

PLOT	
Act 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The witches gather and say they will meet with Macbeth. - Macbeth and his friend Banquo, who are returning from battle, meet the witches. The witches tell Macbeth he will be King. - Macbeth tells his wife about this in a letter. She persuades him to kill King Duncan.
Act 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Macbeth sees a floating dagger before he murders Duncan and his servants. - Lady Macbeth plants the daggers on the servants. - Macduff discovers Duncan's body. Malcolm and Donalbain flee Scotland in fear for their lives and are thought to be guilty.
Act 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Macbeth orders the death of Banquo and his son Fleance, as he is scared that Banquo will realise the truth. - Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes. Macbeth starts to panic, and at dinner with the Lords one night, imagines he sees Banquo's ghost.
Act 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Witches give 3 more prophecies: beware Macduff, Macbeth won't be hurt until the forest moves to his castle, Macbeth can't be killed by a man born from a woman. - Macduff flees to England to meet Malcolm. Macbeth sends murderers to kill Macduff's wife and children. In England, Macduff shows loyalty to Malcolm, finds out Macbeth has killed his family and promises to avenge their deaths.
Act 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lady Macbeth has gone mad; she sleepwalks, rubbing invisible blood on her hands. - Macbeth hears of approaching army but witches' prediction make him feel safe. - The English army hide behind branches from the forest as they march. - Macbeth finds out Lady Macbeth has killed herself. - Macbeth and Macduff meet on the battlefield, but Macbeth still isn't scared until he finds out Macduff was born by caesarean. - Macduff kills Macbeth. Malcolm is crowned king of Scotland.

CHARACTERS	
Duncan	King of Scotland
Malcolm	Duncan's eldest son, heir to the throne
Donalbain	Duncan's other son
Macbeth	Thane (Lord) of Glamis, then Cawdor, then King
Lady Macbeth	Macbeth's wife
Banquo	Loyal soldier to Duncan and friend of Macbeth
Fleance	Banquo's son
Macduff	Thane of Fife, loyal follower of Duncan
Lady Macduff	Macduff's wife
Ross, Angus, Lennox	Thanes of Scotland
Witches/weird sisters	Supernatural beings who can predict the future
Hecate	Goddess and queen of witches

MACBETH	
VOCAB	
supernatural	something that can't be explained by science
eerie	unusual, scary
ominous/foreboding	suggests that something bad will happen
liminal	not quite one thing or the other
noble	good, respected
flawed	having a weakness or imperfection
treacherous	betraying or deceiving someone
Machiavellian	prepared to do bad things to achieve a goal
psychological	to do with the mind or the way we think
emasculating	making someone feel less manly
assertive	confident, forceful
goading	bullying someone into doing something
manipulative	controlling someone / something
hubristic	over-confident in a way that leads to downfall
remorseful	guilty, regretful
hierarchy	fixed order of importance
regicide	killing a monarch (king or queen)
transgression	going against what is normally expected
prophecy	a prediction about the future
appearance & reality	how things look vs how things really are

CONTEXT	
James I and succession	James I took the throne after Elizabeth I, a Protestant (type of Christian). Many had hoped that James might be kinder to Catholics (another type of Christian), because his mother was the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots. But he was not. This led to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605: Guy Fawkes and his Catholic friends tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament with 36 barrels of gunpowder.
Witchcraft and the supernatural	Along with a strong belief in God came a strong belief in the devil. Witchcraft was associated with the devil, and witches were seen as people who had made a pact with him to gain supernatural powers. James I was very interested in witchcraft. He wrote a book called <i>Daemonologie</i> which talked about a conspiracy (plot) of satanic witches threatening to undermine the nation. He also changed part of the bible: Exodus 22:18, originally translated as, 'Thou must not suffer a poisoner to live' became 'Thou must not suffer a witch to live.' His obsession is said to have come from a witch who predicted the beheading of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots.
Women and power	The society of Shakespeare's England was patriarchal (ruled by men) and therefore centred on masculinity. Women were not allowed to attend higher education or go to the theatre, and most women could not read. Women were defined in relation to men (daughter, wife, widow) and were commonly expected to be obedient, manage the home and family and bear a male child to inherit the family's wealth.
The Divine Right of Kings	<i>Divine Right of Kings</i> - The belief that the monarch (king or queen) was God's chosen representative on Earth. Any challenge to this would have been seen as an attack on God himself and would be punished.
The Great Chain of Being	This is the idea that everything in life is in a great chain or hierarchy. It starts with God, then humans, animals, plants and end with rocks. This hierarchy put people in their 'rightful' social place. Each part of this chain was thought to be fixed and any disruption of this was unnatural.
Genre	Macbeth is a tragedy play. Aristotle (384-322 BC) was the first person to write about tragedy as a dramatic genre (type of play). He explained that this type of play focused on the actions of a tragic hero. They begin the story as powerful and respected, but due to a mistake or character flaw (hamartia) they become overconfident (hubris) and this leads to their downfall. The audience may feel a cleansing of negative emotions due to their downfall (catharsis), and learn from their mistake.
Influences	Shakespeare based the events and characters on real people from Scottish history, which he read about in the historical book <i>Holinshed's Chronicles</i> . In this version, Banquo is said to have joined Macbeth in plotting the murder of Duncan, but as Banquo was an ancestor of King James I in real life, Shakespeare made Banquo appear more innocent and added the prophecy about his descendants becoming kings to flatter and please King James, who paid Shakespeare to write his plays.