audience with dread about the assassination plot. They could also, perhaps, suggest an underlying grief in Macbeth, even trauma.

AO4

Sophisticated vocabulary and expression

AO1

Highly effective overarching summary of theme in play

AO1

Focus on question, with relevant exploration

AO2

Effective use of literary terminology

AO2

Selects individual word to examine

AO1

Examines layers of meaning in the question

AO1

Close analysis of language

AO1

Suitably tentative

A01

Well-chosen link
to elsewhere in the
scene

However, Macbeth admits his only justification for betraying Duncan is his own 'vaulting ambition'. Shakespeare uses a verb as an adjective in 'vaulting' and the effect is to make Macbeth's ambition seem beyond his control, like an untamed horse. This conclusion about his motive stops Macbeth. As his soliloquy continues, he declares: 'We will proceed no further in this business'. However, he soon renounces his decision, betraying himself, when Lady Macbeth accuses him of cowardice.

After the murder, the guilt of betrayal disturbs Macbeth. He is now able to utter the word 'murder', but not 'the king' or 'Duncan'. His lamentation 'Macbeth does murder sleep!' shows the immense consequence of betrayal: there will be no rest for Macbeth, his wife, or Scotland.

Later, after the 'terrible feat' and accession to the throne, Macbeth commits further betrayals: he has his fellow soldier Banquo murdered and arranges for Macduff's innocent family to be 'savagely slaughtered'. With these treacherous acts against the blameless and defenceless, Macbeth betrays his own warrior creed.

Macbeth also betrays his role as leader. Instead of offering protection to Scotland, he rules with violence: he is a 'devil', a 'hell-kite', a 'hell-hound'. With these associations to the underworld, Shakespeare creates a contrast between Macbeth and Duncan as portrayed in the extract.

In the end the betrayer is betrayed. On an emotional level Macbeth is betrayed by his mind – he is haunted by 'terrible dreams' and 'gory' hallucinations and does not enjoy the power he sought. His 'dearest chuck', Lady Macbeth, descends into madness, a kind of betrayal of marriage – she is no longer able to equal her husband. Finally, Macbeth is betrayed politically by Macduff and Malcolm. This betrayal, if it is one, is simply the usurping of a 'butcher' king, and therefore seems a fair and just final outcome.

A01

Relevant reference
to elsewhere,
showing strong
overall knowledge

A03

Contextual
reference

A01

Links evidence
from elsewhere in
the play back to the
extract

A01

Concise conclusion

VERY HIGH LEVEL

Comment:

A convincing answer which examines various angles of the theme with a range of evidence, from both the extract and the play as a whole. There is a range of knowledge demonstrated, across and beyond the text, which is well articulated and exemplified using well-chosen quotations.

Question 2

Read the following extract from Act II Scene 2 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Macbeth has just murdered King Duncan.

LADY MACBETH

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

MACBETH

Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep – the innocent sleep,
5 Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast.'

LADY MACBETH

What do you mean?

MACBETH

Still it cried 'Sleep no more' to all the house;
10 'Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

Starting with this conversation, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of sleep.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of sleep in this conversation
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of sleep in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

[illegible]

Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. Conversely, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

Sample answer A

A03 Places scene in context of plot

A04 Sentences are all a similar length – could do with more connectives for variety and impact

A01 Understanding of motif but repeats earlier idea

A01 Acknowledges writer's craft but expressed a little clumsily

Shakespeare uses sleep as a motif. A motif is an idea or image that is repeated through a play. In this extract Macbeth repeats the word 'sleep' seven times. This emphasises how important it is to him.

This extract shows that Macbeth is disturbed after he killed Duncan. He thinks he will not be able to sleep any more because of what he has done. The idea about sleep here, is that sleeplessness is a punishment. Macbeth hears a voice saying 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep!' Killing Duncan has made Macbeth mentally unstable and he is hallucinating. This is like when he hallucinated about the dagger. He isn't totally happy about what he has done.

In this extract, Macbeth describes sleep as 'innocent'. He killed Duncan in his sleep and Duncan was innocent. We know that Macbeth only kills the king because of his ambition and greed. It is as though he has murdered innocence. This makes his crime seem even more disgusting. It also seems like Macbeth is being punished by having sleep taken away from him.

'Sleep' is also a way of saying death. People say someone has gone to sleep when they die. As Macbeth has just murdered Duncan, he has put his king into his final sleep. Macbeth does not say that he murdered the king though. It is as though he can't even admit his crime to himself or Lady Macbeth who knows what has happened. Instead he worries about murdering sleep. This is a bit self-centred. Macbeth only thinks about the consequences for himself, not anyone else.

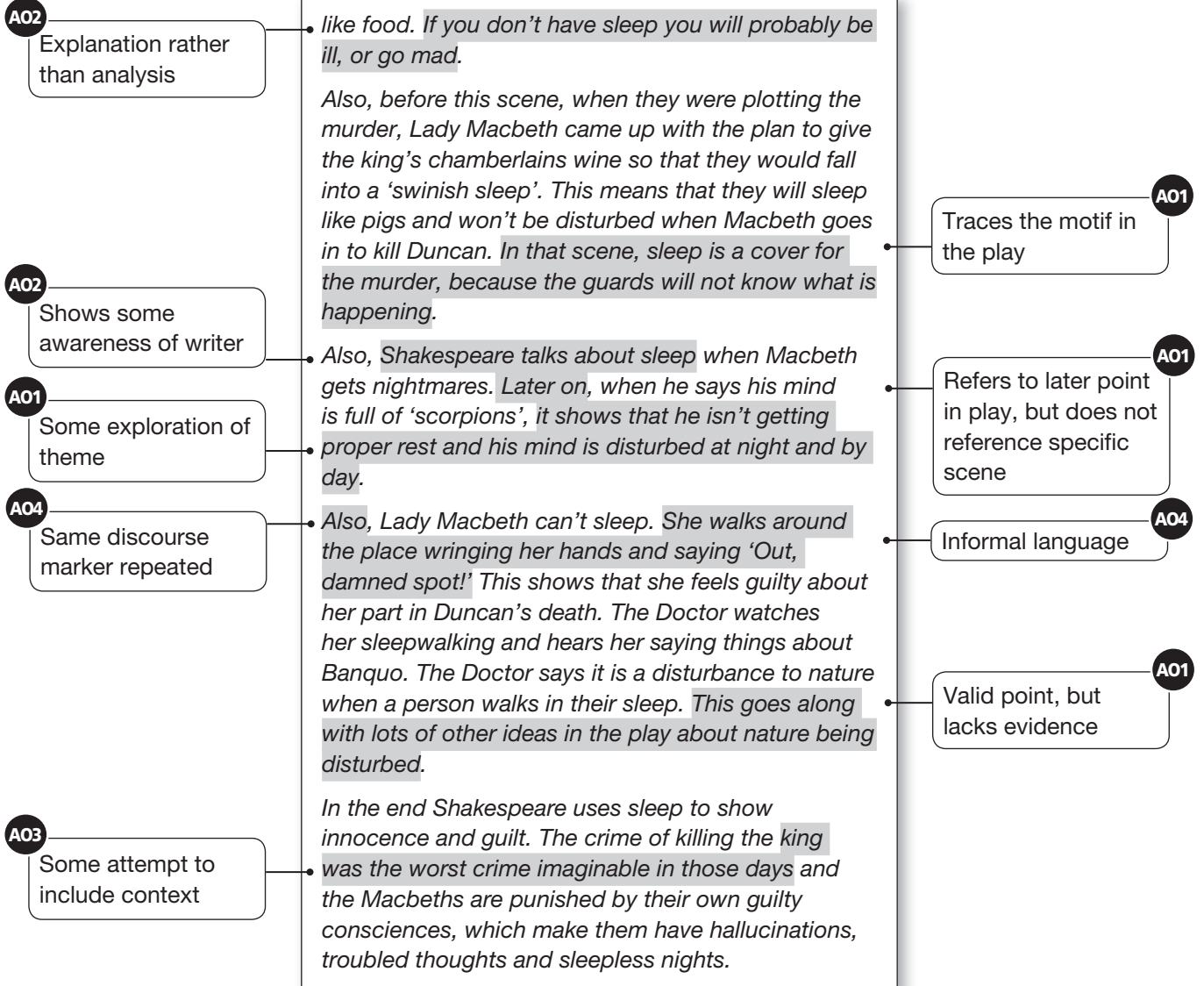
Shakespeare gives Macbeth metaphors to show how important sleep is. He says that sleep is 'sore labour's bath' which means it is something that soothes you after hard work. He also says it is 'Chief nourisher in life's feast' which means sleep is a bit

A02 Shows understanding of literary technique

A01 Vague reference to previous section of play, and informal expression

A02 Explores significance of language

A01 Useful analysis but expression is rather informal

**MID LEVEL****Comment:**

This is a focused response to the question that explains ideas and points clearly and logically. Quotations are generally relevant and support what is being said, though more in-depth analysis would be useful. Shows some understanding of the writer's techniques, but reference to context is limited.

For a Good Level:

- Include more relevant and precise contextual support.
- Analyse language from the extract in closer detail.
- Examine the layers of meaning in particular words.
- Aim to include more literary terminology.
- Express ideas more fluently with a greater variety of sentences.

Sample answer B

This scene presents a key motif in 'Macbeth': sleep. Shakespeare uses the concept of sleep throughout the play – the word itself appears thirty-two times in total. Sleep is used to represent innocence, peace of mind and the natural cycle of life. Sleep is a 'nourisher' and important for good health. In this scene, Macbeth is worried that he has murdered sleep, showing that his murder of Duncan has disturbing implications.

Before the scene this extract comes from, the idea of 'sleep' appears with Lady Macbeth's plot to take advantage of sleep by plying the king's guards with wine, sending them to 'swinish sleep'. The word 'swinish' shows that the guards will be like pigs, grunting in ignorant wine-drenched sleep. Their sleep will be the cover under which Macbeth will murder the king, so sleep is useful to the Macbeths at this point.

Before the murder, Banquo experiences troubled sleep. He meets Macbeth late at night, saying, 'What, sir, not yet at rest?' Banquo doesn't know that Macbeth is about to kill Duncan, so his question makes a link with this extract, which comes after the murder. Here, Macbeth imagines a voice crying, 'Macbeth does murder sleep!'. The voice embodies Macbeth's paranoia and fear. He will never be 'at rest' again.

It is ironic that Macbeth worries about a lack of sleep when he has just killed Duncan in his sleep. It is Duncan who will not sleep – or wake – any more. To any audience, murdering someone in their sleep would seem dreadful, but it was even worse at the time Shakespeare was writing about. In medieval Scotland, the king was the head of everything and to kill him showed disregard for the whole country.

The cry 'Macbeth does murder sleep' shows that Macbeth is disturbed by his actions. He feels horrified and thinks he will be haunted by guilt and nightmares forever. Sleep, therefore, could be said to represent innocence. It suggests Duncan's innocence and could also refer to the innocence of the people like Banquo, and Macduff's children, who Macbeth will go on to kill.

Macbeth also refers to sleep as 'the death of each day's life'. This metaphor shows how the natural order of things should go through cycles: day and night, life and death, summer and winter. Macbeth realises that he has disrupted the natural order of everything and that he will suffer by no longer being able to rest.

Macbeth describes sleep as a 'chief nourisher'. A lack of sleep means a lack of nourishment, which leads to sickness. This links to Lady Macbeth's

Confident, detailed introduction

A01

Picks out individual word but needs to choose words that relate more closely to the theme

A01

Links quotations from different parts of play

A02

Includes context, though could explore this further

A03

Uses literary terminology appropriately

A04

Begins to analyse language, though could go deeper

A02

Well-embedded quotation

A01

Similar opening to previous paragraph

A04

Apt use of literary term

A02

Examines significance of key word

A02

Clear explanation of effect

A01

A01

Effective conclusion summing up the different ways sleep is used in the play

comment that they mustn't think about what they have done or it 'will make us mad'. We see this in the way that both Macbeth and his queen decline into madness as the play progresses. For example, a much weaker Lady Macbeth appears in Act V Scene 1. She is sleepwalking and talking about blood so her maids bring the Doctor to see her. He is shocked by the way she is behaving. Her last line in the play is 'to bed, to bed, to bed'. The repetition shows that she craves sleep and perhaps, by this point, her own death.

Overall Shakespeare uses the motif of sleep effectively in the play to show ways that the Macbeths' crime disturbs the world. However, their own disrupted sleep or thought processes show that they themselves ultimately suffer from the mental torment brought on by guilt.

A01

Clear link to a precise moment elsewhere in the play, though perhaps a little heavy on retelling

A04

Generally fluent expression

GOOD LEVEL
Comment:

This is solid, fluent and well argued, with embedded quotations throughout. There is increasing evidence of deeper understanding and an ability to interpret ideas. Shows a good understanding of the way Shakespeare uses 'sleep' as a motif throughout the play as a whole.

For a High Level:

- Aim to analyse key words and phrases in more detail.
- Look for subtleties of meaning and examine less obvious significance of words.
- Find further opportunities to incorporate historical and social context.

Sample answer C

A02

Appropriate use of terminology

A02

Relevant embedded quotation

A01

Explores layers of meaning

A01

Fluent linking and expression of ideas

A01

Strong control of language and effective repetition

Shakespeare uses the motif of sleep throughout 'Macbeth', starting in Act I Scene 3 when the witches cast a spell on a sailor to prevent him from sleeping.

This foreshadows the Macbeths' experiences of sleeplessness following the murder of Duncan. It also foreshadows the way that sleep represents innocence, and that its opposite, sleeplessness, here conjured by the forces of evil, signifies corruption.

In the given extract, the 'deed' has been done. Macbeth has killed the king, a crime even more awful in the medieval context of the play when the king held a patriarchal position. King Duncan is the 'Lord's anointed temple', central on a spiritual as well as a political level. James I wrote about the Divine Right of Kings, suggesting that a king was the head of a 'microcosm of the body of man'. Macbeth's action disturbs the natural order and is therefore an offence to God. When he hallucinates and imagines a voice crying, 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep', it implies that the peace of mind that comes with sleep, and perhaps prayer, has been destroyed.

It also suggests that all hopes for a peaceful Scotland have gone.

In addition, the use of the present tense form 'does' implies that Macbeth is unable to clear his mind of what he has done. Mentally he is still murdering Duncan. The word 'does' also refers back to Act I Scene 7, when Lady Macbeth taunted her husband saying 'When you durst do it, then you were a man.' Now he 'does' it but the outcome is sleepless torture. Sleep is 'the death of each day's life' and without it, there is a continuous and hellish present, a mental disturbance that makes both Lady Macbeth and her husband 'mad'.

In fact, Macbeth is already in a state of hysteria. He manically repeats the word 'sleep', implying horror at his actions, and a wish that he could become unconscious of what he has done.

This hysteria is also seen in the way in which Macbeth babbles a list of metaphors that show the benefits of sleep. It brings peace of mind and 'knits up the ravelled sleeve of care'. It soothes physical and emotional wounds through being 'sore labour's bath' and the 'balm of hurt minds'. Shakespeare highlights all the benefits of sleep to emphasise the intensity of Macbeth's punishment: a sleepless life unsoothed and in constant pain. Sleep is the 'Great nourisher'. The adjective 'great' suggests something godly or spiritual. Without sleep, the soul goes unfed.

Clear and concise introduction

A01

Useful reference to context

A03

Close analysis of language

A02

Shows secure understanding of play

A01

Shows understanding of character

A02

Thoughtful examination of individual word

A02

A02

Explores wider significance of language

Macbeth also recounts how the voice 'cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house'. The imperative is indisputable: there will be no rest for anyone. The 'house' suggests the Macbeths' home, and could also represent the country. The command is a warning to Scotland to be vigilant.

Later, in Act III, Macbeth reports 'terrible dreams / That shake us nightly'. His sleepless paranoia is surely part of what leads him to have Banquo murdered. It is also possible that murdering Banquo is strategic – Macbeth has invited Banquo to support him and Banquo has rejected the offer. The appearance of Banquo's ghost shaking his 'gory locks' at the feast is nightmarish, and the march of Birnam Wood and the man 'not born of woman' are also so strange as to seem dreamlike. Macbeth's waking world becomes as awful and surreal as a nightmare.

Another aspect of sleep which Shakespeare explores in the play is its association with night, a time when primitive fears and insecurities surface, and also one linked to contemporary ideas about the supernatural. The Macbeths' sleeplessness makes them nocturnal creatures and connects them even more closely with evil.

The sleep motif continues in Act V with Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking. Her bedchamber forms a parallel to Duncan's. Though where Duncan's represents peace, hers is a microcosm of 'perturbation'. Both rooms witness violence – one in the form of 'gash'd stabs' and the other a violent mental disturbance. In each, sleep is murdered.

Finally, Shakespeare combines the motif of sleep with the motif of blood, showing Lady Macbeth's mental and emotional breakdown in her sleeping obsession with a 'damned spot' of blood that she cannot wash away. Both the blood and her disturbed sleep represent her guilt and the impossibility of avoiding it. The motif ends with Lady Macbeth's 'to bed, to bed, to bed' implying her downfall – her deathbed, perhaps, – and pre-empting Macbeth's own descent.

Confident expression and wide vocabulary

A04

Excellent use of critical style, honing the argument

A01

Examines motif in detail

A01

A03

Uses context

Very high level use of relevant vocabulary

A04

Explores parallels

A01

A02

Good understanding of literary techniques

A01

Well-rounded argument

VERY HIGH LEVEL

Comment:

A sustained and convincing answer which presents a wide range of evidence from the extract and across the play as a whole. Knowledge of the theme, and how it is presented across and beyond the text is articulated strongly and exemplified using well-chosen quotations, and detailed analysis.

Question 3

Read the following extract from Act I Scene 2 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Captain is describing to King Duncan what has happened on the battlefield.

MALCOLM

Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.

CAPTAIN

Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald –
5 Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him – from the Western Isles
Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied,
And fortune on his damnèd quarrel smiling
10 Showed like a rebel's whore. But all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth – well he deserves that name –
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carvèd out his passage
15 Till he faced the slave –
Which ne'er shook hands nor bade farewell to him
Till he unseamed him from the nave to the chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements.

KING DUNCAN

O valiant cousin! Worthy gentleman!

'Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a brave warrior who is worthy of respect.'

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

Write about:

- how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a brave warrior worthy of respect at this moment in the play
- how far Shakespeare presents Macbeth as a brave warrior worthy of respect in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]