



GLOBE EDUCATION SHAKESPEARE
FOR AQA GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

MACBETH

William Shakespeare

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ACT 4 SCENE 1

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Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

- First Witch** Thrice the brinded cat hath mewed.
- Second Witch** Thrice, and once the hedge-pig whined.
- Third Witch** Harpier cries — 'Tis time, 'tis time.
- First Witch** Round about the cauldron go:
In the poisoned entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one,
Sweltered venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' th' charmèd pot!
- All** Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
- Second Witch** Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake.
Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing.
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble.
- All** Double, double, toil and trouble,
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
- Third Witch** Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witch's mummy, maw and gulf

- 1 **Thrice:** Three times
1 **brinded:** striped
2 **hedge-pig:** hedgehog
3 **Harpier:** the third witch's
'familiar' – her link to the world
of magic, disguised as an animal
- 5 5 **entrails:** guts
8 **Sweltered venom:** poison,
sweated by the toad
9 **sleeping got:** taken while it slept
12 **Fillet:** a thick slice of
12 **fenny:** from the Fens, which are
marshy and muddy
15 15 **Wool:** hair
16 **fork:** tongue
16 **blind-worm:** slow-worm
17 **howlet:** young owl
23 **mummy:** a powder made from
Egyptian mummies
15 23 **maw and gulf:** throat and
stomach

The Witches dance around
the cauldron, spring 2010.

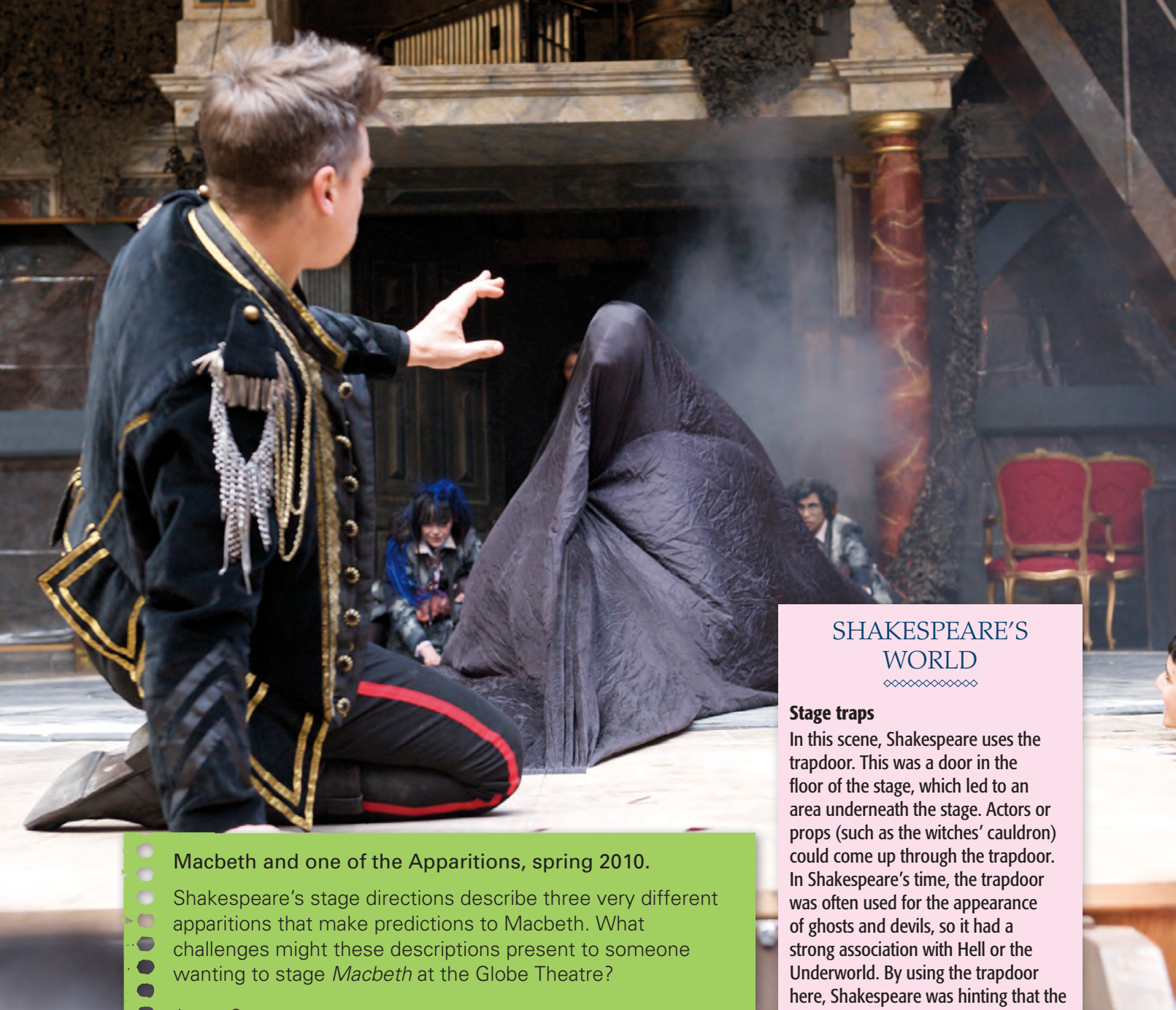
What effect might Shakespeare
have intended by the language
used by the Witches?

— Rachel Winters,
Karen Bryson, Shane Zaza



ACT 4 SCENE 1

	Of the ravined salt-sea shark, Root of hemlock, digged i' th' dark, Liver of blaspheming Jew, Gall of goat, and slips of yew Slivered in the moon's eclipse, Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips, Finger of birth-strangled babe Ditch-delivered by a drab, Make the gruel thick and slab. Add thereto a tiger's chaudron, For th' ingredients of our cauldron.	24 25 26 27 27 28 30	24 ravined: full to bursting 25 hemlock: a poisonous plant 26 blaspheming: denying Christian beliefs 27 Gall: bitter liquid from the liver 27 slips: small twigs 28 Slivered: cut 29–30 Turk ... Tartar ... birth-strangled babe: none of these were baptised Christian, so the Witches could use them 31 Ditch-delivered: born in a ditch 31 drab: prostitute 32 slab: sticky 33 chaudron: guts
All	Double, double, toil and trouble, Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.	35	
Second Witch	Cool it with a baboon's blood, Then the charm is firm and good.		
	<i>Enter Hecate, and three other Witches.</i>		
Hecate	O well done! I commend your pains, And every one shall share i' th' gains. And now about the cauldron sing, Like elves and fairies in a ring, Enchanting all that you put in. <i>Music, they sing a song, putting in more ingredients as they dance round the cauldron.</i>	39 40	39 commend your pains: praise you for the trouble you have taken
Second Witch	By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes. <i>Exit Hecate and the other three witches.</i> Open, locks, whoever knocks! <i>Enter Macbeth.</i>	45	
Macbeth	How now, you secret, black and midnight hags? What is't you do?		
All	A deed without a name.		
Macbeth	I conjure you, by that which you profess, Howe'er you come to know it, answer me. Though you untie the winds and let them fight Against the churches, though the yeasty waves Confound and swallow navigation up, Though bladed corn be lodged, and trees blown down, Though castles topple on their warders' heads Though palaces and pyramids do slope Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure Of nature's germens tumble all together, Even till destruction sicken. Answer me To what I ask you.	50 55 60	49 conjure: demand 51 Though: Even if 51–2 untie ... churches: send storms to knock down churches 52 yeasty: frothy 53 Confound: smash up 53 navigation: ships at sea 54 bladed corn be lodged: ripening corn is blown flat (and so ruined) 55 warders: people in charge 56 slope: bend 57–8 the treasure ... all together: the elements that bring life itself are thrown into chaos 59 sicken: feels sick with overeating
First Witch	Speak.		
Second Witch	Demand.		
Third Witch	We'll answer.		



Macbeth and one of the Apparitions, spring 2010.

Shakespeare's stage directions describe three very different apparitions that make predictions to Macbeth. What challenges might these descriptions present to someone wanting to stage *Macbeth* at the Globe Theatre?

James Garnon

SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD

Stage traps

In this scene, Shakespeare uses the trapdoor. This was a door in the floor of the stage, which led to an area underneath the stage. Actors or props (such as the witches' cauldron) could come up through the trapdoor. In Shakespeare's time, the trapdoor was often used for the appearance of ghosts and devils, so it had a strong association with Hell or the Underworld. By using the trapdoor here, Shakespeare was hinting that the Witches were supernatural beings.

exam SKILLS

Target skill: commenting on Shakespeare's use of spectacle

Question: How might a modern audience react to apparitions that appear during lines 75–128?

Shakespeare opens the scene with the witches' disgusting but hypnotic spells of evil.

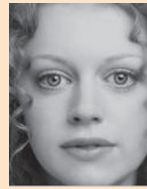
How far do you agree with these statements:

- 1 Macbeth is brave in demanding answers of an "unknown power".
- 2 The first apparition warns Macbeth, while the next two seem to reassure him. He believes all three.
- 3 It is the vision of Banquo's issue inheriting the crown that enrages Macbeth and makes him determined to slaughter the families of his opponents.
- 4 The Witches may influence Macbeth but they do not control him.
- 5 The apparitions would have appealed to a Jacobean audience's love of spectacle.
- 6 Using the apparitions was part of Shakespeare's exploration of the relationship between appearance and reality.

First Witch	Say, if th' hadst rather hear it from our mouths, Or from our masters?	65	
Macbeth	Call 'em. Let me see 'em.		
First Witch	Pour in sow's blood that hath eaten Her nine farrow, grease that's sweaten From the murderer's gibbet, throw Into the flame.	68 69 70	farrow: piglets sweaten: sweated gibbet: post that murders were hung from
All	Come high or low: Thyself and office deftly show! <i>An Apparition appears, it is a head wearing armour.</i>		Thyself and office: you and your role deftly: skilfully
Macbeth	Tell me, thou unknown power.		
First Witch	He knows thy thought. Hear his speech, but say thou naught.		
1st Apparition	Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth! Beware Macduff! Beware the Thane of Fife! Dismiss me. Enough. <i>1st Apparition descends.</i>	75	
Macbeth	Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks. Thou hast harped my fear aright. But one word more.		harped: guessed
First Witch	He will not be commanded. Here's another, More potent than the first. <i>2nd Apparition appears, it is a bloody child.</i>	80	potent: powerful
2nd Apparition	Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth!		
Macbeth	Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.		
2nd Apparition	Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn The power of man, for none of woman born Shall harm Macbeth. <i>2nd Apparition descends.</i>	85	resolute: determined none: no one
Macbeth	Then live Macduff: what need I fear of thee? But yet I'll make assurance double sure, And take a bond of fate. Thou shalt not live, That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies, And sleep in spite of thunder. <i>3rd Apparition appears, it is a child, crowned, with a tree in its hand.</i>		make assurance double sure: kill him anyway, to be on the safe side take a bond of fate: make sure fate keeps its promise That I may: so that I will be able to
Macbeth	What is this That rises like the issue of a king, And wears upon his baby-brow the round And top of sovereignty?	90	issue: child round And top of sovereignty: crown
All Witches	Listen, but speak not to't.		
3rd Apparition	Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are. Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill Shall come against him.	95	lion-mettled: brave as a lion chafes: argues, resists frets: is unhappy with your reign vanquish'd: defeated



Actor's view



Rachel Winters
Third Witch, spring 2010

In this scene, [and] I think right from the start of the play, they never actually have control over Macbeth, it's all about the power of suggestion. They suggest things, and OK so they tell him, this is going to happen to you, and he chooses to believe these things. They see this before this particular scene, and they see that he is going along with what they are saying, that he's tempted by it all. And when they meet him in this particular scene they know — well, he's already killed the king, he's killed Banquo, so they know they've got him. It's a funny one. [He comes in thinking he's in charge, but] he's the one who is asking all the questions and they choose to answer him, which shows, I think, that they are in control. At the end of the scene they are saying, 'seek to know no more'. Actually, we are not going to tell you any more. That's it. They are in control.

Actor's view



Janet Fullerlove
First Witch, summer 2010

When Macbeth comes in at the beginning of this scene, when we've been casting a spell and plotting, it is all very much part of our plan. We want Macbeth back. That's what the spell is all about. We start to cast, for us, the ultimate spell. This is the one where we want to get him, hook, line and sinker. We're calling him back almost. So when he comes in we're almost playing it as though we're surprised: "Oh, it's you!" There is a point where he walks forward and says, "I want you to answer my questions". We're almost playing it with our back to him, as though we're going to not go there, and then we eventually say "Speak. Demand. We'll answer". That's when we think "Okay, now we've got him, we've really sucked him in here, he's coming all the way, we're going to take him right to the depths of this, he's going to be horrified by what we show him."

One of the supernatural events in Act 4 Scene 1.

- 1 Study the stage directions on pages 77 and 79. Which of them is shown in this photo?
- 2 What effect do you think Shakespeare was intending when he wrote this stage direction?

3rd Apparition descends.

Macbeth

That will never be.

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements, good!
Rebellious dead, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

99 **impress:** force to join an army

100 **bodements:** predictions

101 **Rebellious dead:** Banquo

103-4 **the lease of nature ... mortal custom:** his given life-span, dying naturally

105 **art:** skills

All Witches

Seek to know no more.

Macbeth

I will be satisfied. Deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you. Let me know —

The cauldron descends. Music (oboes) offstage.

Why sinks that cauldron? And what noise is this?

110

First Witch

Show.

Second Witch

Show.

Third Witch

Show.

All Witches

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart.

115 **so:** in the same way

A procession of eight kings, the last holding a mirror, followed by the Ghost of Banquo. They move past Macbeth during his next speech.

Macbeth

Thou are too like the spirit of Banquo. Down!
Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third, is like the former. — Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? — A fourth? Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to th' crack of doom?
Another yet!? A seventh? I'll see no more.
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more. And some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry.
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true,
For the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.

117 **sear:** burn

118 **gold-bound brow:** crowned head

119 **former:** one before

120 **Start:** burst from your sockets

121 **th' crack of doom:** the Day of Judgement (when God sends the dead to Heaven or Hell)

125 **twofold balls ... sceptres carry:** carrying the symbols of a ruler, but twice, to show he rules two countries, as King James ruled England and Scotland at the time

127 **blood-boltered:** smothered in blood

128 **for his:** as his descendants

[The procession has left the stage.]

What? Is this so?

First Witch

Ay sir, all this is so. But why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights.
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round.
That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

130 **amazedly:** stunned

131 **sprites:** spirits

134 **antic round:** unnatural dance

135 **Our ... pay:** we treated him respectfully and did as he asked

ACT 4 SCENE 1

Music. The Witches dance, then vanish.

Macbeth

Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursèd in the calendar. —
Come in, without there! *Enter Lennox.*

Lennox

What's your grace's will?

Macbeth

Saw you the weird sisters?

Lennox

No, my lord.

Macbeth

Came they not by you?

Lennox

No indeed, my lord.

Macbeth

Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damned all those that trust them! — I did hear
The galloping of horse. Who was't came by?

Lennox

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word.
Macduff is fled to England.

Macbeth

Fled to England?

Lennox

Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth

Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits.
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done
The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife; give to th' edge o' th' sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool,
This deed I'll do, before this purpose cool.
But no more sights. — Where are these gentlemen?
Come bring me where they are.

Exit Macbeth and Lennox.

137 **pernicious:** dangerous

138 **aye:** forever

139 **Come in, without there!:**
calling Lennox who is waiting
outside

149 **anticipat'st:** have guessed

149 **dread exploits:** fearsome deeds

150–1 **The flighty ... with it:**
Planning a deed isn't enough –
you have to do it quickly

152–3 **The very firstlings ... hand:**
From now on I must act as soon
as I think of a deed

154 **crown:** follow through

155 **surprise:** attack without warning

156 **Fife:** the area Macduff rules

156 **give to ... sword:** kill

158 **trace him in his line:** are his
descendants

159 **before this purpose cool:** at
once

160 **sights:** visions

Director's Note, 4.1

- ✓ Macbeth visits the Witches.
- ✓ They show him visions which reassure him, but include 'beware Macduff'.
- ✓ He asks about Banquo, and is dismayed by a vision of many descendants of Banquo as kings.
- ✓ Shaken by this, and by the news that Macduff has fled, he decides to have Macduff's family killed.
- ✓ What effect do the visions have on Macbeth?



exam PREPARATION

Text focus: Act 4 Scene 1 lines 129–161

(A01) Response to characters and events:

- Macbeth cries of the weird sisters, “damned all those who trust them”, yet because he continues to trust (selectively) in what they showed him, his belief in his invulnerability will betray him. *What clues do you find in his attitude and actions that he no longer needs prompting by his wife or by the Witches?*
- Macbeth once took comfort in the idea that “time and the hour runs through the roughest day”, but time has enabled Macduff to flee, it will put Banquo’s heirs on the throne and it will bring Macbeth to damnation. Does Macbeth now see time as a friend or an enemy?
- Macbeth said earlier that “words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives” and now says, “be it thought and done”. *Why does he want to remove the time between thought and deed?*
- Macbeth wants to kill without remorse as he did when a soldier, and starts by planning to kill Macduff’s wife and children. *How might this influence the audience’s attitude to Macbeth?*

(A02) Language, structure and form:

- The very air is “infected” by the weird sisters, but also by Macbeth and his evil. *How does Shakespeare show that Macbeth is now the disease afflicting Scotland?*

- The word “crown” is a reminder to the audience that all his actions and sufferings are the result of seeking the crown of Scotland. *Is Shakespeare suggesting that he who holds the crown by treason, not by right, will not hold it for long?*
- Structurally this is a significant moment in the play. Shakespeare is showing the audience Macbeth as an evil tyrant. *How does he do this?*
- This is the last time the Witches appear on stage. *Are there any clues in their words that this might be so?*

(A03) Context and ideas:

- Read the *Shakespeare’s World* box on False Prophecies on page 104. *What would Shakespeare’s original audiences have thought about the prophecies and Macbeth’s reaction to them in this scene?*
- Sight, visions and appearance are major themes in the play. Macbeth did not dare to look again at Duncan’s corpse and was rendered helpless by the sight of “blood-boltered Banquo”, so now he wants “no more sights”. *At this point in the play, which “sights” from earlier scenes are likely to be in the audience’s mind?*

Question:

How do lines 135–161 contribute to Shakespeare’s presentation of Macbeth as a tyrant?

Surrounded by the audience: an evening performance of *Macbeth*, summer 2010.

