Macbeth
William Shakespeare

A Before Reading

1 Two major themes in Macbeth are ambition and the supernatural. In what ways can ambition be a positive or negative quality? And why was the theme of the supernatural important at the time the play was written?

2 Decide if the following statements about the play are True (T) or False (F).
   a King Duncan loved and trusted Macbeth.  T / F
   b Macbeth didn’t believe in the supernatural.  T / F
   c Lady Macbeth was not as ambitious as her husband.  T / F
   d Macbeth committed his first murder alone.  T / F
   e The witches tricked Macbeth.  T / F

Read page 8 to check your answers.

3 a Here are some pictures of key scenes in the play. What can you see in each and in what order do you think they happen?

   b Match the following quotes from the play to the pictures in 3a. Write the correct letter (a–d) next to each quote.
       1 ‘You were not born of woman – yet I’ll fight.’ ____
       2 ‘Why did you bring these daggers from the room?’ ____
       3 ‘Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor! Greater than both As the three sisters promised!’ ____
       4 ‘Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth! Beware Macduff! Beware the Thane of Fife!’ ____

Check your answers as you read.
B While Reading

4 There are a lot of deaths in the play. As you read, make a note of who was killed and the person responsible. The first one is an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who was killed?</th>
<th>Who was responsible?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The rebels’ leader</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5a What adjectives can you use to describe these characters?

- noble
- weak
- guilty
- trusting
- wicked
- ambitious
- brave
- loving
- fair
- loyal

a Macbeth: ____________________________
b Lady Macbeth: _______________________
c Banquo: ____________________________
d Duncan: ____________________________

5b How do the characters of Macbeth and his wife change through the play?

6a Things are not what they seem! Hallucinations – things that you see but are not really there – occur throughout the play. Make a note of the ones that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth had in these scenes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Hallucination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act 2, Scene 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 3, Scene 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 5, Scene 1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

b Why do you think they have these hallucinations?
7 Read Macbeth's speech on page 87 and answer the questions.
   a How does he see death?
   b What does he compare life to?
   c What does he compare people to?
   d What is the feeling of the speech?

C After Reading

8 a Imagine you are a film director. What actors would you cast in the roles of the main characters in Macbeth? Give reasons for your choices.
   b You are going to adapt your film to a modern-day setting. Decide these things:
      • Where is it set?
      • When is it set?
      • What are the main locations?
      • What do the characters do for a living?
      • Would you change any of the murders for different crimes?

9 In the scene in the picture the servant woman told the doctor about Lady Macbeth's strange behaviour.

Imagine you are Lady Macbeth's servant and you are concerned about her. Write a letter to a friend and tell her what has happened at the castle. Include how you heard about Duncan's murder and how Lady Macbeth has changed. Start your letter like this:

Dear Sally,

Things here at the castle have changed so much. First there was the terrible murder of the King. I was...