



**GLOBE EDUCATION SHAKESPEARE**  
FOR **WJEC EDUQAS** 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?

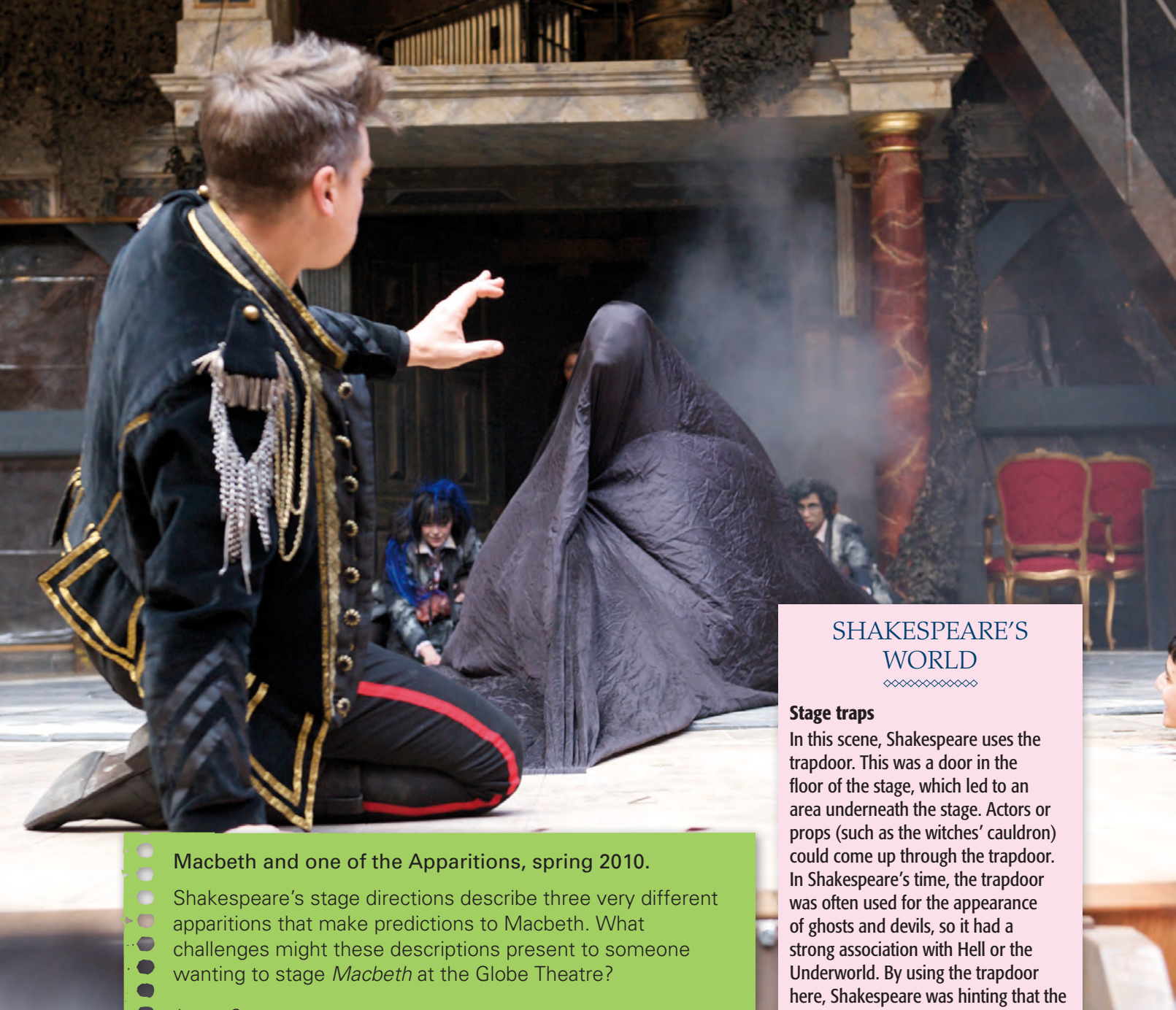
— Rachel Winters,  
Karen Bryson, Shane Zaza





## 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.		
All	Double, double, toil and trouble, Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.	25	24 <b>ravined:</b> full to bursting 25 <b>hemlock:</b> a poisonous plant 26 <b>blaspheming:</b> denying Christian beliefs 27 <b>Gall:</b> bitter liquid from the liver 27 <b>slips:</b> small twigs 28 <b>Slivered:</b> cut
Second Witch	Cool it with a baboon's blood, Then the charm is firm and good.	30	29–30 <b>Turk ... Tartar ...</b> <b>birth-strangled babe:</b> none of these were baptised Christian, so the Witches could use them 31 <b>Ditch-delivered:</b> born in a ditch 31 <b>drab:</b> prostitute 32 <b>slab:</b> sticky 33 <b>chaudron:</b> guts
	<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.	40	39 <b>commend your pains:</b> praise you for the trouble you have taken
	<i>Music, they sing a song, putting in more ingredients as they dance round the cauldron.</i>		
Second Witch	By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes.	45	
	<i>Exit Hecate and the other three witches.</i>		
	Open, locks, whoever knocks!		
	<i>Enter Macbeth.</i>		
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 <b>conjure:</b> demand 51 <b>Though:</b> Even if 51–2 <b>untie ... churches:</b> send storms to knock down churches 52 <b>yeasty:</b> frothy 53 <b>Confound:</b> smash up 53 <b>navigation:</b> ships at sea 54 <b>bladed corn be lodged:</b> ripening corn is blown flat (and so ruined) 55 <b>warders:</b> people in charge 56 <b>slope:</b> bend 57–8 <b>the treasure ... all together:</b> the elements that bring life itself are thrown into chaos 59 <b>sicken:</b> 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:** examining appearance and reality

**Text focus:** Act 4 Scene 1 lines 75–128

You will need to know where certain themes are presented in the play. The theme of appearance and reality is an important one. We have seen that:

- the original Thane of Cawdor was a traitor
- the witches' predictions for Banquo were ambiguous
- Duncan cannot read character from a person's face
- Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are deceivers
- Macbeth is unsure whether the dagger that seems to lead him to Duncan's chamber is real

- the Macbeths fake surprise after Duncan's death
- only Macbeth can see the ghost of Banquo.

This section also presents opportunities for writing about appearance and reality.

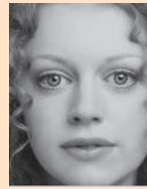
- The first apparition warns Macbeth and he thanks it. *Why do you think he trusts it?*
- The next two apparitions reassure him. *Look at what they say. How do Macbeth's replies show his trust?*
- It is the vision of Banquo's issue inheriting the crown that enrages Macbeth. *How do his speech and behaviour show that he doesn't want to believe this?*

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	68 <b>farrow:</b> piglets 69 <b>sweaten:</b> sweated 69 <b>gibbet:</b> 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>		72 <b>Thyself and office:</b> you and your role 72 <b>deftly:</b> 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.		78 <b>harped:</b> 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	80 <b>potent:</b> 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	83 <b>resolute:</b> determined 84 <b>none:</b> 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>		87 <b>make assurance double sure:</b> kill him anyway, to be on the safe side 88 <b>take a bond of fate:</b> make sure fate keeps its promise 89 <b>That I may:</b> 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	91 <b>issue:</b> child 92-3 <b>round And top of sovereignty:</b> 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	94 <b>lion-mettled:</b> brave as a lion 95 <b>chafes:</b> argues, resists 95 <b>frets:</b> is unhappy with your reign 96 <b>vanquish'd:</b> 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.

115 115 **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)  
125 125 **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.

130 130 **amazedly:** stunned  
131 **sprites:** spirits  
134 **antic round:** unnatural dance  
136 **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 114–161

### (A01) Response to characters and events:

- Macbeth no longer seeks his wife's guidance but places his trust in the Witches. *How does this affect the mood of this scene?*
- The theme of control is presented. *How successful is Macbeth in exerting control?*
- The Witches use equivocation and double meanings when telling Macbeth elements of his future. *How does this heighten the mood?*
- Macbeth asked to know his future but is irate at what he is shown. *Explain why.*
- The Witches remain calm as Macbeth rants. *How does this affect the mood of the scene?*
- Macbeth says that he will "see no more" yet the visions continue. *What does this tell the audience about the level of control Macbeth has here?*
- Macbeth intends to act far more impetuously (quickly) in the future. *Why do you think he decides to do this? What mood is created?*

### (A02) Language, structure and form:

- Shakespeare has Macbeth use negative adjectives in lines 119–127. *Find examples and comment on how they affect the mood of this scene.*

- This is a very visual scene as Macbeth describes each sight. *How does this make the scene more dramatic for the audience?*
- Macbeth speaks in an exclamatory and interrogative mood, with a rapid pace and broken sentences. *What is the effect of this?*
- The Witches speak in rhyming couplets of tetrameter (8 syllables.) *What effect does this chant-like rhythm have on the mood of the scene?*
- Macbeth uses negative adjectives to describe his experience. *Find these and comment on them.*
- Lennox is offstage. *Why might Shakespeare have placed him there instead of having him with Macbeth for the Witches' predictions?*
- There is irony in this scene. Macbeth trusts the Witches to tell him the truth, but says, "damned all those that trust them!" *What expectations might the audience have for future events in the play?*
- The shocking images that the Witches show Macbeth seem to prompt him to commit more "dread exploits." *Find language associated with violence and horror in Macbeth's final speech in this scene.*

### Question:

How does Shakespeare create mood and atmosphere at this point in the play? (15 marks)

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

