

## Characterisation

<b>Macbeth</b> (tragic hero)	initially brave and courageous; plagued by self-doubt and indecision; becomes a ruthless, calculating killer. Obsession with ambition destroys his noble characteristics. Cynical and world-weary at the end of the play.
<b>Lady Macbeth</b>	Macbeth's wife; drives his ambition in the beginning, but loses her control by the end. Devious, cunning and morally ambiguous. Unconventional and rebellious. Ruthlessly ambitious. Rejects conventional femininity and maternal instincts.
<b>Banquo</b> (Macbeth's foil)	Macbeth's close friend and ally who also receives prophecies from the witches (descendants will become kings). Perceptive and cautious – does not immediately believe prophecies. Brave, noble and wise. A moral contrast/counterpoint to M
<b>Duncan</b>	King of Scotland at the beginning of the play; strong and respected leader. Trusting and nurturing towards his nobles.
<b>Malcolm</b>	Duncan's oldest son and next in line to the throne. Joins the English army to defeat Macbeth at the end of the play. Honest and wise. Becomes a strong leader.
<b>The Three Witches</b>	Supernatural beings who predict events in the play; mysterious and ambiguous; gruesome and evil; disturbing and unsettling presence on stage; unnatural; symbolic of disruption of the natural order.
<b>Macduff</b>	Thane of Fife; honest, sincere and loyal; determined to avenge his family's slaughter; represents goodness and hope; ends Macbeth's tyranny and restores

## Literary techniques and methods

<b>Tragedy</b>	Macbeth is a tragedy and the character of Macbeth is a tragic hero, a man who began nobly but is driven to his downfall by a fatal flaw (ambition) and is defeated at the hands of his nemesis (Macduff).
<b>Symbolism</b>	blood/bloody hands = <i>guilt</i> ; light and dark (e.g. murder committed at night) = good and evil; sleep = innocence, purity and peace of mind; the natural world = <i>correct order of things - animals rebel when things are not right.</i>
<b>Dramatic irony</b>	When the audience knows information the characters do not. E.g. Macbeth orders Banquo murdered and then sees his ghost at the banquet.
<b>Pathetic fallacy</b>	Unnatural events are usually echoed by unnatural weather. E.g. thunder and lightning at the start of the play creates an ominous and violent mood.
<b>Hamartia</b>	a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero.
<b>Soliloquy</b>	a character speaks thoughts and feelings out loud, sharing them with the audience – gives illusion of being unspoken reflections. E.g. 'Glamis thou art, and Cawdor'
<b>Aside</b> (stage direction)	a character speaks thoughts aloud to the audience, but other characters on stage cannot hear them; usually short speeches.
<b>Dramatic moments/Tension</b>	Act 1, Sc i –Witches. A1, s5 – Lady Mac reads letter -wishes to become ruthless. A 2, s 2 – Mac brings bloody daggers from Duncan's room - Lady Mac takes charge . A 3, s 4 – Feast - Macbeth sees ghost of Banq. A 5, s 1 – Lady Macbeth sleep walking. A5 Macduff's revelation 'untimely ripp'd'

## Shakespeare's themes and conflicts

<b>Ambition</b>	Ambition motivates M to commit terrible deeds; ambition is the tragic hero's hamartia - his 'fatal flaw'; Lady Macbeth persuades M by appealing to his ambition; Banquo shows ambition can be balanced by morals and reason. Shakespeare warns against the corrosive power of unchecked ambition.
<b>Fate vs free will</b>	M first line 'so foul and fair a day' hints that Witches already in control; Witches use prophecies to determine Macbeth's future and eventual downfall; Macbeth fails to 'cheat' fate by having B killed. Ambition and LM also affect Macbeth's free will. M is controlled by prophecies - Banquo is not.
<b>Power &amp; corruption</b>	From 'valiant' & 'brave warrior' to 'tyrant' & 'butcher.' When the crown is taken wrongfully, the country suffers. Mac and Lady M's journey
<b>Appearance &amp; reality</b>	The deception and beguiling shown by the Macbeths in A1; dissembling behaviour; the 'movement' of Birnam Wood; M and LM hide true intentions from Duncan in A1; Witches' riddles/language: 'Fair is foul' to deceive and confuse.
<b>The supernatural vs the natural order</b>	Appear at the start to set the tone/to suggest their influence over events; shown to have evil intent and evil ways; the Witches' prophecies drive the action of the play; hallucinations (dagger, ghost, blood).
<b>Good vs evil</b>	Duncan acknowledged as a 'good' King.; Malcolm is a fair and good leader (the rightful one); Mac and lady M – imagery associated with evil; Macbeth transforms from 'noble' and respected in A1 to a 'dead butcher' in A5; evil represented by Witches; LM loses her femininity to be more cruel /ruthless.
<b>Loyalty vs betrayal</b>	Macduff and Banquo's words and actions. Thane of Cawdor executed for betrayal, and Mac rewarded for loyalty. Macbeth, Lady Mac 's betrayal leads to their demise; loyalty shown to different things.
<b>Peace vs violence</b>	Battle, at start; contains murders of men, women, and children, ends with suicide of Lady Mac, a climactic siege & the beheading of Mac.beth. An

## Authorial intention and Tragic Structure

<b>Jacobean Context</b>	To kill a king was considered the worst sin and a terrible crime against the natural order. Witchcraft widely believed - witches could cause harm. Narrow expectations of women: belonged to their fathers and then to their husbands. Women could not own property of their own. Lady Macbeth subverts these conventions - manipulates Macbeth to achieve ultimate power (to become Queen)
<b>Structure</b>	The 5 Acts: Macbeth is a typical tragedy. Act 1 and 2: Macbeth's rise to power builds up to the turning point (Duncan's murder). Act 3-5: consequences of crimes leads to Macbeth's downfall.

