



# Year 7 Macbeth Knowledge Organiser

**Assessments:**

1. A persuasive letter to Macbeth. Should Macbeth kill Duncan?
2. How does the audience's impression of Macbeth change as they watch Act 1 Scene VII, Macbeth's Soliloquy and Act 2 Scene II?

**Brief Plot Summary:**

**Act 1:**

- Macbeth and Banquo meet three witches.
- Macbeth is made the Thane of Cawdor.
- Lady Macbeth reads the Macbeth's letter and taunts Macbeth.
- King Duncan arrives Inverness Castle.

**Act 2:**

- Macbeth kills Duncan.
- Duncan's sons flee.
- Macbeth is crowned King of Scotland.

**Act 3:**

- Banquo is suspicious of Macbeth.
- Banquo is murdered but his son escapes.
- Macbeth is haunted by Banquo's ghost at a banquet.

**Act 4:**

- The Witches show Macbeth that the future kings will be sons of Banquo.
- Macduff's family is murdered.
- Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty.

**Act 5:**

- Lady Macbeth sleepwalks and dies.
- Macbeth is killed by Malcolm
- Malcom is restored as king.

**Key Characters:**

**Macbeth:** One of King Duncan's generals. He loves power; the witches tempt him into murder. Originally Thane of Glamis, he becomes the Thane of Cawdor, then King of Scotland.

**Lady Macbeth:** Macbeth's wife. She is ambitious and drives him to murder but is driven mad by conscience.

**Three Witches:** Sinister ladies of witchcraft who tempt Macbeth to do dark deeds.

**Banquo:** A general and friend of Macbeth. The prophecy does not corrupt him. He is murdered by Macbeth as he is considered a threat. His ghost haunts Macbeth.

**King Duncan:** The good and noble King of Scotland, murdered by Macbeth.

**Macduff:** Thane of Fife. He opposes Macbeth and supports Malcolm. He kills Macbeth in revenge for the murder of his family.

**Malcolm:** Duncan's son. He flees with his brother after the murder of Duncan but returns with English support to challenge Macbeth.

**Fleance:** Banquo's son. Macbeth tries and fails to murder him. He flees Scotland but it's implied he will return one day to fulfil the prophecy and become King.

**Key Quotations:**

"Fair is foul and foul is fair" Act 1 Scene 1

"When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?" Act 1, Scene 1

"Is this a dagger which I see before me," Act 2, Scene 1

"There's daggers in men's smiles.." Act 3, Scene 3

"Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth." Act 4, Scene 1

"Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble." Act 4, Scene 1

"Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" Act 5, Scene 1

**Language and Techniques:**

alliteration  
animal imagery  
changes in iambic pentameter  
imagery related to themes  
irony/dramatic irony  
metaphors  
metre  
paradox  
pathetic fallacy  
personification  
questioning  
rhetorical questions  
rhyming couplets  
similes  
symbols and motifs



**Context**

**Philosophy:** Everyone believed that they had his or her place in life. This hierarchy was known as the chain of being. The idea of Macbeth planning to kill the king would have shocked the Elizabethan audience.

**Politics:** Written in 1606. There is a strong political theme throughout, with the idea that excessive ambition has terrible consequences. Shakespeare was close to King James I and it is thought that in focusing on Macbeth as a figure from Scottish history he was paying homage the King's lineage.

**Order:** A century earlier, England had experienced chaotic disorder during the War of the Roses. An underlying threat is evident throughout the play that treachery may once again bring disaster. Many events in the play challenge the idea of 'order'.

**Supernatural:** Witchcraft and supernatural were both of great interest and hugely feared. King James I was highly intrigued by (and suspicious of) the supernatural, and even wrote about the subject. The audience believed anything associated with the supernatural to be evil and menacing.

**Religion:** People were deeply religious. Belief in God and heaven and hell affected people's choice and the way they behaved.

**Gender:** It was a patriarchal society. Women were expected to be submissive to their husbands and a woman with an education was a rarity. Women were ruled by men and supposed to be pious and pure. The idea that a woman could challenge a man was unheard of and would have shocked audiences. Men were supposed to be strong, brave and masculine. To be called feminine was an insult to a man.

**Themes**

<p><b>Ambition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most well-known theme.</li> <li>• Affects both Macbeth &amp; Lady Macbeth.</li> <li>• Ambition is corrupting and leads to evil.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Good and Evil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Macbeth must choose between them.</li> <li>• The witches symbolise evil.</li> <li>• Choices have consequences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Supernatural</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idea that mysterious forces control us.</li> <li>• Does Macbeth become possessed?</li> <li>• Strong belief and fear of witchcraft at the time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Order and Chaos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A century earlier – War of the Roses.</li> <li>• Civil disorder seen as perilous.</li> <li>• Macbeth's restored 'order' is only an illusion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Appearance and Reality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lady Macbeth believes Macbeth is a poor actor.</li> <li>• Macbeth sees powerful visions.</li> <li>• Banquo appears as a 'vision'.</li> <li>• Witches seem 'useful' to Macbeth but bring about his downfall.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Loyalty and Betrayal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dominate the play as themes.</li> <li>• Cawdor punished for betrayal.</li> <li>• Macbeth rewarded for loyalty at outset.</li> <li>• Macbeth betrays Banquo and Duncan.</li> <li>• Macbeth remains loyal to Lady Macbeth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allude/allusion</li> <li>ambition/ambitious</li> <li>apparition</li> <li>contempt</li> <li>feminine/femininity</li> <li>greed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iambic pentameter</li> <li>malevolent</li> <li>manipulate/manipulative</li> <li>masculine/masculinity</li> <li>moral/immoral</li> <li>noble</li> <li>patriarchal society</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>power</li> <li>prophecy</li> <li>protagonist</li> <li>regicide</li> <li>sinister</li> <li>soliloquy</li> <li>supernatural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>surreal</li> <li>treachery</li> <li>usurp</li> <li>valour</li> <li>vile</li> <li>villain</li> <li>witchcraft</li> </ul>



