

## 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

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.

AD1 Clear reference to historical context, though rather simplistic

AD1 Relevant selection from elsewhere in the play

AD1 Another reference to context, but needs a clearer connection to the question

AD1 References to elsewhere in play, though these are unsupported

AD1 Personal, if informal, response

**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.

15

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.

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

**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**

**AO1** Uses words from the question but focuses on content not technique

**AO1** Well-chosen and embedded quotation

**AO1** Relevant quotation but rather long given lack of analysis

**AO2** Basic analysis which could be expanded

**AO1** Links to the wider text

**AO4** Repetition of 'good'

**AO4** Paragraphs openings could be more varied

**AO1** Inaccurate – Shakespeare writes, we quote him

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

**AO2** Uses terminology, but does not explain it

**AO4** Repetition of same word within sentence

**AO1** Some explanation, but misses the opportunity to link to other parts of play

**AO2** Use of terminology

**AO1** Relevant quotations embedded

**AO2** Relevant terminology and some analysis of structure

**AO4** Weak expression – use more formal language

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.

**AO3** Clear reference to historical context, though rather simplistic

**AO1** Personal, if informal, response

Relevant selection from elsewhere in the play

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

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.

## PART THREE: FURTHER YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH SHORT ANSWERS

Here are three further questions on the text in a similar style to the ones you might face in your exam. Taking into account what you have learned from the mark schemes on pages 7–8, and the sample responses to the other questions, use Questions 5 to 7 as you wish. You may choose to:

- plan ideas
- write opening paragraphs or part answers
- write full answers at your own speed
- write full answers to a set time limit.

Once you have finished, you can check to see if you have covered some of the key points suggested in the Answers section, and make a judgement about what level you have achieved.



### Question 5

Read the following extract from Act I Scene 5 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth has just received a letter from her husband, describing his meeting with the witches on the heath.

#### LADY MACBETH

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be  
 What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature:  
 It is too full o'the milk of human-kindness  
 To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,  
 5 Art not without ambition, but without  
 The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly  
 That wouldst thou holily, wouldst not play false,  
 And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'dst have, great  
     Glamis,  
 That which cries, 'Thus thou must do' if thou have it,  
 10 And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
 Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither  
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,  
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
 All that impedes thee from the golden round  
 15 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
 To have thee crowned withal.

Starting with this speech, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as ruthless.

Write about:

- how far Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as ruthless in this speech
- how far Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as ruthless in the play as a whole.

**[30 marks]**  
**AO4 [4 marks]**