MACBETH WORKBOOK

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON ACT ONE:

ACT ONE:

1. What is introduced in the first scene of Act one, regarding
   1. The setting /2/
   2. The characters /1/
   3. Themes /2/
2. Explain in your own words what the witches mean by :

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air. /4/

1. Why do you think Shakespeare begins his play with such short scenes? /2/
2. What background is sketched for us in the second scene.(give you answer in points) /5/
3. What prophesy do the witches give to Macbeth? /2/
4. What prophesy do the witches give to Banquo? /3/
5. In two short paragraphs describe how Macbeth and Banquo each respond to the witches’ prophesies and what this reveals about their different characters. /10/
6. Why is it significant to the plot that Ross tells Macbeth about his promotion when he does?

/2/

1. Explain the irony in these lines

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour

To make thee full of growing. ( 1.iv. 28/29) /2/

10. 1. Who is proclaimed the Prince of Cumberland? Malcolm /1/

10.2. How does Macbeth react to this and why? /3/

1. What is the dramatic significance of Lady Macbeth receiving news of Macbeth’s encounter with

the witches by post? /2/

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1. Write a paragraph describing what is revealed of the nature of Lady Macbeth in this scene.

(1.v.30) /5/

1. When Duncan arrives at Inverness, how is he received by Lady Macbeth? /2/
2. What is ironic about this scene? /3/
3. Consider the first soliloquy of Macbeth

15.1. What is a soliloquy and what is its dramatic function? /2/

15.2. Briefly summarise what Macbeth’s dilemma is in this soliloquy /4/

15.3. What is Macbeth’s emotional state here? /4/

16. How does Lady Macbeth persuade Macbeth to kill Duncan? /4/

CONTEXTUAL QUESTION ONE

ACT1 SC V11

**MACBETH**

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
To our own lips. 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,  
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;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

How now! what news?

1. This is a soliloquy. What is a soliloquy and what is its functions? /3/

2. This soliloquy is in blank verse. Explain the statement. /2/

3. “If it were done” To what is Macbeth referring? /1/

4. Why does he want to do this deed? Explain the background. /3/

5. Why is it best if it “were done quickly”? /1/

6. According to the text, what is stopping Macbeth from doing the act? /8/

7. What is Macbeth saying about justice in this soliloquy? /2/

8. What is the reason Macbeth give for killing Duncan? /1/

MACBETH: ACT TWO QUESTIONS

1. Write a single summary sentence for each of the scenes in this act. /4/

**2. Refer to Scene 1**

2.1. Banquo asks Macbeth about the Weird sisters. How does Macbeth respond and why do you think he responds like this? /3/

2.2.What does this reveal about his nature? /2/

2.3. Refer to lines 32 to 65

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,  
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

*A bell rings*

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

*Exit*

2.3.1. What does this soliloquy reveal to us about the stat of Macbeth’s mind at this stage of the play? Substantiate your answer. /3/

2.3.2. Explain what is meant by the lines “Whiles I threat,….gives” /3/

2.3.2. Do you think the bell summoned Ducan to heaven or to hell? Justify your answer with evidence from the play. /2/

2.3.3. Where else in the play does Macbeth hallucinate? (2)

2.3.4. According to the play, where would Duncan be going, heaven or hell? Justify your answer. (2)

2.3.5. Reference is made to sleep in this soliloquy. Where else is the theme developed in the play? Discuss its importance. (4)

**3. Refer to Scene 2**

3.1. Why has Shakespeare chosen to begin this scene with Lady Macbeth waiting for her husband? /2/

3.2.How does Shakespeare build up tension in this scene? /3/

3.3. Describe Lady Macbeth emotional state in this scene. /4/

3.4. How does Macbeth react to what he has just done? What does this reveal about his nature? /4/

3.5. The theme of sleep is built on in this scene. How? /2/

**4. Refer to Scene 3**

4.1. Give two reasons why Shakespeare included this scene in the play. /2/

4.2. Who discovers the body of Duncan and why do you think Shakespeare chose to use this character? /2/

4.3. How has “ the night has been unruly”(line 45) and why is it significant that it has been so? /3/

4.4. How do Lady Macbeth and Macbeth behave in this scene? /3/

4.5. Why did Macbeth say he killed the grooms and why did he really kill them?

/2/

**Refer to Scene 4**

5.1. Give three reasons why Shakespeare has included this scene. /3/

5.2. Why does Macduff choose to go to fife? /2/

5.3. How does this influence what happens later in the play? /2/

**General question**

6. Why is this act an important one in the development of the plot?

MACBETH: ACT THREE QUESTIONS

**Act three Scene 1:**

1. Banquo says that Macbeth “hast it now”. What does he mean by these words?

2. Do you think Banquo believes Macbeth killed the King? Justify your answer with a quote from Banquo”s soliloquy

3. What is Banquo’s opinion about what the witches told him at this stage of the play?

4. Macbeth asks Banquo two important questions. What are they and why does he ask them?

5. What does Macbeth mean when he says, “ We hear our bloody…..parricide” (lines 29-31)?

6. Refer to Macbeth’s soliloquy (Lines 48 -72)

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.--Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,  
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there!

*Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers*

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

*Exit Attendant*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

**First Murderer**

It was, so please your highness.

**MACBETH**

Well then, now  
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know  
That it was he in the times past which held you  
So under fortune, which you thought had been  
Our innocent self: this I made good to you  
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you,  
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd,  
the instruments,  
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might  
To half a soul and to a notion crazed  
Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

a. What does he mean when he says “To be thus, is nothing, but to be safely thus”?

b. What does this soliloquy tell us about his fears?

c. What does this speech tell us about ambition?

d. Quote three lines which are Macbeth’s opinion of Banquo. What do they tell us?

e. What is Macbeth’s justification, according to what he says in this soliloquy for killing Banquo and Fleance?

7. How does Macbeth persuade the murderers to kill Banquo?

**Act three Scene 2:**

1. Refer to line 14 “ We have scorched the snake not killed it.” What does Macbeth mean by that?

2. To what is Macbeth referring when he speaks of “these terrible dreams that shake us nightly”(line 19)? What do you think Shakespeare is telling us about sleep?

3. Macbeth is envious of Duncan. Why?

4. What does Lady Macbeth ask of Macbeth ?

**Act three Scene three:**

1. Why are the two murderers surprised?

2. Why is it significant that Fleance escapes?

**Act three Scene four:**

1. What do the murderers tell Macbeth?

2. How does he react?

3. What is Macbeth’s hallucination? What does it tell us about his emotional and mental state?

4. How does Lady Macbeth justify Macbeth’s actions?

5. Why is this a significant scene in the play?

**Act three Scene five:**

1. Who is Hecate?

2. Why is Hecate angry with the three witches?

**Act three Scene six:**

1. Lennox is being cynical and sarcastic in his words. Explain what he is saying.

2. What news does the Lord bring?

3. Why did Shakespeare include this speech in the play?

MACBETH QUESTIONS: ACT FOUR

**ACT IV SC 1**

4.1.1 What effect is created through the witches appearing again in the play? /2/

4.1.2. Give a brief comment on the nature of the things put into the cauldron. Why has Shakespeare chosen to include these things? /3/

4.1.3. The second witch introduces Macbeth as “something wicked” (ll 45). Is she correct? Justify your answer. What implication does this have for our understanding of the character of Macbeth? /4/

4.1.4. How does Macbeth treat the witches? What does this reveal of his nature? /2/

4.1.5. Why has Macbeth come to the witches? /2/

4.1.6. In point form summarise the information Macbeth gleans from the witches. /6/

4.1.7. How does he respond to the prophesies? /4/

4.1.8. Why is it significant that Lennox does not see the witches? Is it possible that they were an hallucination? Justify your answer. /4/

**ACT IV SC II**

4.2.1. What is Lady Macduff talking to Ross about? Describe her feelings. /3/

4.2.2. Where is the Thane of Fife (Macduff)? /1/

4.2.3. Quote 4 descriptions which describe the character of Macduff according to Ross./4/

4.2.4. Why is Shakespeare intent on projecting an image of Macduff as Ross describes him?

(Think of the conventions of a tragedy) /2/

4.2.5. What is the effect of brining in the young son? /2/

4.2.6. Why has Shakespeare included this scene in the play? These are not main characters?

Consider the plot as a whole. /5/

**ACT IV SC III**

4.3.1. What picture is portrayed of Malcolm in this scene? Justify your answer with two pieces of evidence. /6/

4.3.2. Why does Malcolm say he is not fit to reign? Is he being sincere? Explain your answer.

/3/

4.3.3. What are the qualities Malcolm says a king should possess. Quote them. /1/

4.3.4. Suggest why Shakespeare included this in the play (Consider the audience) /2/

4.3.5. What news does Ross bring and how is it received? /4/

4.3.6. What does Malcolm resolve at the end of this scene? /2/

**MACBETH QUESTIONS: ACT FIVE**

**ACT V SC I**

5.1.1. Why has the nurse called the doctor? /2/

5.1.2. Describe Lady Macbeth’s actions. /3/

5.1.3. Explain her references in her “dream” /8/

5.1.4. What does the doctor tell the nurse to do and why? /2/

**ACT V SC II**

5.2.1. Suggest a reason why Shakespeare has written such short scenes in this act. /2/

5.2.2. What does this scene reveal about the state of the opposing forces? /2/

5.2.3. Why is the last line of the scene so significant? /2/

**ACT V SC 111**

5.3.1. Explain Macbeth’s emotional state as the scene opens. Quote from the text to justify your answer. /4/

5.3.2. What is his attitude to his subjects? What does this reveal of his nature? /3/

5.3.3. There is a short discussion between the doctor and Macbeth

5.3.3.1. What does the doctor tell Macbeth of Lady Macbeth? /2/

5.3.3.2. What evidence do we have that Macbeth knows what is causing her illness?

/3/

5.3.4. What prophesy is propelling Macbeth? /1/

**ACT V SC1V**

5.4.1. What instruction does Macolm give to the soldiers here? /2/

5.4.2. What does this instruction reveal to us about the witches and the nature of prophesy?

/3/

**ACT V SC V**

5.5.1. Explain what Macbeth means in line 9 -14. /5/

5.5.2. How does the king react to the death of Lady Macbeth? How do you arrive at your answer?

/4/

5.5.3. Explain the meaning of

“Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day.

To the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life’s but a poor shadow; a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury

Signifying nothing.

What do these lines reveal of Macbeth’s emotional state and his vaulting ambition? Why are they so important in the convention of a tragedy? /10/

**ACT V SCENES VI, VII, VIII, IX**

5.6 . Who is Siward and how does he fit into the play? /2/

5.7. What is revealed of Macbeth’s nature in this scene? /2/

5.8. Why is Macbeth so confident? /1/

5.9. Explain how each of the prophesies is revealed in action to Macbeth. /3/

5.10 Why is it significant in the c0onventions of tragedy that Malcolm speaks at the end and is crowned king? /3/