

# Macbeth

## Model Answers

English Literature



- Five Model Answers
- Five Practice Questions
- Last Minute Revision Notes



## MACBETH: REVISION PACK

### Main Characters and Quotes:

- **Macbeth:** a Scottish nobleman and warrior who murders King Duncan to take his throne. He has a sense of right and wrong but is easily influenced. He is a “tragic hero” as he is a good man at heart, however he has a fatal flaw – which is his ambition – that causes him to commit treason and kill King Duncan.

### Macbeth quotes:

So foul and fair a day I have not seen. (Act 1, Sc 3)

Why do you dress me in borrowed robes? (Act 1, Sc 3)

Stars hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires (Act 1, Sc 4)

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself / And falls on the other. (Act 1, Sc 7)

I dare do all that may become a man (Act 1, Sc 7)

Is this a dagger which I see before me (Act 2, Sc 1)

Art thou but a dagger of the mind, a false creation (Act 2, Sc 1)

I heard a voice cry, Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep (Act 2, Sc 2)

We have scorch'd the snake, not kill'd it (Act 2, Sc 2)

Will all great Neptune's Ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? (Act 2, Sc 3)

Thou canst not say I did it: never shake thy gory locks at me. (Act 3, Sc 4)

Secret, black and midnight hags (Act 4, Sc 1)

All our yesterdays have lighted fools (Act 5, Sc 5)

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more (Act 5, Sc 5)

## *Past Paper Questions and Model Answers*

**Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 5 and answer the question that follows. At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is reading a letter from Macbeth.**

### **Lady Macbeth**

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

**Starting with this extract, how does Shakespeare present Macbeth as a dangerous character?**

**Write about:**

- **how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character in this extract**
- **how Shakespeare presents Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character in the play as a whole**

**[30 marks]**

## *Model Answer*

Shakespeare effectively presents Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character through using a variety of literary techniques. Whilst we initially discover that she is cruel and manipulative and she is behind a spate of killings, by the end of the play her conscience makes her feel incredibly guilty. This essay will examine in depth how on the one hand Lady Macbeth is dangerous, but also how she shifts in character as the play progresses.

Firstly, Lady Macbeth is portrayed in the extract as a dangerous character through the metaphor “fill me from the crown to the toe top full of direst cruelty.” Shakespeare effectively uses alliteration to portray Lady Macbeth as a dangerous character as we learn she wants to be transformed by the supernatural to become evil, possibly to do unnamed horrors and commit a murder. The use of the noun “topful” portrays Lady Macbeth as incredibly evil as she wants to be filled completely with evil and not just a little bit. The reader would feel intimidated as they would see Lady Macbeth as a unstable and that she could become a future threat later on in the play.

Secondly, Lady Macbeth is portrayed in this extract as someone who wants to become a man to gain more power. Lady Macbeth uses the imperative sentence: “unsex me here.” We learn that she wants her femininity to be taken away and this presents a fairly gruesome and vivid image of Lady Macbeth wanting to have her feminine feelings taken away so that she can commit murder. The verb “unsex” portrays Lady Macbeth frustrated with the limitations she faces as a woman and she wishes to be a man so that she can commit the murders herself. Contextually in the Jacobean Era, men were seen as superior to women. Indeed they were more powerful than women. Equally women were not expected to be ambitious and a sign of ambition was seen as devious - hence leading many to see Lady Macbeth as the ‘fourth witch’ as she defied conventions and expectations at the time of women. Indeed this passage shows that she wishes to be equal to a man in order to fulfil her ambitions, which would have been shocking to a Jacobean audience.

Thirdly, Lady Macbeth is portrayed as dangerous and a woman with a murderous thoughts. This is shown in the quote “take my milk for gall, you murd’ring ministers.” The alliteration of “m”, coupled with the noun “gall” illustrates Lady Macbeth wants her milk to be used for poison and for the demons of hell to take it and use it to kill Duncan. This establishes Lady Macbeth as a woman who wishes to work with the supernatural in order to commit evil actions.

Later on in the play, Lady Macbeth is portrayed as a dangerous and manipulative character. This is due to the fact she persuades Macbeth into committing regicide. Lady