

**SIGNING  
SHAKESPEARE**

# Macbeth



Workpack

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this **Signing Shakespeare *Macbeth* Workpack**. It contains a complete Scheme of Work for teaching Shakespeare's *Macbeth* at GCSE level, as well as handouts and other resources. This Workpack is designed to be used alongside the **Gallery presentations** – which include further resources – and the [Playlist](#) of short films.

### ABOUT SIGNING SHAKESPEARE

Signing Shakespeare is a programme designed to support young people who are deaf and hard of hearing in their study and enjoyment of Shakespeare. It aims to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication, to support GCSE study and beyond. Our activities and resources focus on visual and active learning. They explore not just the story of *Macbeth*, but also the characters, relationships, themes, imagery, rhythms, and literary devices in the play. Collaborative activities and writing tasks support students to develop understanding of the different perspectives and layers within the text.

### ABOUT THE WORKPACK AND ITS RESOURCES

This series of activities has been designed to support the teaching and learning of Shakespeare at GCSE level with students who are deaf or hard of hearing; but it can also support students at different levels, with or without special educational needs. The activities cover the whole play of *Macbeth* and the resources include short films of deaf actors performing key speeches.

- Many exercises involve **active, dialogic, and drama approaches** to aid students' understanding and explore their own interpretations of the text. Access to an open space is useful for these activities, but many can take place in a classroom with some space around desks and a clear view of a screen for supporting visuals.
- Tags at the start of each exercise indicate whether that activity focuses on particular **characters** or aspects of **language** (such as metaphor, metre, antithesis). Relevant historical, cultural, and literary knowledge is included for **context** in some exercises.

Throughout all exercises, students are encouraged to consider context in terms of how a drama text is continually reinterpreted through being staged, and how it is received and engaged with by different audiences, at different times.

- Tags also include one or more of **eleven key themes**: the supernatural; fate vs. free will; appearance vs. reality; violence and war; fear; ambition; kingship; deception; guilt; revenge; loyalty and betrayal. These are themes commonly associated with *Macbeth*, with some highlighted on past GCSE papers. This list, however, is not exhaustive, and you may well identify other themes through exploring students' own interests and interpretations (for example, around power and gender).
- Relevant resources are referenced within each exercise. They are also listed in the Resources section that follows each sequence of activity. The resources, which can be easily displayed, printed or photocopied, include:
  - **Gallery presentations** – for each sequence of activity. The presentations include the images referred to in the exercises, as well as, for example, the '**dramatis personae**' films. They are available alongside this Workpack and can be downloaded separately.
  - **Handouts** – providing additional support for key exercises. Any handouts listed in the Resources section can be found on the pages immediately following the Resources list.
  - **Images** – additional images of witches that you could share with students as you explore Shakespeare's Weïrd Sisters. The images can be found in the [Appendix](#).
- There is also a **series of short films in BSL, SSE, and VS** (see [Modelling, including short films with deaf artists](#)) for key moments in the play. You can access these short films from the [Playlist](#).

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

### 1. Follow the chronology of the narrative

You will notice that there are many more activities for the first Act of the play than for subsequent Acts. The two sections of activities for Act 1, 'Witches' and 'Warriors', are related to the first very short scene; they are designed to introduce students to the world of the play, and support them in thinking about the themes and characters that Shakespeare sets up at the start. We follow the chronology of the play by not just meeting the Witches and seeing their scene, but also by exploring what they describe in terms of the battle that happens off stage and in the audience's imagination.

Thereafter, we are careful to follow the action of the play as Shakespeare presents it, so that students can build their understanding of characters' different perspectives and the layers of dramatic irony in the text by appreciating who knows what and when. Our research found this approach to be particularly useful for students with special educational needs.

### 2. Drama/Theatre-based approaches

- For activities, we suggest having a base position of standing in a semi-circle so that students can see instructions from you and also see each other.
- Establishing routines and clear signals is important for drama activities. For example: using a hand in the air signal for everyone to look at you and waiting until all attention is on you before giving further instructions, or touching students gently on the shoulder to direct their attention.
- Freeze frames are a device commonly used in the activities as a way to quickly create a visceral understanding of characters' situations and emotions. Physically creating still images or freeze frames helps students to better understand and remember concepts and moments in the play. With freeze frames and other active exercises, it is a good idea to establish clear signs that can be seen across a space. We suggest establishing a sign to hold the freeze absolutely still; a sign to exaggerate the position and facial expression even more; and a sign to relax.

- A signal to cue a group to perform is also useful: perhaps a 3-2-1 signal with your fingers, pointing at the group on 1.
- Modelling what you want the students to do is important in many exercises. We suggest modelling activities with a Teaching Assistant or a confident student to support shared understanding with the group.

### 3. Explicit visual resources

#### Crowns and sashes

We have found crowns and sashes are a clear, fun way for students to keep track of who is playing which character and when titles change hands. In the instructions for the activities, we have stated when it is useful to give a crown or sash to a student playing a role.

A sash can be made very simply by stapling or taping folded paper together and writing the name of the character as indicated. You can, of course, be more creative and make sashes out of fabric and decorate them, perhaps with tartan.

A crown can also be made very simply; for example, you may choose to use the template from the [Shakespeare Birthplace Trust](#). Play crowns are also easy to find. We advise adding an 'S' to indicate the King of Scotland and an 'N' for the King of Norway.



#### Literary terms

A number of literary terms are introduced and explored in the activities. These are: rhyme, antithesis, paradox, iambic pentameter, feminine endings, dramatic irony, soliloquy, personification, simile, metaphor, pathetic fallacy, repetition, and alliteration. The first time a term is introduced, there is a slide in the relevant **Gallery presentation** to allow you to display the word. When the terms are mentioned again, you can write them up as needed.

#### Maps

Although Shakespeare's Scottish geography is not always very clear, we have found it useful to use maps to give students an indication of place in the plays. This also supports understanding of how characters' names and titles are related to the area they rule.

#### **4. Reinforce cumulative knowledge and explore interpretations**

We include prompts and closed questions to support students in consolidating knowledge as the activities progress. We include open questions and prompts for discussion to encourage exploration of ideas and sharing of different possible interpretations. These questions can be adapted based on your knowledge of your students. Examples are given of possible responses with sentences beginning 'Perhaps...', but these examples are not the only possibilities, and your students may well have other ideas. We encourage you to encourage your students to understand that their ideas are always valid, providing that they do not contradict the text.

#### **5. Modelling, including short films with deaf artists**

##### **Sign names**

We have established sign names for all of the characters in the play. These appear as individual '**dramatis personae**' films, included in the **Gallery presentations**. You can show these films to your students and encourage them to learn the sign names.

##### **Sign Supported English**

The **short films** available in the [Playlist](#) are in BSL and most are also available in SSE (Sign Supported English). We recognise that SSE is not a language in its own right, but that it is often used in classrooms where children have a range of communication needs. Feel free to decide which version(s) of the films to show, depending on the needs and understanding of your students.

Some of the short films have also been made in what we are calling 'Visual Shakespeare' (VS). The sign language used in these films is more performative and theatrical. We have used VS for films where the activities require students to produce their own versions of a scene or speech. We hope that the VS versions will inspire students to be creative and dramatic in their delivery.

## ACT 1

### Signing Shakespeare resources and activities for teaching Act 1 of *Macbeth*



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### ACT 1 SCENE 1: THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

In this initial two-part series of activities, students are introduced to the world of *Macbeth*, firstly by inhabiting the setting and characters of Act 1 Scene 1 (the Witches) and then by creating the setting and characters of the off-stage event that follows (the battle). These activities lay foundations for comprehension of what follows in the plot, as well as building a more visceral understanding of *Macbeth's* world. The activities also build a sense of playful, collaborative, and creative working. Students begin to recognise Shakespeare's use of: **rhyme, antithesis, paradox, iambic pentameter, and feminine endings**. Key themes explored in this section include **the supernatural, fate vs. free will, loyalty and betrayal, and violence and war**. Video resources for this section include three short films of the Witches in BSL, SSE, and VS.

## Act 1 Scene 1: Witches

### Exercise 1: The Weïrd Sisters

**Characters:** *The Witches*

**Context:** *Jacobean beliefs about the supernatural, stage history of *The Witches*, the writing and setting of the play*

**Themes:** *the supernatural, fate vs. free will*

#### Resources

- Show **SLIDE 2** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – dark forest**. (This image is used for the backdrop of the Witches film in [Act 1 Scene 1 Witches, Exercise 2](#).)
- Ask:
  - What can you see?
  - What creatures might live here?
- Encourage students to identify the dark woods and consider the birds and animals they associate with this scene (perhaps owls, foxes, wolves; perhaps creatures that are dangerous or magical).
- Tell students that a storm is approaching. There is thunder and lightning, and three figures appear.
- Ask: What sort of story might this be, that starts in this way? (Perhaps a storm suggests something dramatic or mysterious. Perhaps three figures appearing suggests that the figures are lost, or up to no good.)
- Tell students that these three figures are sisters (**SLIDE 3** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – sisters**).
- Organise students into groups of three and ask them to make a freeze frame of ‘sisters’.
- Tell students that the sisters have strange powers and are sometimes called ‘the Weïrd Sisters’ (**SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – The Weïrd Sisters**). Ask students to adjust their freeze-frames to show ‘the Weïrd Sisters’.

- Explain that the word 'weird' means having some supernatural power to control fate (what happens in people's lives).
- Tell students that these Weird Sisters are also called 'witches' - a more common word for people believed to have special powers (**SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – The Weird Sisters/witches**).
- Invite students to adjust their freeze-frames to show three witches. Share ideas about how these witches appear - perhaps they look powerful, perhaps hunched over or secretive, perhaps scary.
- Discuss the ideas of witches that we have today and where those ideas come from - books, films, games?
- Tell the students that in Shakespeare's time, people believed in 'weird women' or witches who could conjure storms and tell the future. England's King, King James, believed in the power of witches and wrote a book about them. Women, and sometimes men, who were suspected of being witches were feared. Many were imprisoned and executed on charges of witchcraft.
- Show students some images of witches from Shakespeare's time (**SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – images of witches from Shakespeare's time**). Discuss how these compare with modern ideas about witches.
- Explain that Shakespeare's play begins with a stage direction: 'Thunder and Lightning'. This would get the attention of the audience, and then they would see the three strange figures appear on the stage. This would be an exciting start to the play; perhaps even scary for many in the audience who believed that witches are real.
- Shakespeare doesn't say much about what the Witches look like. This means that every time the play is staged, the Witches look different. Show students images as examples of how the Witches have looked in different productions of the play (**SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – the Witches in different productions**).

- Note that all of these Witches are from different periods in history. Show students the historical timeline (**SLIDE 8 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – historical timeline**). Explain that the play is based on the story of a Scottish man called Macbeth, who lived from 1005–1057. Shakespeare wrote the play in around 1606 (the Jacobean period). The play has been performed ever since, and different productions are set in different time periods.
- Ask students in pairs to decide which Witches they think look most interesting and be ready to share their decisions and reasons with the whole class.
- Explain that the students will meet another version of the three Witches in a film in the next exercise. Play the **dramatis personae video for the Witches (SLIDE 9 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES)**. This introduces the Witches with their sign name and an image of the actors playing them in later videos.

### **Exercise 2: The Witches' plans**

**Characters:** *The Witches, (Macbeth)*

#### **Resources**

- Remind students of the three Witches in the storm and explain they will now watch three actors playing these Witches. Ask them to watch carefully to see if they can work out what the Witches are planning to do.
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 1 – The Witches** in the **Playlist: [BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#)**.
- Discuss with students what they have learnt about the Witches and their plans.
- Draw out from students the key points, that the Witches are planning to meet again after a battle to talk to someone called Macbeth.
- Discuss with students what they thought about the film.

- Ask:
  - What did you enjoy?
  - What did you think worked well about what the actors did?
  - How might you improve on what they did?
- Explain that they are now going to create their own versions of this scene. Organise them into groups of three.
- Show the text from **SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – The Witches’ Plans** and/or have print outs ready ([Handout: Exercise 2: ‘The Witches’ Plans’ text](#)).
- Give students time to create their own versions of this scene using any form of expression: BSL, SSE, VS, spoken words, or any combination of these.
- Share these performances and encourage students to comment on what worked well in other groups’ performances.

### **Exercise 3: Antithesis**

**Characters:** *The Witches*

**Language:** *rhyme, antithesis, paradox*

**Theme:** *the supernatural*

### **Resources**

- Revisit the lines spoken by the Witches (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – The Witches’ Plans**) and ask:
  - Why do you think the Witches speak the last lines together?
    - Perhaps it’s a song, chant or spell?
    - Perhaps something that gives them a sense of togetherness, or a sense of their joint power?
    - The words are ambiguous so they can give a sense of mystery.
- Ask students what they notice about the words ‘fair’ and ‘air’ (‘They look like/ sound alike’).

- Draw out the fact that these words **rhyme** (**SLIDE 11** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – rhyme**). Rhyme makes words easier to remember and is often used in poems, songs, and spells, like this one. Shakespeare also often uses rhyme at the ends of speeches or scenes, to give a stamp of finality to the speech/scene.
- Discuss with students what they associate with ‘fair’ and with ‘foul’ and ask if they remember any of the ways in which the actors signed these words in the films.
- Organise students into small groups to create a frozen image showing ‘fair’ and another for ‘foul’.
- Look at each of these pairs of images in turn and comment on any similarities and differences that bring out the variety of associations we can make with fair and foul.
- Explain that these concepts – fair and foul – are the opposite of one another and when opposite ideas are brought close together, as they are in the Witches’ lines, it is called antithesis. Show the slide that says antithesis (**SLIDE 12** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – antithesis**). Because these words are opposites, we don’t know whether the Witches’ plans are good or bad - fair or foul – or both.
- Discuss with students why Shakespeare might start his play with these Witches and their strange words:
  - Perhaps they grab the audience’s attention?
  - Perhaps they create a mysterious atmosphere?
  - Perhaps they set up the idea that things are not what they seem?
  - Perhaps they create tension as we wonder what is going on?
  - Perhaps they create curiosity about the storm and the battle and Macbeth?
- Ask students to take another look at the text of the scene (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – The Witches’ Plans**) and look for another example of antithesis.
- When they land on ‘lost and won’, ask students as a whole group to show you a frozen image of soldiers who have lost a battle; then to adapt to soldiers who have won a battle.

- Ask: How can a battle be lost and won?
- Encourage students to understand that although it sounds mysterious, there are two sides in any battle: winners and losers. This is an example of using antithesis to create a paradox – something that seems at first to make no sense, but actually it does (**SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – paradox**).
- Organise students into two halves: one half are the winners and the other half are the losers. Ask students to create a group freeze frame showing this battle that is lost and won.
- Tell students that this battle the Witches describe is between Norway and Scotland and show them the map (**SLIDE 14** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – map of Norway and Scotland**).

Note: These flags are anachronistic, as both were designed long after Macbeth's time. We use them symbolically, to support students' comprehension and relate the two countries to their current identities. You may, however, have students who are interested in flags; they may want to know that the Scottish flag has been in use since 1540, and so was in use in Shakespeare's time. The Norwegian flag was designed in 1821, but not widely used until 1899, when Norway became independent from Sweden.

#### **Exercise 4: Consolidation**

*Characters: The Witches, Macbeth*

#### **Resources**

- Ask students in pairs to answer the following questions and to give a word or phrase in the text that supports their answer. The questions can be found on **SLIDE 15** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WITCHES – questions**.
  - When are the Witches/Weird Sisters meeting again? ('When the hurly-burly's done / When the battle's lost and won')
  - Where are they meeting? ('Upon the heath')
  - Who are they meeting? ('There to meet with Macbeth')

- Discuss who Macbeth might be. (Perhaps someone fighting in the battle? Or running away from the battle? Or another witch?)

### **Act 1 Scene 1: Witches – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 1 Scene 1 Witches
- **Playlist resource:**
  - Exercise 2: FILM: Act 1 Scene 1 – The Witches ([BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#))
- **Handout:**
  - Exercise 2: [‘The Witches’ Plans’ text](#)

*Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.*

**FIRST WITCH** When shall we three meet again?

In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

**SECOND WITCH** When the hurly-burly's done,

When the battle's lost and won.

**THIRD WITCH** That will be ere the set of sun.

**FIRST WITCH** Where the place?

**SECOND WITCH** Upon the heath.

**THIRD WITCH** There to meet with Macbeth.

**ALL** Fair is foul, and foul is fair,

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

## Act 1 Scene 1: Warriors

### Exercise 1: Thanes and kings

*Characters: Macbeth, Banquo, Thane of Ross, Thane of Cawdor, Macdonald, King of Norway*

#### Resources

- Remind students about the Witches and ask:
  - Who were the Witches planning to meet? (Macbeth)
  - When did they plan to meet him? (After the battle - when it has been 'lost and won')
- Explain that they are going to meet Macbeth and the leaders of the battle the Witches spoke about.

#### Macbeth

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macbeth (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces Macbeth with his sign name and an image of the actor playing him in later videos.
- Explain that Macbeth is a Scottish warrior and is Thane of Glamis. Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macbeth, Thane of Glamis (SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. Explain that a thane is a lord or ruler. Glamis is a place in Scotland and Macbeth serves the King of Scotland. Macbeth is the ruler of a place in Scotland called Glamis.
- Ask all students to try out Macbeth's sign name and repeat the film as needed.

#### Banquo

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Banquo (SLIDE 4 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces Banquo with his sign name and an image of the actor playing him in later videos.
- Explain that Banquo is also a thane. He is a friend of Macbeth's and supports him in the battle.

- Ask all students to try out Banquo's sign name and repeat the film as needed.

### Thane of Ross

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Ross (SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces the Thane of Ross with his sign name and an image of the actor playing him in later videos.
- Explain that the Thane of Ross is another Scottish thane.
- Ask all students to try out Ross's sign name and repeat the film as needed.

### Thane of Cawdor

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for the **Thane of Cawdor (SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces the Thane of Cawdor with his sign name and an illustration of him.
- Explain that the Thane of Cawdor is another Scottish thane.
- Ask all students to try out the Thane of Cawdor's sign name and repeat the film as needed.

### Macdonald

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macdonald (SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces Macdonald – another Scottish warrior.
- Ask all students to try out Macdonald's sign name and repeat as needed.

### King of Norway

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for the **King of Norway (SLIDE 8 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS)**. This introduces the King of Norway with his sign name and an illustration of him.
- Explain that the King of Norway has invaded Scotland and this is why the battle is about to take place.
- Ask all students to try out the sign name for the King of Norway and repeat the film as needed.

## **Exercise 2: Introducing iambic pentameter**

**Language:** *iambic pentameter*

### **Resources**

- Explain that the warriors in *Macbeth* ride horses. Mime getting on a horse and galloping on the spot. Encourage students to copy.
- Remind students that warriors have to be very disciplined, perhaps even gallop in time together. Model galloping to the rhythm of iambic pentameter (de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum). Encourage students to join you and keep in time to the rhythm.
- Explain that in battles, armies also carry flags. Mime waving a flag and encourage students to copy, again waving the flags to the rhythm of iambic pentameter.
- Explain that all warriors feel their hearts beating fast as they get ready to fight in a battle. Model beating the rhythm of the heart / iambic pentameter on your chest with one hand and encourage students to copy.
- Tell students that this rhythm is called 'iambic pentameter' (**SLIDE 9 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS – iambic pentameter**) and that the play is written with lines that fit this rhythm. You might want to add that this was a convention of the time and that the rhythm also helps actors learn their lines.

## **Exercise 3: Going into battle**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor, King of Norway, Banquo, Thane of Ross, Macdonald*

**Language:** *iambic pentameter, feminine endings*

**Theme:** *loyalty and betrayal*

### **Resources**

#### **Building armies**

- Put signs for Macbeth's army, Thane of Cawdor's army and King of Norway's army (**Handouts: Exercise 3: [Macbeth's army sign](#), [Thane of Cawdor's army sign](#), [King of Norway's army sign](#)**) on three different walls of the space.

- Organise students to stand by one of the three signs to form each army. Ensure Macbeth's army is bigger than the other two.
- Assign leaders of each army as follows:
  - Macbeth, supported by Banquo and Ross, commands a large army for Scotland.
  - The Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald lead a smaller Scottish army.
  - The King of Norway commands the Norwegian army.
- Give the king a crown and the other leaders a sash with the name of their character. With each leader recap the sign names established above in [Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 1](#).
- Show students the map with Fife marked (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS – map of Fife**) and tell them that these three armies are all marching to battle and will meet in Fife.
- Ask students to show you a freeze frame of their army ready to fight.

### Marching to battle

- Next recap the exercise on iambic pentameter above ([Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 2](#)), modelling galloping, flag waving and heartbeat in time with the rhythm and encourage students to join you.
- Assign each army one of these special actions:
  - Assign Macbeth and his army the action of galloping
  - Assign the King of Norway and his followers the action of waving a flag or banner
  - Assign the Thane of Cawdor and his army the action of the heartbeat
- Allow each group time to practise their action. They should follow their leader to keep time and find the rhythm together. They can then practise moving to the centre of the room whilst doing their action.

- Assign each army a line of text to match their actions (**SLIDE 11** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS – battle text**):
  - Macbeth: ‘For Brave Macbeth, well he deserves that name’ (Brave Macbeth, he deserves to be called brave)
  - King of Norway: ‘Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky’ (Where the Norwegian flags wave)
  - Thane of Cawdor: ‘Assisted by that most disloyal traitor’ (Helped by that most disloyal traitor)
- Model speaking the lines in iambic pentameter (de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, dedum) and then repeat, encouraging students to join in with you.
- When beating out the final line – ‘Assisted by that most disloyal traitor’ note that there is an extra beat on the end: Ass-is-ted **by** that **most** dis-loy-al **trai**-tor. Explain that when a line has an extra syllable on the end, like this, it is called a ‘feminine ending’. Although some may find the term feminine ending outdated or offensive, due to its suggestion of feminine weakness, you could, instead, suggest that it is called ‘feminine’ because it is more interesting(!). In any case, note that this disrupts the metre. This may give us a clue as to the nature of the Thane of Cawdor.
- Ask everyone to do their action and encourage those comfortable with speaking to say their group’s line at the same time.
- Discuss with students what the lines mean. Draw out that:
  - Macbeth is described as brave, and others seem to admire him for his bravery. Perhaps his warriors are proud to follow him? Perhaps they are scared he will lead them into danger?
  - The King of Norway’s army has many banners (flags). Perhaps this suggests they are confident and proud? Perhaps they are unsure what to expect from the Scots?
  - The Thane of Cawdor’s line needs more unpicking. What is a traitor? (a person who betrays their country) What does disloyal mean? (false) Who might the traitor be? (We will find out soon!)

- Tell them they will perform their action and/or speak their line as they move to Fife (the centre of the space). When they arrive, they freeze showing they are ready to fight. Explain that on your cue they should move towards Fife, trying to show they are stronger than the other armies (which might mean bigger actions, louder voices, fiercer expressions).
- Cue one group at a time: first Macbeth's army, then the King of Norway's army, then the Thane of Cawdor's army.
- When Macbeth's army 'arrives' at the battle, they should form a line.
- When the Norwegian army 'arrives' at the battle, they should form a line, facing Macbeth's army, around a metre away from them.
- When the Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald 'arrive' at the battle, ask students which line you think they should join – the Scottish army or the Norwegian army?
  - As Scottish warriors, the Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald should be fighting for Scotland against Norway.
  - But remind students of the meaning of 'disloyal traitor.' The Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald are the disloyal traitors. They are going to fight for Norway against Scotland.
  - How do they feel? Perhaps happy as they have been promised a reward? Perhaps guilty as they are fighting against fellow Scots?
- Ask Macbeth's army to show how they feel about these 'disloyal traitors' joining the Norwegian army.
- Ask the King of Norway's army to show how they feel as the Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald join their line.

### **Exercise 4: Fighting the battle**

**Context:** *the opening battle*

**Theme:** *violence and war*

#### **Resources**

- All students should now be in two lines facing each other: Scotland on one side and Norway with the 'traitors' on the other.
- Explain that this story was written about events that happened around 1000 years ago and so the soldiers in the story are warriors who fight with big, heavy broadswords. Show students the image (**SLIDE 12** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS – soldiers fighting**).
- Mime lifting a heavy sword with two hands and encourage students to do the same. Model moves with the imaginary sword – swiping to the left, to the right, up and down and invite students to do the same.
- Invite students to imagine they are soldiers in Scotland a thousand years ago, getting ready to fight. It is cold and misty. How do they feel? (Perhaps scared, excited, anxious?)
- Introduce a drum and tell students that they are going to make alternate battle moves, which they will perform after each drum beat. Explain you will make a big movement of striking the drum and they should watch or listen for that cue.
- Ask all students to work with the person standing opposite them in the line of battle. They are to create a sequence of three moves each to create a fight. Each move happens when they see/hear the drum beat and they should then freeze in their battle pose until their next move. The Scottish fighter starts and the Norwegian/rebel fighter falls on the last move. You could model a possible sequence.
- Beat the drum slowly six times to allow students to practise their moves. Ensure the movement of banging the drum is big enough to see for students who cannot hear the beat.

- Encourage students to add noises to their battle moves and to show how they feel at the end. The Scottish army have won and the Norwegian army have lost.
- Ask the Scottish army to say/sign the line 'The victory fell on us' (victory was ours): **SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 1 WARRIORS – 'The victory fell on us'**.
- Run the sequence one last time as a final performance.
- Explain that in the play, we don't see the battle but we hear about it from eyewitnesses fighting for Scotland. We will meet those eyewitnesses in the next activity.

### **Act 1 Scene 1: Warriors – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 3: [Macbeth's army sign](#)
  - Exercise 3: [Thane of Cawdor's army sign](#)
  - Exercise 3: [King of Norway's army sign](#)
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercise 3: Crown for King of Norway
  - Exercise 3: Sashes for Macbeth (Thane of Glamis), Banquo, Thane of Ross, Thane of Cawdor, Macdonald
  - Exercise 4: Drum

**GLAMIS**

**CAWDOR**



## ACT 1 SCENE 2: KING DUNCAN'S COURT

In this series of activities, students are taken further into the world of *Macbeth* by meeting the court of King Duncan of Scotland and seeing how he responds to the news from the battle.

Students are introduced to the concept of **dramatic irony**, and there are opportunities to reinforce understanding of **antithesis** and **paradox**. Key themes explored in this section include **violence and war** and **loyalty and betrayal**.

### Act 1 Scene 2: King Duncan's court

#### Exercise 1: Warm-up

*Character: King of Norway*

#### Resources

- Ask all students to stand as if they were a king. Ask them to walk as a king, taking seven steps, then return to their place in the circle. Share ideas about how a king stands and walks from what they have done.
- Now ask students to stand as if they were a soldier. Remind them of the soldiers who fought in the battle, with their long, heavy swords.
- Ask: Who have we met who is both a king and a soldier? (The King of Norway)
- If useful, show again the **dramatis personae video** for the **King of Norway (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2)**.
- Explain that we are now going to meet the King of Scotland. He has not been fighting in the battle, like the King of Norway, but has been waiting to find out if his side won.

#### Exercise 2: King Duncan's court

*Characters: King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Thane of Lennox*

#### Resources

- Explain that the King of Scotland, King Duncan is waiting for news of the battle against the invading army from Norway.

- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **King Duncan (SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2)**. This introduces King Duncan with his sign name and an illustration of him. Ask all students to try out King Duncan’s sign name and repeat the film as needed.
- Assign one student to be King Duncan and give them the crown of Scotland. Invite ‘King Duncan’ into the acting space where you have placed a chair and ask them to sit as a king on his throne.
- Ask: Who else might be with the king? (Perhaps guards, servants, family, advisors...)
- Invite students into the acting space to join the king and become the character they suggest. Encourage them to build an image of the court considering where and how they stand by thinking about their status and their relationship to others in the image.
- Ensure that family are mentioned and explain that King Duncan has two sons: Malcolm and Donalbain.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Malcolm (SLIDE 4 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2)**. This introduces Malcolm with his sign name and an illustration of him. Ask all students to try out Malcolm’s sign name and repeat the film as needed.
- Assign one student to be Malcolm in the image and give them a sash.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Donalbain (SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2)**. This introduces Donalbain with his sign name and an illustration of him. Ask all students to try out Donalbain’s sign name and repeat the film as needed.
- Assign one student to be Donalbain in the image and give them a sash.
- Ensure advisors or counsellors are mentioned and explain that the Thane of Lennox is with the king as an advisor.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Lennox (SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2)**. This introduces the Thane of Lennox with his sign name and an illustration of him. Ask all students to try out Lennox’s sign name and repeat the film as needed.

- Assign one student to be Lennox in the image and give them a sash.
- Ask all students in the court to now show a freeze-frame of: ‘Waiting for news of the battle’.

### **Exercise 3: News from the battle – the wounded captain**

**Characters:** *the Wounded Captain, King Duncan, (Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor, Macdonald)*

**Theme:** *violence and war*

#### **Resources**

- Explain that the first news to arrive about the battle is from a gravely injured soldier. Invite one student to be the captain and to stagger into King Duncan’s court and fall at the feet of the king.
- Tell everyone to create a freeze-frame of this moment showing their responses.
- Ask if anyone remembers the line spoken in the battle exercise by Macbeth’s army ([Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 3](#)).
- Remind students: ‘For Brave Macbeth, well he deserves that name’ (Brave Macbeth; he deserves to be called brave). (Show **SLIDE 7** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘For Brave Macbeth, well he deserves that name’**.)
- Explain that this is a line spoken by the wounded captain to King Duncan and invite the student playing that role to say/sign the line.
- Now explain that the Captain can't be sure who won the battle because he had to leave when he was injured, but that he did witness a particular moment when Macbeth killed one of the traitors: Macdonald.
- Invite two students to become Macbeth and Macdonald to act out what the Captain says about them. Take the students through the lines below, encouraging ‘Macbeth and Macdonald’ to show what is described:
  - That Macbeth fought so hard his sword ‘smoked’ with the blood of his enemies. (**SLIDE 8** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘smoked with bloody execution’**)

- That Macbeth carved his way across the field of battle and showed no fear as he defeated anyone who got in his way. Then he saw the traitor Macdonald. He tightened his grip on his big heavy sword and then he.... ‘unseamed him from the nave to th’ chops,/ And fixed his head upon our battlements’. (Show **SLIDE 9** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘unseamed him from the nave to th’ chops,/ And fixed his head upon our battlements’**.)
- Unpick these lines with the students by asking:
  - What does unseamed mean? (undid or split - like ripping the seam on the seat of a pair of trousers)
  - What is a nave? (a navel or tummy button)
  - What are chops? (cheeks)
  - If Macbeth sticks Macdonald’s head on the battlements what did he need to do first? (cut off his head, then pick up the heavy bleeding head and stick it on a spike)
- Invite students to show Macbeth ‘unseaming’ Macdonald from the nave to the chops; then slicing off his head, picking up the heavy bleeding head and sticking it on a spike.
- Discuss with student what impression of Macbeth this gives us:
  - Perhaps that he is fearless and strong
  - Perhaps angry and violent
  - Perhaps loyal to his country
- Ask how they think King Duncan will respond to this news:
  - Impressed?
  - Horrified?
  - Delighted?
- Tell them that King Duncan says: ‘O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman’ (O, brave cousin, worthy gentleman). (Show **SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘KING: O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman’**.)

- Ask: How does this suggest the king feels about Macbeth? (He praises Macbeth for being brave and calling him cousin tells us that they are family.)
- Tell students that the captain then collapses and is helped away to a doctor and then another soldier arrives from the battle with more news.

#### **Exercise 4: News from the battle – the Thane of Ross**

**Characters:** *Thane of Ross, King Duncan, (Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor)*

**Language:** *antithesis, paradox, dramatic irony*

**Theme:** *loyalty and betrayal*

#### **Resources**

- Ask students if they remember the Thane of Ross. (He fought with Macbeth against the Norwegian army and was introduced in [Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 1.](#)) Play the **dramatis personae video** for Ross (**SLIDE 11** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2**) to remind them. Ask all students to repeat Ross’s sign name.
- Assign one student to be Ross and give them a sash and a ‘message’ to deliver to the king. This message is a copy of the ‘battle message’ (**SLIDE 12** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – battle message**, and [Handout: Exercise 4: ‘Battle Message’](#)).
- Explain that Ross has just ridden fast to the king’s court with news from the battle between Scotland and Norway. Ask ‘Ross’ to enter the court as though exhausted from his journey, bow to the king and pass over his message.
- Ask others in the court scene to react to Ross’s entrance. (Perhaps excited to hear news? Perhaps shocked at how tired he looks?)
- Next organise all students into small groups and ensure each group has a copy of the ‘battle message’ ([Handout: Exercise 4: ‘Battle Message’](#)) and pens.
- Remind students about the Norwegian and Scottish flags to help them identify who is who in the images. Then ask each group to discuss what they think the message is saying and to add a short caption in their own words underneath each image.

- Ask students if they can remember what the Norwegian army said in the battle exercise ([Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 3](#)).
- Show **SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky’** (Where the flags of Norway wave).
- Ask students if they can remember what the traitors said in the battle exercise ([Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 3](#)).
- Show **SLIDE 14** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘Assisted by that most disloyal traitor’**.
- Ask the students if they can remember what the Scottish army said at the end of the battle ([Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 4](#)).
- Show **SLIDE 15** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘The victory fell on us’** (victory was ours).
- Show slide with all three lines together (**SLIDE 16** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – Ross’s speech**).
- Ask students to match the lines to the pictures in the image.
- Ask: What should King Duncan do about the disloyal traitor, the Thane of Cawdor?
- Discuss ideas, then show students what King Duncan says to Ross (**SLIDE 17** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – ‘Go pronounce...’**):

‘Go pronounce his present death,  
And with his former title greet Macbeth.’

(Go, order his death  
And give the title of Thane of Cawdor to Macbeth.)

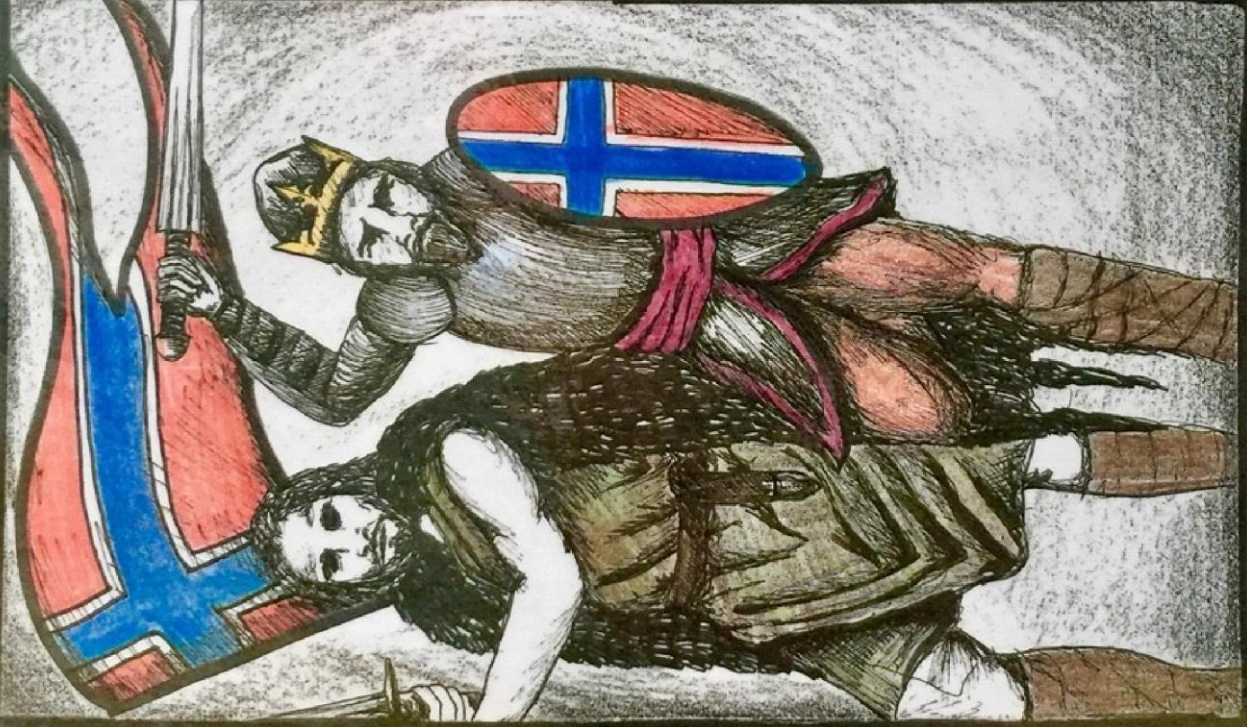
- Model speaking/ signing this line aloud and then encourage students to speak or sign it with you.
- Discuss what King Duncan is saying (that the Thane of Cawdor must die and Macbeth will be rewarded with Cawdor’s title, which also means his lands and wealth).

- Give the Thane of Cawdor's sash to the student playing King Duncan and ask them to say these lines to 'Ross' and hand him the sash. 'King Duncan' can read aloud the lines or put them into their own words or signs.
- Show Ross's line (**SLIDE 18** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – 'I'll see it done'**). Ask 'Ross' to bow to the king, then read aloud or sign: 'I'll see it done' (I'll do that).
- Show King Duncan's next line (**SLIDE 19** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – 'What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won'**).
- Ask:
  - What has been lost? What has Macbeth won? (The Thane of Cawdor has lost his title and his life. Macbeth has won that title.)
  - Where have we come across these opposites of lost and won before?
    - Remind them of the Witches' line: 'When the battle's lost and won' (introduced in [Act 1 Scene 1 Witches, Exercise 2](#); see the line on **SLIDE 20** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – 'When the battle's...'**).
    - Remind them that this is called **antithesis** (**SLIDE 20** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – antithesis**). As before, antithesis is used here to create a **paradox** (**SLIDE 20** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – paradox**) – something that sounds mysterious but in fact turns out to be true.
- Ask King Duncan to read aloud or sign this line: 'What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won' (**SLIDE 19** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – 'What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won'**).
- Next ask if anyone remembers Macbeth's current title (Thane of Glamis).
- Then ask: Who knows that Macbeth is now Thane of Cawdor as well as Thane of Glamis? Draw out that everyone at the court knows this but Macbeth does not know it yet. Also, importantly, the audience watching the play know it because they have seen King Duncan decide to make Macbeth Thane of Cawdor.

- Explain that when the audience know something that one of the characters does not, it is called 'dramatic irony' (**SLIDE 21** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENE 2 – dramatic irony**).
- You might want to discuss other examples of what the audience know that the characters do not - for example, that the Witches have planned to meet Macbeth.
- You might also want to discuss how these events relate to the theme of loyalty and betrayal:
  - Who is showing loyalty, and how?
  - Who is betraying the trust of another, and showing themselves to be a traitor?

### **Act 1 Scene 2: King Duncan's court – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 1 Scene 2
- **Handout:**
  - Exercise 4: ['Battle Message'](#)
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercises 2, 3, and 4: Crown for King Duncan
  - Exercises 2, 3, and 4: Sashes for: Malcolm, Donalbain, Thane of Lennox
  - Exercise 4: Sashes for: Thane of Ross, Thane of Cawdor O Exercise 4: Marker pens for 'Battle Message'



## ACT 1 SCENES 3–4: THE WITCHES

These activities explore what happens when the Witches meet Macbeth and Banquo after the battle. Students are invited to consider the Witches' prophecies (supported by six short films in BSL and SSE), and how Macbeth and Banquo respond. The activities introduce the concept of **soliloquy**. Students are also supported to put themselves in the shoes of the characters: the final writing activity invites them to express their thoughts and feelings in their roles. This section provides opportunities to reinforce understanding of the literary terms of **antithesis** and **paradox**, and to explore key themes of **the supernatural, kingship, fear, ambition, and fate vs. free will**.

### Act 1 Scenes 3–4: The Witches

#### Exercise 1: The Witches speak to Macbeth

*Characters: Macbeth, Banquo, The Witches*

*Themes: the supernatural, kingship*

#### Resources

- Ask students to get into pairs as Macbeth and Banquo and discuss how they might feel as they are heading home after the battle: happy, relieved, tired, victorious?
- Ask students to show a freeze frame of how Macbeth and Banquo feel and to share these with the class. Note the different versions of Macbeth and Banquo you see.
- Ask: Who was planning to meet Macbeth after the battle? (The Witches)
- Tell students that Macbeth and Banquo suddenly see the Witches, who then speak to them.
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 1** in the [Playlist](#): [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- In these films we see the Witches speak to us as if we are Macbeth and Banquo. They greet Macbeth as Thane of Glamis.
- Discuss what Macbeth and Banquo might be thinking. (Perhaps: Who are these people? What are they doing here? What do they want? Why are they acting so strangely?)

- Ask: Is Macbeth Thane of Glamis? (Yes)
- **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 2** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- In these films, the Witches greet Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor.
- Ask: Is Macbeth Thane of Cawdor? (Yes, but he doesn't know that yet; nor does Banquo.)
- Discuss what Macbeth and Banquo might be thinking now and then invite the Macbeth and Banquo pairs to show a freeze-frame of how they feel now. (Perhaps confused, anxious, proud, scared, excited?)
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 3** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- In this video we see the Witches greet Macbeth as 'King hereafter'.
- Discuss what Macbeth and Banquo might be thinking now and ask students to show a freeze-frame of how Banquo and Macbeth feel having heard all three greetings from the Witches. (Perhaps even more confused, anxious, proud, scared, excited?)

## **Exercise 2: The Witches speak to Banquo**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Banquo, The Witches*

**Context:** *Medieval and Jacobean beliefs about witchcraft, inheritance of the throne in Medieval Scotland*

**Language:** *antithesis, paradox*

**Themes:** *the supernatural, fear, ambition, fate vs. free will, kingship*

### **Resources**

- Ask students to get into pairs as Macbeth and Banquo and to recap what the Witches said to Macbeth.
- Discuss how Macbeth and Banquo feel and draw out from students that perhaps Banquo might want to know if the Witches have anything to say to him.
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 1** in the **Playlist: [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)**.
- In these films we see the Witches speak to Banquo as ‘lesser than Macbeth and greater’.
- Discuss how someone can be ‘lesser’ and ‘greater’. What might this mean?
- Remind students that pairs of opposites like this are called antithesis – like the Witches’ lines about the battle lost and won and the line about fair is foul. Again a paradox is being set up, but we don't find out how the paradox can be resolved yet.
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 2** in the **Playlist: [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)**.
- In this video we see the Witches speak to Banquo as ‘not so happy, yet much happier’.

- Discuss how someone can be ‘not so happy’ and ‘much happier’. Note again that this antithesis creates a paradox and discuss why the Witches might speak in paradoxes so much:
  - Does it make them sound mysterious?
  - Do they want to confuse Macbeth and Banquo, or maybe make them think harder?
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 3** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- In these films we see the Witches tell Banquo ‘thou shalt get kings though thou be none’. Discuss what this might mean, ensuring that students understand that the Witches are telling Banquo that his children will be kings but that he will not be a king himself.
- Ask: How does this make sense of the paradoxes spoken by the first two Witches? (Banquo himself will be ‘lesser’ and ‘not so happy’ as Macbeth, but his descendants will be ‘greater’ and ‘much happier’.)
- Ask students to show a freeze-frame of how Macbeth and Banquo feel now. (Perhaps confused, scared, excited, suspicious of each other?)
- Discuss the following questions (**SLIDE 2** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – questions**):
  - What do you think about what the Witches have said? Do you think Macbeth and Banquo believe it might come true?
  - Why do you think this? (Draw out the idea that they seem to have already predicted accurately that Macbeth will be Thane of Cawdor and that there was a stronger belief in the Medieval and Jacobean periods of the powers of witches and their abilities to predict the future compared to now.)
  - How do you think Macbeth could become king? (Explain that in Medieval Scotland, the King decided who would be the next king. It didn’t have to be his eldest son. Macbeth was King Duncan’s cousin. Macbeth has shown himself to be a strong leader and warrior. It is possible to defeat a king.)
  - How do you think Banquo’s children could become kings? (As above – no guaranteed succession; taking the throne by force)

- There is an opportunity here to relate these discussions to key themes set up at the start of the play:
  - The supernatural – How might the Witches be presented onstage to give the audience a sense that they are supernatural figures?
  - Fear – How scared might Macbeth and Banquo be to meet these strange creatures?
  - Ambition – Does Macbeth want to be king? Is this an ambition he might have? (Perhaps yes, because he is a strong warrior and so he thinks he will make a good king. Perhaps no, because he is loyal to the current king.)
  - Fate vs. free will – Do Macbeth and Banquo believe these Witches have the power to predict the future and control fate, or is it up to their free will to decide whether these things happen or not? How might an audience, then and now, feel about the power of the Witches?
  - Kingship – What are the qualities of a good king?

### **Exercise 3: News from the king**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Banquo, Thane of Ross, (The Captain)*

**Language:** *antithesis*

**Theme:** *the supernatural*

#### **Resources**

- Choose one 'Macbeth and Banquo' pair and give them sashes.
- Give the role of Ross to a good reader and give them the 'Thane of Ross' sash.

- Invite 'Ross' to enter, greet Macbeth and Banquo and give them a message from the king by reading aloud the lines on the slide (**SLIDE 3** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – Ross**):

ROSS

The King hath happily received, Macbeth,  
The news of thy success;

*(The King is happy to have received news of your success)*

- Ask: What success is Ross talking about? (Macbeth's success in battle)
- Ask 'Ross' to read aloud the next lines (still **SLIDE 3** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – 'Ross'**):

every one did bear

Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence  
And poured them down before him.

*(Everyone praised you for defending the kingdom)*

- Ask: Who have we met who praised Macbeth to the king for defending Scotland? (The Captain and Ross)
- Ask 'Ross' to read aloud the next lines and present Macbeth with the Thane of Cawdor sash.

He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor

*(He asked me to call you Thane of Cawdor)*

- Discuss with all students how Macbeth and Banquo might feel now.
- Ask the selected Macbeth and Banquo pair to show a freeze frame of how they feel, choosing from the suggestions made by the other students.
- Tell the students that Banquo says 'What, can the devil speak true?' (**SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – Banquo**).

- Ask: Who does he mean by ‘the devil’? (The Witches)
- Discuss with students what this suggests about how Banquo feels about the Witches. If he feels they are on the side of evil, does that make him less happy about their predictions for him?
- Tell the students that Macbeth says (**SLIDE 5** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – Macbeth**):

This supernatural soliciting  
Cannot be ill, cannot be good.

*(This supernatural temptation can't be bad and can't be good)*

- Discuss with students what this suggests about how Macbeth feels about the Witches. Draw out that Macbeth is using antithesis here to consider whether what the Witches are telling him is something good – that he will be king; or something bad – that he will do something evil.
- Discuss with the students why they think the Witches make their predictions:
  - Are they simply telling the truth about what will happen?
  - Are they bringing good news to inspire the men to be the best they can be?
  - Are they trying to tempt or trick Macbeth and Banquo into actions that will hurt others?
  - And: Is it good or bad to be ambitious?

### **Exercise 4: Creating a soliloquy**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Banquo*

**Language:** *soliloquy*

#### **Resources**

- Give each student a copy of the sentence starters ([Handout: Exercise 4: 'Creating a Soliloquy'](#)). Ask them to complete the lines as either Macbeth or Banquo. They can write or draw their response:
  - I feel...
  - I want...
  - I will...
- Explain to students that they will now create a speech together that their character might say to the audience at this point in the play. This is called a **soliloquy (SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – soliloquy)**. A soliloquy is a speech in which a character, on their own, speaks aloud their thoughts – either to themselves or to the audience. There are a lot of soliloquies in Shakespeare's plays.
- Organise the Macbeths into one or two groups and do the same with the Banquos.
- Ask each group to share all their lines and then to select a maximum of ten lines they think seem best. Encourage them to choose at least one line from each person to promote joint ownership.
- Next, ask each group to order their lines to make a speech. They decide on the order they think works best.
- Ask each group to nominate one 'Macbeth' or 'Banquo' to read out/sign their speech.
- Discuss what worked well about each speech and what could make it even better. What more have we learned about how Macbeth and Banquo might feel?
- You may want to record a version of each speech - either a paper version or a video.

### **Exercise 5: Writing a letter home (optional writing exercise)**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Banquo, (King Duncan)*

#### **Resources**

- Tell the students that Macbeth and Banquo still have a long way to go before they get home. First they must visit King Duncan, who praises them for their bravery in the battle. As they rest for the night, they each sit alone and think over all the events of the day. They also think about how much they look forward to getting home and seeing their wives.
- Ask students to imagine they are either Macbeth or Banquo and write a letter to their wife.
- Display starter suggestions (**SLIDE 7** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 3–4 – writing a letter home**) and/or give out copies of [Handout: Exercise 5: 'Writing a Letter Home'](#). Suggest the letter should include:
  - Some description of the battle
  - What happened when you met the Witches
  - How you felt about the Witches and what they said
  - What you want to do about what the Witches said
- If setting as a homework task, you might want to provide students with a copy of the soliloquies that they made together as part of [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 4](#) to help them.

## **Act 1 Scenes 3–4: The Witches – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 1 Scenes 3–4
  
- **Playlist resources:**
  - Exercise 1:
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 1 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 2 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 3 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
  - Exercise 2:
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 1 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 2 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 3 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
  
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 4: [‘Creating a Soliloquy’](#)
  - Exercise 5: [‘Writing a Letter Home’](#)
  
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercise 3: Sashes for: Macbeth (Thane of Glamis), Banquo, Thane of Ross, Thane of Cawdor
  - Exercise 4: Marker pens for ‘Creating a Soliloquy’
  - Exercise 5: Copy of students’ soliloquies from Exercise 4; marker pens for ‘Writing a Letter Home’

<b>I feel...</b>	
<b>I want...</b>	
<b>I will...</b>	

Write a letter from either Macbeth or Banquo to their wife. Include:

- Some description of the battle
- What happened when you met the Witches
- How you felt about the Witches and what they said
- What you want to do about what the Witches said.

Dear

The battle...

After the battle we felt...

Walking away from the battle we met three strange women...

They told me...

They told Banquo...

I felt...

I want to...

## ACT 1 SCENES 5–7: THE MACBETHS

In these activities, we meet Lady Macbeth, and explore her thoughts about what the Witches have told her husband. We introduce **personification**, **similes**, and **metaphors**, and explore key themes of **ambition**, **fate vs. free will**, **appearance vs. reality**, **deception**, **kingship**, and **loyalty and betrayal**. Video resources include films of Lady Macbeth’s ‘pour my spirits in thine ear’ excerpted speech in BSL, SSE, and VS. Writing activities bring together facts and ideas to be developed further as the play goes on.

### Act 1 Scenes 5–7: The Macbeths

#### **Exercise 1: Meeting Lady Macbeth**

*Characters:* Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, (Banquo)

*Themes:* ambition, fate vs. free will

#### **Resources**

- If you completed [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 5](#), remind students of the letters they wrote as Macbeth and Banquo to their wives. You might like to invite a few students to read aloud or sign their letters.
- Explain that they will now meet Macbeth’s wife, Lady Macbeth.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Lady Macbeth (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7)**. This introduces Lady Macbeth with her sign name and an image of the actor who will play Lady Macbeth in later films. Ask all students to try out Lady Macbeth’s sign name and repeat the film as needed.
- Tell students that Lady Macbeth and Macbeth live in a castle in Inverness and show Inverness on the map (**SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – map of Inverness**).
- Explain to students that Lady Macbeth has received a letter from Macbeth (like the one they wrote in [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 5](#)). In the letter, Macbeth tells his wife about meeting the Witches and what they told him and Banquo.

- Discuss what Lady Macbeth might think about this strange story:
  - Perhaps she thinks it is a joke?
  - Perhaps she is scared that her husband has met witches?
  - Perhaps she is pleased and wants him to be king?
- Tell students that we are now going to find out what Lady Macbeth says after reading the letter.
- Play **FILM: Act 1 Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL, SSE, and/or VS](#).
- Display the text from the film (**SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Lady Macbeth**).  
Go through the speech, phrase by phrase, checking understanding:
  - Explain that ‘thou’ and ‘thee’ mean you, ‘thy’ means your, ‘art’ means are and ‘shalt’ means shall or will.
  - Remind them that Macbeth is Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor, and ask: What else was he told by the Witches? (That he would be king)
  - What does Lady Macbeth mean by his ‘nature’? (His character/ personality)
  - What does she mean by ‘too full of the milk of human kindness’? (He is too caring)
  - What is the illness needed in someone who is ambitious? (A toughness or ruthlessness not to care)
  - Explain that ‘hie thee hither’ means come here.
  - What does she mean by ‘pour my spirits in thine ear’? (Tell him her reasons, convince him)
  - What does she want to happen? (That he will be crowned king)
- Invite students to offer suggestions of adjectives that might describe Lady Macbeth based on what she says in this speech. Keep this list to review later.
- Ask students how they would describe Lady Macbeth’s relationship with her husband. (Perhaps protective or nurturing, perhaps dominant, perhaps business-like?)
- Organise students into pairs and give each pair one or two lines from the speech ([Handout: Exercise 1: ‘Lady Macbeth’s text’](#)).

- Explain that they are all Lady Macbeth. In pairs they will have some time to rehearse a performance of their line and then share with the group:
  - Perhaps they will speak or sign together, perhaps divide the line between them.
  - Perhaps repeat a word or sign, or add other gestures and movements.
- For the performance, ask students to stand in a semi-circle and to perform their lines in the order of the speech.
- Discuss what they enjoyed about the performances and anything they found interesting about the language.
- Return to the list of adjectives and invite students to comment on which words now seem most fitting and if there are any more they want to add.
- Refer back to the themes of ambition and fate vs. free will raised when Macbeth met the Witches. Ask:
  - How ambitious does Lady Macbeth seem about taking the crown, compared to her husband?
  - How much free will does she think she has to decide whether Macbeth will become king or not?
- Ask students to choose two words or phrases that Lady Macbeth says and write a sentence or two explaining what that word or phrase suggests about her and why.

## **Exercise 2: Macbeth's return**

**Characters:** Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, King Duncan

**Language:** personification

### **Resources**

- Recap the key points from Lady Macbeth's speech (see [Handout: Exercise 1: 'Lady Macbeth's text'](#)). (She believes the Witches and wants Macbeth to take the crown of Scotland for himself immediately, but is concerned that he is not strong enough to kill the king and fulfill the prophecy.)
- Tell students that Lady Macbeth calls on spirits, or supernatural powers, to make her strong enough to help Macbeth kill King Duncan.
- Explain to students that Macbeth now returns home from the battle, wearing his Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor sashes, saying:

'My dearest love. Duncan comes here tonight'

**(SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Macbeth)**

- Check that everyone remembers who King Duncan is. As a reminder you can play the **dramatis personae video** for **King Duncan (SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7)**. This introduces King Duncan with his sign name and an illustration of him.
- Show students Lady Macbeth's response and check understanding:

'And when goes hence?' (*And when will he leave?*)

**(SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's lines – Part 1)**

- Show Macbeth's next line and check understanding:

*'Tomorrow, as he purposes.'* (*Tomorrow, as he intends.*)

**(SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's lines – Part 2)**

- Discuss how Macbeth might say/ sign this line. (Perhaps hesitantly, wondering what his wife is thinking? Perhaps confidently, believing that is what will happen? Perhaps with a smile, because he already knows they won't let King Duncan leave tomorrow?)
- Show Lady Macbeth's response to this:

*'O, never / Shall sun that morrow see.'*

**(SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's lines – Part 3)**

- Discuss this response – what does she mean by 'never shall sun that morrow see' (that it won't happen – the sun will never rise on a day when King Duncan leaves).
- Explain that this is personification (**SLIDE 8 in GALLERY ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – personification**) – the sun is being described as though it was a person who can see.
- Ensure understanding that Lady Macbeth is making clear her intention that they must kill King Duncan while they have the opportunity.
- Invite students to show you how Macbeth might react to this. (Perhaps delight or horror or confusion?)
- Now look at the next bit of Lady Macbeth's speech: 'Your face, my thane, is as a book where men / May read strange matters' (**SLIDE 9 in GALLERY ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – Lady Macbeth**).

- Unpick what she means by comparing the students' faces to books where you have read those feelings of delight, horror, confusion etc. Explain that Lady Macbeth can read Macbeth's feeling in his face just as she can read words in a book (the word 'as' here is used to mean 'like').

### **Exercise 3: Look like the innocent flower (metaphor/simile)**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, (King Duncan)*

**Language:** *simile, metaphor*

**Themes:** *appearance vs. reality, deception*

#### **Resources**

- Tell students that Lady Macbeth says 'Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it' (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – 'Look like the innocent flower but be the serpent under it'**).
- Organise students into small groups. Ask each group to work together to copy the image as best they can by physically making a flower with their bodies with a serpent under it. You may need to model this by working with a small group and directing them into positions to show what the image might look like.
- See each group in turn and invite comments about what students like about each other's work. Discuss how can we tell the image shows a flower and a serpent.
- Next organise students into pairs as Lady Macbeth and Macbeth.
- Ask the Lady Macbeths to help their Macbeths into a statue of someone who looks like an 'innocent flower'.
- Next ask the Lady Macbeths to help their Macbeths into a statue of someone who looks like a serpent.
- Ask the Macbeths to practise moving from one shape to the other.
- Invite the Macbeths to share their performances, transitioning from 'flower' to 'serpent'.

- Discuss with students what they think works well, and then what they think Lady Macbeth is asking Macbeth to do. Draw out the idea that Lady Macbeth is telling Macbeth to look like he is King Duncan's friend, whilst secretly (s)he wants to kill him. Discuss how this relates to the themes of appearance vs. reality and deception in the play, when characters look like one thing on the outside whilst feeling something quite different on the inside (see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 4](#)).
- Explain that when something is compared to something else using the word 'like' – 'like the innocent flower' – we call this a 'simile' (**SLIDE 11** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – simile**).
- You can return at this point to Lady Macbeth's line 'Your face, my thane, is as a book where men/ May read strange matters' (**SLIDE 9** in **GALLERY ACT 1 SCENES 5–7**). This is also a simile – where Macbeth's face is compared to a book.
- Explain that when something is described as *being* something else – i.e. 'be the serpent' – this is a metaphor (**SLIDE 12** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – metaphor**).
- You might like to give other examples. For example, we might talk about clouds in the sky as 'clouds like cotton wool' or as 'cotton wool clouds'. Ask students to suggest other examples for what Lady Macbeth wants Macbeth to do. (Perhaps she might say 'Look like the summer's day, but be the rain cloud' or 'Look like the innocent puppy, but be the sharp teeth'.)

#### **Exercise 4: King Duncan arrives**

**Characters:** Lady Macbeth, King Duncan

**Language:** metaphor

**Theme:** deception

#### **Resources**

- Invite students to all pretend to be Lady Macbeth as she waits for King Duncan and his court to arrive at Inverness castle.

- Ask students to show you, as a freeze frame or statue, how they are going to greet the King.
- Establish the idea that Lady Macbeth needs to look as though she is welcoming King Duncan to her house. She needs to pretend to be his friend.
- Now ask students to change their freeze frame or statue into an image of what Lady Macbeth really wants to do to King Duncan (kill him).
- Encourage them to make connections with the metaphors they created in [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 3](#), and the theme of deception.

### **Exercise 5: Deciding to kill the king**

**Characters:** Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, King Duncan

**Context:** Jacobean ideas about kingship

**Themes:** kingship, loyalty and betrayal, ambition

#### **Resources**

- Ask students to work in pairs and to make two lists with as many reasons as they can think of for why Macbeth should kill the king and why he shouldn't. These lists might include suggestions like: kill the king to take over his power and money, or to do a better job, or to please his wife; don't kill the king because murder is wrong, or being king is a hard job, or Macbeth is King Duncan's friend.
- Share ideas as a whole group; encourage students to add any new ideas to their own lists.
- Explain to students that although Lady Macbeth is sure, Macbeth has doubts about killing King Duncan. Share with students the reasons that Macbeth gives not to kill the king (in his soliloquy at the start of Act 1 Scene 7): **SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – reasons not to kill the king'**. Ask them to compare/add this to their own list.
  - Doing bad things has consequences. ('We still have judgement here') (*We are still judged here*) ('Here' might be internal, i.e. in my conscience, or external, i.e. here on earth.)

- He trusts me. ('He's here in double-trust') (*He trusts me double*) (Explain that 'double' refers to the fact that King Duncan trusts Macbeth because King Duncan is Macbeth's cousin and his king, but also because he is a guest in Macbeth's home. Social expectations of the time were that you should protect your family, your king and your guests.)
  - King Duncan has been a good king. ('So clear in his great office') (*So blameless in his role as king*)
  - Trying to jump too high can lead to a nasty fall ('Vaulting ambition')
  - What if we fail? ('If we should fail?')
- Explain that in Shakespeare's time many people believed that kings were appointed by God and that it was a sin to kill a king – even if they were a bad king.
  - Explain that Macbeth decides not to kill King Duncan and tells Lady Macbeth that they will 'proceed no further' (**SLIDE 14** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – 'We will proceed no further...'**).
  - Share what Lady Macbeth says to change Macbeth's mind back to killing the king and add these reasons to the list to kill the king (**SLIDE 15** in **GALLERY: ACT 1 SCENES 5–7 – 'Reasons to kill the king'**):
    - Don't be a coward. ('Art thou afeard?') (*Are you afraid?*)
    - Behave like a man. ('You would be so much more the man') (*You would be more of a man*)
    - If I had said that I was going to do it, then I would. ('Had I so sworn') (*If I had sworn*)
    - Be brave. ('Screw your courage to the sticking place') (*Keep your courage firm*)
    - We won't fail. ('We'll not fail')
- Ask students to look at their lists in pairs and consider which are the reasons that Macbeth will most listen to.
  - Ask partner A in the pair to choose a reason or line from the 'kill the king' list and partner B to choose a reason or line from the 'don't kill the king' list.

- Organise a 'conscience forest' where students stand like trees spread out around the room. Each tree will say/sign their reason or line to Macbeth when he passes them. Place a crown in the middle of the forest.
- Ask for a volunteer to be Macbeth. 'Macbeth' walks around the forest and pays attention to what the trees say to him until he decides what to do. He can then leave the forest if he decides not to kill the king, or go to the middle and pick up the crown if he decides he will kill the king. Ask 'Macbeth' what most influenced his decision.
- Play with a few different volunteers to hear different responses.
- Ask students for a show of hands to show whether they think Macbeth *should* kill the king. And another show of hands for whether they think he *will* kill the king. You can follow this up to discuss their ideas about why.
- Tell them that Act 1 of the play ends with Macbeth agreeing that he will kill King Duncan while he is staying at their castle that night.

### **Exercise 6: Lady Macbeth's hopes and fears**

**Character:** *Lady Macbeth*

#### **Resources**

- Give students a copy of [Handout: Exercise 6: 'Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#) and ask them, in pairs, to add what they think Lady Macbeth's hopes are and what she fears and fill in the two columns.
- Share ideas as a whole group; encourage students to add any new ideas to their own lists.

## **Act 1 Scenes 5–7: The Macbeths – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 1 Scenes 5–7
  
- **Playlist resource:**
  - Exercise 1: FILM: Act 1 Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth ([BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#))
  
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 1 and 2: [‘Lady Macbeth’s text’](#)
  - Exercise 6: [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
  
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercise 1: Copy of students’ letters from [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 5](#)
  - Exercise 2: Sashes for Macbeth (Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor)
  - Exercise 5: Marker pens
  - Exercise 6: Marker pens for [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)

## **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.

Thou wouldst be great,

Art not without ambition,

but without the illness should attend it.

Hie thee hither,

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,

To have thee crowned withal.

## LADY MACBETH

- To become Queen of Scotland



## FEARS

- Her husband will look guilty

## ACT 2

### Signing Shakespeare resources and activities for teaching Act 2 of *Macbeth*



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### ACT 2 SCENES 1–2: KILLING THE KING

In this series of activities, students explore how the Macbeths kill King Duncan, and the consequences of this terrible act. Students are introduced to Macbeth's famous 'Is this a dagger' **soliloquy** and can further consider the effects of **metaphor**, **rhyme**, and **antithesis**. Key themes in this section include **appearance vs. reality**, **fear**, and **guilt**.

## Act 2 Scenes 1–2: Killing the king

### **Exercise 1: Who is sleeping in the Macbeths' castle? (recap exercise)**

**Characters:** *Lady Macbeth, King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Thane of Ross*

#### **Resources**

- Recap **FILM: Act 1 Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth** in the **Playlist: [BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#)**.
- Ask students what they remember about Lady Macbeth and her plans. You can use the **[Handout: 'Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)** to support this recap if you completed the exercise (**[Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 6](#)**). You might also like to recap the metaphor of the flower and the serpent studied in **[Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 3](#)** (see **SLIDE 2** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2 – 'Look like the innocent flower...'**).
- Explain that everyone has gone to bed in Macbeth's castle except for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. They are awake because they plan to kill King Duncan that same night, whilst he is asleep in their home.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **King Duncan (SLIDE 3** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2)** to remind students of King Duncan and his sign name.
- Ask if they remember anything about King Duncan's family. (He has two sons.)
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Malcolm (SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2)** to remind students of Malcolm and his sign name.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Donalbain (SLIDE 5** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2)** to remind students of Donalbain and his sign name.
- Explain that Malcolm and Donalbain arrived with their father and are also sleeping in the castle, along with two other characters we have met before: Banquo and Ross.
- Play the **dramatis personae videos** for **Banquo (SLIDE 6** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2)** and the **Thane of Ross (SLIDE 7** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2)**.

## **Exercise 2: 'Is this a dagger...?'**

**Character(s):** Macbeth, (King Duncan, Lady Macbeth)

**Language:** soliloquy, metaphor, rhyme, antithesis

**Themes:** appearance vs. reality, fear

### **Resources**

- Explain that Macbeth is walking through the dark castle in the dead of night, on his way to kill King Duncan.
- Discuss with students whether they think Macbeth still has any doubts about whether he should kill King Duncan.
- Tell students they will now see what Macbeth is thinking. This is another soliloquy – when the audience see or hear a character speaking aloud their inner thoughts (see [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 4](#)).
- Play **FILM: Act 2 Scene 1 – Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- In this video we see an edited version of Macbeth's 'Is this a dagger...' soliloquy in BSL.
- Display the text from the film (**SLIDE 8** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2 – 'Is this a dagger'**) and/or distribute [Handout: Exercise 2: 'Is this a dagger' text](#). Discuss the following questions. You might want to watch the film again.
  - What does Macbeth see that seems to be leading him to King Duncan? (A dagger that points the way)
  - Do you think that there is actually a dagger? (Is it Macbeth's imagination or could it be something supernatural?)
  - A bell is ringing in the castle – what does Macbeth say it is doing? (It is inviting him to kill King Duncan. Lady Macbeth is ringing the bell to let Macbeth know her part of the plan is ready.)
  - Why doesn't Macbeth want King Duncan to hear the bell? (It might wake him)
  - What is a knell? (A funeral bell - a metaphor: Macbeth compares the normal bell to a funeral bell)

- What do you notice about the phrase ‘Hear it not Duncan, for it is a knell/ That summons thee to heaven or to hell’? (These final lines rhyme – they look alike and sound alike.) As we have learned ([Act 1 Scene 1 Witches, Exercise 3](#)), Shakespeare often uses rhyme at the end of a speech to emphasise its finality. Note that heaven/hell is another antithesis.
- Invite students to stand up and show a freeze frame of how Macbeth feels at the end of this soliloquy. (Perhaps determined, perhaps still unsure...)
- You might discuss how this soliloquy relates to themes of appearance vs. reality and fear:
  - Macbeth is fearful of the dagger which is not really there. Why might he see this dagger?
  - What does it represent for him?
  - How could this moment be staged? Would you want to suggest something supernatural, maybe with sound or lighting, or that it is all in his head and reflects his own mental state?

### **Exercise 3: The murder of King Duncan (dramatising an off-stage scene)**

*Characters: Macbeth, King Duncan, (Lady Macbeth)*

#### **Resources**

- Display or print out [Handout: Exercise 3: ‘The Murder of Duncan’ narrative](#).
- Organise students to stand in a semi-circle and tell them that together you are going to create the story of what happens when Macbeth kills King Duncan.

- Explain that you will read aloud / sign a narrative and invite students into the circle to become the characters described. The student simply has to mime what is being described. For example, at the beginning, a student playing King Duncan comes into the circle (wearing a crown) and mimes being asleep. Then two further students mime standing as guards outside his room.
- As you read the narrative, you can ask students to repeat any lines a character says. You may want to change the language as appropriate for your group.
- Explain that this murder of King Duncan happens off stage – it is not seen by the audience.
- What the audience sees is Macbeth and Lady Macbeth talking about what has happened – this is a bit like the battle in Act 1, which was not shown on stage, but instead reported by the Captain (see [Act 1 Scene 2, Exercise 3](#)).
- Ask: Why do you think Shakespeare chooses not to show us the murder? (Perhaps because it is quite complicated to stage; or it might end up being unintentionally funny; or Shakespeare is more interested in focusing on how the Macbeths feel.)

#### **Exercise 4: The Macbeths**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, (King Duncan)*

**Themes:** *fear, guilt*

#### **Resources**

- Explain that the next scene Shakespeare gives us is Lady Macbeth waiting for Macbeth to return from killing King Duncan.
- Ask how she might be feeling? (Perhaps anxious that something has gone wrong, such as the guards waking up or someone else hearing King Duncan cry out? Perhaps impatient to hear what happened? Perhaps worried that Macbeth has changed his mind again?)
- Macbeth enters and says 'I have done the deed' (**SLIDE 9** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2** – 'I have done the deed').

- Ask how Macbeth might be feeling? (Perhaps anxious that someone heard him? Perhaps horrified at what he has done? Perhaps keen to share his feelings with his wife?)
- Organise students to work in pairs and give each pair a set of lines ([HANDOUT: Exercise 4: 'Lines of Text'](#)).
- Ask students to cut out and arrange the lines into two columns (correct categorisation shown below):
  - 'What Lady Macbeth says':
    - 'A foolish thought to say a sorry sight' (*It is silly to say 'a dreadful sight'*)
    - 'Consider it not so deeply' (*Don't think about it too much*)
    - 'Go, get some water  
And wash this filthy witness from your hand' (*Go, get some water, and wash away the blood*)
  - 'What Macbeth says':
    - 'This is a sorry sight' (*This is a dreadful sight*)
    - 'I am afraid to think what I have done'
    - 'Macbeth shall sleep no more'
- Discuss why students have chosen to put lines where they have. Draw out that some lines indicate a sense of fear, regret or guilt (Macbeth's lines) and other lines indicate a more practical approach (Lady Macbeth's lines). Ask:
  - What does this suggest about how the characters are feeling at this moment?
  - Why might Shakespeare show us this moment rather than the actual murder?
  - What does it suggest about the importance of fear and guilt in the play?
- Show slide with the lines from Act 2 Scene 2 (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 1–2 – Macbeth and Lady Macbeth table**).
- Ask students in pairs to create a freeze frame of how Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are feeling.



*Lady Macbeth*     *You are weak.  
Give me the daggers.)*

- Ensure understanding and ask students why they think Macbeth does not want to take the daggers back:
  - Why doesn't he want to be reminded of the horrible thing he has done?
    - Perhaps he regrets what he did.
    - Perhaps he fears what will happen next.
    - Perhaps he doesn't want to admit it is true.
- Ask students what they think about Lady Macbeth's response. Are they surprised that she takes the daggers back? Why / why not?

### **Act 2 Scenes 1–2: Killing the king – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 2 Scenes 1–2
- **Playlist resources:**
  - Exercise 1: FILM: Act 1 Scene 5 – Lady Macbeth ([BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#))
  - Exercise 2: FILM: Act 2 Scene 1 – Macbeth ([BSL](#))
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 1: [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
  - Exercise 2: [‘Is this a dagger’ text](#)
  - Exercise 3: [‘The Murder of Duncan’ narrative](#)
  - Exercise 4: [‘Lines of Text’](#)
- **Additional resource:**
  - Exercise 4: Scissors for cutting out [‘Lines of Text’](#)

## MACBETH

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.

I see thee still,

And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before.

Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts.

There's no such thing:

Whiles I threat, he lives:

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.

Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell

That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

### **The Murder of Duncan narrative**

King Duncan is asleep in the best guest room in the Macbeths' castle. Two guards stand outside the room, guarding the king as he sleeps.

In the room next door, Donalbain the king's son is sleeping. In another guest room nearby, the king's other son, Malcolm is asleep.

*Ask: How do you think Macbeth will kill Duncan without anyone raising an alarm? After hearing ideas, continue the story.*

Lady Macbeth brings two drinks to the guards. She smiles at them and offers them the drinks.

The two guards are very pleased the Lady of the castle is being so kind to them and they take the drinks. They drink. Suddenly they cannot keep their eyes open. They sink to the floor and fall fast asleep, snoring.

*Ask: Why do you think the guards fall asleep? (Lady Macbeth has drugged their drinks)*

The guards each have a dagger hanging from their belts. Lady Macbeth takes the two daggers. Then she carefully pushes open the door and looks at the king to check he is still asleep. He is. She lays the daggers near his bed. She then walks away from the king's room. She picks up a bell and rings it. Then she walks to her own room to wait for Macbeth.

Macbeth walks to the door of the king's bedroom. He sees the two guards fast asleep. He shakes them to make sure they are asleep. Then he pushes open the door and walks over to where the king is lying in his bed. He picks up the daggers and raises his hands high in the air with a dagger in each hand. Then he stabs the king twice in the chest.

King Duncan opens his eyes and sees Macbeth. He reaches out, but quickly falls back dead. Macbeth walks out of the room, past the guards, carrying a blood-covered dagger in each hand. Donalbain and Malcolm are still asleep.

### **The Murder of Duncan narrative continued**

Lady Macbeth is very nervous as she waits for Macbeth. She paces up and down and rubs her hands. Macbeth walks in and says: 'I have done the deed'. She sighs with relief. Then she sees that he is carrying the daggers and she is angry. She says: 'Give me the daggers'.

She takes the daggers from him. He is shocked at what he has done. He says: 'I am afraid to think what I have done'.

Lady Macbeth leaves him and walks back to the king's bedroom. She sees the sleeping guards and puts the blood covered daggers in their hands. She goes to the dead king and puts her hands on his wounds. She goes back to the guards and smears blood on their clothes and faces. Donalbain and Malcolm are still asleep.

Lady Macbeth then walks back to Macbeth and shows him her own hands covered in blood. She says: 'a little water clears us of this deed' (*Let us wash our hands and no-one will know what we have done*). They hear a knocking at the door. They go to wash their hands and change their clothes.

Donalbain and Malcolm hear the knocking and wake up.

---

'This is a sorry sight'

*(This is a dreadful sight)*

---

'A foolish thought to say a sorry sight'

*(It is silly to say 'a dreadful sight')*

---

'Consider it not so deeply'

*(Don't think about it too much)*

---

'I am afraid to think what I have done'

---

'Macbeth shall sleep no more'

---

'Go, get some water

And wash this filthy witness from your hand'

*(Go, get some water, and wash away the blood).*

---

## ACT 2 SCENES 3–4: THE KING IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE KING!

In these activities, students explore the complex issue of who knows what and who suspects what in the aftermath of King Duncan’s murder. Students explore **pathetic fallacy** and **personification**, and key themes of **deception**, **fear**, **the supernatural**, **appearance vs. reality**, and **kingship**. These activities include a short film of a dialogue between Macduff and the Thane of Ross in BSL and SSE.

### Act 2 Scenes 3–4: The king is dead, long live the king!

#### Exercise 1: Who was knocking (recap exercise)

**Characters:** *Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, King Duncan, Thane of Lennox, Macduff*

**Theme:** *deception*

#### Resources

- Recap with your students that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have murdered King Duncan and have gone to wash and change before talking to whoever is knocking at the door.
- Explain that two characters have arrived at the Macbeths’ castle. One is the Thane of Lennox, who we met before at King Duncan’s court in [Act 1 Scene 2, Exercise 2](#). The other is Macduff, who is the Thane of Fife.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Lennox** (SLIDE 2 in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4**) to remind students of Lennox and his sign name.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macduff** (SLIDE 3 in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4**). This introduces Macduff with his sign name and an image of the actor playing Macduff in a later video.
- Display the questions (SLIDE 4 in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4 – questions**) and ask students to discuss in pairs, then share their answers with the group.
  - Who killed King Duncan? (Macbeth)
  - Who will Macduff and Lennox think has killed King Duncan? (The guards)

- Why? (Because Lady Macbeth left the bloody daggers with them and smeared blood on them)
- What do you think of the Macbeths' plan?
- How well is it working so far?
- Remind students of the point in **Act 1 Scenes 5–7** (see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 3](#)) when Lady Macbeth said to Macbeth 'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it' (**SLIDE 5** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4 – 'Look like the innocent flower...'**). What did she mean? (That he should look like King Duncan's friend, whilst secretly planning to kill him.)
- Explain that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are welcoming two more guests to their house and again, they want to deceive them.
- Ask pairs to create a freeze frame of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth showing how they feel about completing their plan to murder King Duncan. (Perhaps victorious, or exhausted, or anxious.)
- Now ask them to adjust this freeze frame to show how they appear as they greet Lennox and Macduff. (Perhaps calm or smiling.)

### **Exercise 2: 'The night has been unruly...'**

**Context:** *Jacobean beliefs about weather and witchcraft*

**Language:** *pathetic fallacy, personification*

**Themes:** *fear, the supernatural*

#### **Resources**

- Explain that outside the castle, a storm has been raging and you are going to create this storm together.
- Display Lennox's lines (**SLIDE 6** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4 – Lennox's lines**) and explain these are things that Lennox says about his journey to the castle:
  - 'The night has been unruly'
  - 'Our chimneys were blown down'

- 'Strange screams of death'
  - 'The earth was feverous and did shake'
- Clarify meaning with students, including 'unruly' (*wild/chaotic*) and 'feverous' (*having a fever*).
- Divide the students into small groups and give each group one line (more than one group can have the same line).
- Ask the students to rehearse speaking and/or signing their line together. Encourage them to be playful: perhaps they all speak/sign at the same time; perhaps one person speaks while others sign; perhaps they all speak/sign the line but one after the other; perhaps they repeat some of the words/signs. Encourage them to create a performance of their line that suggests it is part of the storm.
- Organise students in a semicircle and explain you will create a whole class performance by beginning with the storm mime as you did at the start of the exercise. You will then point to a group who must be ready with their performance of their line. As the storm mime continues with everyone, you point to the next group and so on.
- Try this a few times so students can improve and enjoy their performance.
- Discuss the following questions with students:
  - Why do you think the weather is like this?
  - Why do you think that Shakespeare puts this description in the play?
- Build on the students' responses to bring in social and historical context: many people in Shakespeare's time believed that storms could be created with magical powers by witches and spirits. Strange weather was also often believed to be a sign of something significant about to happen, such as the birth or death of an important person. Discuss how this knowledge supports understanding of the themes of fear and the supernatural in this description.

- You might like to explain that descriptions of weather in stories are often used to reflect an important event or a particular mood. This is called ‘pathetic fallacy’ (**SLIDE 7 – Part 1** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4**). It is a form of personification (**SLIDE 7 – Part 2** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4**), where something non-human is given human attributes. It is as if the weather has human emotions – here the earth is shaking as if it has a fever.

### **Exercise 3: Duncan is dead!**

**Characters:** *King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Thane of Ross, Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Thane of Lennox, Macduff*

**Themes:** *deception, appearance vs. reality*

#### **Resources**

- Ask: What happened to King Duncan? (He was killed.)
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **King Duncan** (**SLIDE 8** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4**). Invite one student to be King Duncan and give them the Scottish crown. Ask the student playing King Duncan to lie down as dead on one side of the playing space: ‘the King’s chamber’.
- Ask:
  - Was anyone else with King Duncan? (His two guards)
  - What happened to them? (They were drugged by Lady Macbeth and she left the bloody daggers with them)
- Invite two more students to be the two guards and ask them to lie down next to King Duncan as though they are asleep.
- Ask: Who else was sleeping in the Macbeths' castle on the night of the murder?

- Play the **dramatis personae videos** for **Malcolm (SLIDE 9)**, **Donalbain (SLIDE 10)**, **Banquo (SLIDE 11)**, and **Ross (SLIDE 12)** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4** as each character is named. Ensure there are students playing each character below and give each a sash to identify them. Invite students into the other side of the playing space, ‘the great hall’, to become that character.
  - Malcolm
  - Donalbain
  - Banquo
  - Thane of Ross
  - Lady Macbeth
  - Macbeth
- Ask: Who arrived at the castle and knocked on the door very early in the morning? (Lennox and Macduff)
- Re-play the **dramatis personae videos** for **Lennox (SLIDE 2)** and **Macduff (SLIDE 3)** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4** as each character is named. Invite two more students into the playing space to become Lennox and Macduff. Give them sashes to identify them.
- Ask: Who knows that King Duncan is dead? (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth)
- Ask: Does Macduff know the king is dead? (No)
- Explain that Macduff has arrived to meet the king to continue his journey that morning.
- Ask the student playing Macduff to go and wake the king.
- Ask: What does Macduff discover? (That the king is dead)
- Invite the student playing Macduff to shout/sign ‘O horror, horror, horror’.
- Ask the students playing Macbeth and Lennox to go to the king’s chamber to see for themselves.
- Ask the students playing the guards to start to wake up.

- Ask the student playing Macbeth to stab them.
- Ask the student playing Macbeth to go to ‘the great hall’ and say to the other characters ‘The king is dead’.
- Invite each of the characters to respond to this news in a freeze frame.
- Focus on each character in turn and ask the group to give you one word to describe how that character is feeling based on what we see in their freeze frame. Each time, ask the following questions:
  - How does the character look?
  - Is this how the character really feels?
  - If yes, what else are they feeling?
  - If no, what are they really feeling? If a character is hiding their true feelings, remind students that this has happened a lot in the play. Deception and appearance vs. reality are key themes.
  - Then ask each character in turn: What do you want to do now?

#### **Exercise 4: Macbeth is king**

**Characters:** *Thane of Ross, Macduff, (King Duncan, Macbeth, Banquo, Malcolm, Donalbain)*

**Themes:** *deception, kingship*

#### **Resources**

- Discuss with students whether they think everyone believes the story that the two guards killed King Duncan.
- Ask students what they remember about Ross. (We first met him in Act 1 Scene 1 when he is supporting Macbeth and Banquo to defeat the Norwegian army. We meet him again after the battle when he brings the message that King Duncan has rewarded Macbeth the title of Thane of Cawdor. We meet him again because he is staying at the castle the night the king is murdered.) You might want to play the **dramatis personae video** for **Ross (SLIDE 12 in GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4)** to remind students of the Thane of Ross and his sign name.

- Explain that we are going to meet Ross again and hear his conversation with Macduff. Remind them that Macduff is the Thane of Fife who arrived to meet King Duncan the morning after the murder.
- Play **FILM: Act 2 Scene 4 – Ross and Macduff** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- Display the text from this (**SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4 – Ross and Macduff**) and ask the following questions:
  - Who do people think killed King Duncan? (Malcolm and Donalbain)
  - Why? (Because they have run away) Discuss how no-one seems to believe it was really the guards but it seems like the Macbeths have got away with murder anyway.
  - Ross says the ‘the sovereignty’ will fall on Macbeth. What does this mean? (Macbeth will be the new king.) So the Macbeths have got what they wanted!
- Macduff says that Macbeth has gone to Scone (a place in Scotland) to ‘be invested’. Show students the map (**SLIDE 14** in **GALLERY: ACT 2 SCENES 3–4 – map of Scotland**). Explain that Ross and Macduff are currently in Inverness and ask the following questions:
  - What does ‘invested’ mean? (To be crowned king). Suggest that this would be an important event that all the Scottish thanes would be expected to attend.
  - Where is Macduff going? (To Fife - Macduff’s castle is in Fife – he is the Thane of Fife)
- Suggest to students that it seems odd that Macduff will not go to Scone to see the new king crowned. Ask why Macduff might decide to go to Fife instead of Scone. (Perhaps he simply misses his family or perhaps he doesn’t think Macbeth should be king? Perhaps he suspects that Macbeth is responsible for the murder of King Duncan?)

- Discuss why Macduff does not say exactly what he thinks to Ross. Why do people not always say exactly what they think? Remind students of the play's theme of deception: sometimes characters deliberately behave and speak in ways that are untrue, and sometimes they are perhaps just careful what they say (like Macduff).
- Discuss what you have learned about kingship from this scene: who becomes king and how do they become king?
- Ask: What do you think will happen next? (Perhaps Macduff will cause trouble for Macbeth? Perhaps Macbeth will try to punish Macduff for not coming to his coronation?)

### **Act 2 Scenes 3–4: The king is dead, long live the king! – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 2 Scenes 3–4
- **Playlist resource:**
  - Exercise 4: FILM: Act 2 Scene 4 – Ross and Macduff ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercise 3: Crown for King Duncan
  - Exercise 3: Sashes for: Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Thane of Ross, Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, Thane of Lennox, Macduff

## ACT 3

### Signing Shakespeare resources and activities for teaching Act 3 of *Macbeth*



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### ACT 3 SCENES 1–2: BANQUO AND MACBETH

In these activities, students explore how the two old friends Banquo and Macbeth now feel about each other. Two short films of **soliloquies** from both Banquo (in BSL and SSE) and Macbeth (in BSL) help students to explore the language and consider the changing relationship between the two characters. There is also an opportunity to further explore **metaphor** and the key themes of **the supernatural, fear, ambition, appearance vs. reality, and loyalty and betrayal**.

## Act 3 Scenes 1–2: Banquo and Macbeth

### Exercise 1: Banquo's hopes and fears

**Characters:** *The Witches, Macbeth, Banquo, Fleance*

**Themes:** *the supernatural, fear*

#### Resources

- Ask students if they remember what the Witches said to Macbeth and Banquo.
- Play the following in the [Playlist](#):
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 1:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 2:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 3:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- Ask: Have the prophecies the Witches made to Macbeth come true? (Yes, he became Thane of Cawdor and then king)
- Play the following in the [Playlist](#):
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 1:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 2:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#)
  - **FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 3:** [BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- Ask: Have the prophecies the Witches made to Banquo come true? (Not yet)
- Explain that Banquo has a son called Fleance.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Fleance (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2)**. This introduces Fleance with his sign name and an illustration of him. Ask all students to try out Fleance's sign name and repeat the film as needed.
- Tell students that Banquo has been thinking about the Witches since Macbeth was crowned and discuss what Banquo might hope will happen next and what he fears might happen next.

- If you completed [Act 1 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 4](#) and/or [Exercise 5](#), you might like to revisit that work to remind students of their ideas about what Banquo was thinking and feeling after meeting the Witches.
- Tell students they are going to meet Banquo and see what he is thinking now.
- Play **FILM: Act 3 Scene 1 – Banquo** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).
- Display the text from the film and the questions (**SLIDE 3** in **GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2 – ‘Thou hast it now’**). Ask students to discuss their answers, in pairs, and then share their answers with the class.
  - What does Banquo fear? (That Macbeth killed King Duncan in order to become king – he ‘played most foully for it’)
  - What does Banquo hope? (That his children will be kings)
- Discuss with students what Banquo might now be thinking about his old friend Macbeth.  
Ask:
  - Do you think Banquo fears Macbeth?
  - Why do you think he might be scared of Macbeth?
  - Why do you think he would not be scared of Macbeth?
  - How do you think the Banquo in this film feels about Macbeth?
- Give students copies of Banquo’s hopes and fears chart from [Handout: Exercise 1: ‘Banquo’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#). Ask them in pairs to add what they think Banquo hopes and what he fears in the two columns.
- Share ideas as a whole group; encourage students to add any new ideas to their own lists.

## **Exercise 2: Macbeth’s hopes and fears**

**Character(s):** *Macbeth, (the Witches, King Duncan, Banquo)*

**Themes:** *fear, ambition*

**Resources**

- Remind students that Macbeth's plan has succeeded. He is King of Scotland as the Witches said he would be, and no-one can prove he had anything to do with the murder of King Duncan.
- Give students copies of [Handout: Exercise 2: 'Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#). Ask them to discuss in pairs what they think Macbeth hopes and what he fears.
- Ask them to share their ideas with the whole group.
- Explain that you will now see what Macbeth is thinking about his old friend Banquo.
- Play **FILM: Act 3 Scene 1 – Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- Display the edited text from the film (**SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2 – 'Our fears in Banquo'**) and discuss with students any further thoughts about what Macbeth hopes and what he fears. Ask them to write down Macbeth's hopes and fears in the two columns:
  - What does Macbeth fear? (That he has committed a horrible murder and a terrible sin just to help Banquo's children become kings. Perhaps also that Banquo knows what he has done? Perhaps that Banquo might kill him so his sons can be king?)
  - What does he hope? (Perhaps that Banquo doesn't suspect him? That the Witches are not telling the truth about Banquo's children? That he will have a child himself?)

### **Exercise 3: How do they really feel?**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Banquo, (Fleance, Murderers)*

**Theme:** *appearance vs. reality*

#### **Resources**

- Organise all students in a circle.
- Ask one student to be Macbeth and one to be Banquo.

- Ask the Macbeth and Banquo to walk across the circle to the other person's place, crossing in the middle.
- As the Macbeth and Banquo meet in the middle they should greet each other as they might at court.
- As they move away, they should show us how they really feel about each other.
- Repeat with different Macbeths and Banquos until everyone has had a chance to be Banquo or Macbeth.
- Invite predictions from students about what Macbeth might do about Banquo.
- Explain that Macbeth arranges for some murderers to kill Banquo and Fleance.

#### **Exercise 4: 'O, full of scorpions is my mind' (visual metaphors)**

**Characters:** Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, (Banquo, Fleance, the Witches)

**Language:** metaphor

**Theme:** loyalty and betrayal

#### **Resources**

- Show the image of a scorpion (**SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2 – 'O, full of scorpions is my mind'**) and ask students what words they associate with a scorpion. (Perhaps dangerous, spiky, scary...)
- Show the image of Macbeth's mind with the line: 'O, full of scorpions is my mind' (**SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2 – 'O, full of scorpions is my mind' – 2**). Explain this is what Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth about how he is feeling.
- Ask students what they think Macbeth means by this. What does his mind feel like if he is comparing it to scorpions? How effective is this comparison? Remind students that this sort of comparison is a metaphor.
- Share with students that Macbeth uses this metaphor to share with his wife how he feels about Banquo and Fleance:

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife:

Thou knowst that Banquo and his Fleance lives.

**(SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2)**

- Ask if students remember who Fleance is? (Banquo's son). If necessary, play the **dramatis personae video** for Fleance (**SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2**).
- Recap with students why it matters to Macbeth that Banquo's son is alive. Do they remember the prophecy that the Witches made – that Banquo's descendants would become kings? Macbeth fears that his own children will not inherit the throne but instead Banquo's children will, so he wants not just Banquo, but also his son to die.

- Share with students Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s short exchange:

Lady Macbeth	What’s to be done?
Macbeth	Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck Till thou applaud the deed.

**(SLIDE 8 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2)**

- Ask: What does Macbeth mean here by ‘the knowledge’ and ‘the deed’ (the fact that he has arranged for Banquo and Fleance to be killed).
- Ask: Why do you think Macbeth does not tell Lady Macbeth about his plans to have Banquo and Fleance killed? (Perhaps he wants to protect her? Perhaps he is worried something will go wrong? Perhaps he thinks she might stop him?)
- Discuss how this scene relates to the theme of loyalty and betrayal. Who is showing loyalty to whom? Who is betraying another’s trust?

### **Exercise 5: Lady Macbeth’s hopes and fears**

**Character(s):** *Lady Macbeth, (Banquo, Macbeth, King Duncan)*

**Language:** *soliloquy*

**Themes:** *ambition, fear*

#### **Resources**

- Tell students that at this point in the play, Lady Macbeth has a short soliloquy, in which she reveals what she is really thinking. Share these lines with students:

<i>‘Tis safer to be that which we destroy Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.</i>	<i>It’s better to be the person who was killed Than to be the murderer and live with doubt and fear</i>
--	---

**(SLIDE 9 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 1–2)**

- Discuss why she might feel like this:
  - What are her doubts and fears?
    - Perhaps that Banquo will say something that might make people suspect Macbeth killed King Duncan?
    - Perhaps guilt at murdering the king?
    - Perhaps that Macbeth's mental health is suffering?
    - Perhaps that her own mental health is not good?
  - What does she have to be hopeful about?
- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 6: 'Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#) (see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 6](#)) and add Lady Macbeth's new hopes and fears.

### **Act 3 Scenes 1–2: Banquo and Macbeth – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 3 Scenes 1–2
- **Playlist resources:**
  - Exercise 1:
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 1 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 2 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Macbeth – Prophecy 3 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 1 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 2 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 1 Scene 3 – Banquo – Prophecy 3 ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
    - FILM: Act 3 Scene 1 – Banquo ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
  - Exercise 2: FILM: Act 3 Scene 1 – Macbeth ([BSL](#))
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 1: ['Banquo's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)
  - Exercise 2: ['Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)
  - Exercise 5: ['Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)

- **Additional resources:**

- Exercise 1: Marker pens for [‘Banquo’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
- Exercise 2: Marker pens for [‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
- Exercise 3: Sashes for Macbeth, Banquo
- Exercise 5: Marker pens for [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)

## HOPES

- His children will lead Scotland

## BANQUO



## FEARS

- Macbeth will do anything to get what he wants

## HOPES

- To become King of Scotland

## MACBETH



## FEARS

- Doing the wrong thing

## ACT 3 SCENES 3–4: KILLING BANQUO

In this series of activities, students explore how Macbeth arranges the murder of his friend Banquo and is then haunted by him. Students have the opportunity to explore the perspectives of different characters as they inhabit the scenes, and to examine some of the **metaphorical** language that Shakespeare uses. Key themes explored in this section include **violence and war**, **fear**, **the supernatural**, **appearance vs. reality**, and **revenge**.

### Act 3 Scenes 3–4: Killing Banquo

#### Exercise 1: The murder of Banquo

**Characters:** Banquo, Fleance, Murderers, (Macbeth)

**Theme:** violence and war

#### Resources

- Ask students if they remember the name of Banquo’s son? Play the **dramatis personae video** for Fleance (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4) as a reminder.
- Ask students what the Witches told Banquo (that his descendants would become kings).
- Explain that Macbeth decides to kill Banquo and Fleance to remove the threat of the Witches’ prophecy coming true.
- Organise students into groups to include: Banquo, Fleance and two or three Murderers.
- Ask each group to create three freeze frames of the story of Banquo’s murder following the descriptions given. Display the Freeze Frames slide (SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4 – freeze frames).
  - Banquo and Fleance walk back to the castle, talking about the weather. The Murderers hide, ready to jump out.
  - The Murderers kill Banquo. Fleance runs away.
  - Banquo is dead. The Murderers look around for Fleance.
- Watch each group’s performance of their three freeze frames.

- Next, ask students to add lines to their freeze frames. Display **SLIDE 4** in **GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4 – Murderers** or give out copies of the lines from [Handout: Exercise 1: 'The Murder of Banquo' text](#).
- Check for understanding:
  - Murderer: 'Tis he. (*It's him, he's coming*)
  - Murderer: Stand to it. (*Get ready*)
  - Banquo: It will be rain tonight. (*It's going to rain tonight*)
  - Banquo: Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly! (*Run away Fleance, run, run, run*)
  - Murderer: The son is fled. (*The son has run away*)
  - Murderer: Well, let's away. (*Well, let's go*)
- Encourage students to bring their freeze frames to life and to sign and/or speak the lines to create a performance of the whole scene.
- Share the performances and encourage students to comment on what worked well in each other's performances. Discuss how the theme of violence might affect how the audience thinks about Macbeth.

### **Exercise 2: Macbeth hears that Banquo is dead**

**Characters:** Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Thane of Ross, Thane of Lennox, Murderers, (Banquo, Fleance)

**Theme:** fear

#### **Resources**

- Organise students into a semi-circle. Invite volunteers into the playing space to enact:
  - Macbeth
  - Lady Macbeth
  - Thane of Ross
  - Thane of Lennox
- Give sashes to identify characters and a crown to 'Macbeth'. Ask the students to create a freeze frame of a banquet. Invite the remaining students to join the freeze frame of the banquet as other guests - except for one student who will enter later as the Murderer.

- Tell the narrative below, encouraging students to mime the actions as you describe them.

*Macbeth welcomes all his guests to the banquet. He raises his drink in a toast and all the guests raise their drinks too. The guests begin to eat and drink and talk.*

*A Murderer, with blood on his face, enters the room quietly. Macbeth leaves the table, goes to the Murderer and asks if Banquo is dead. The Murderer tells Macbeth: 'My lord, his throat is cut. That I did for him'. Macbeth is pleased. Macbeth asks if Fleance is dead too. The Murderer replies: 'Fleance is scaped'.*

**(SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4 – the banquet)**

- Invite all students to step out of their roles as guests and suggest how Macbeth might feel about this news. Ask the student playing Macbeth to show how they feel, having heard the suggestions.

### **Exercise 3: The serpent and the worm (embodying metaphors)**

**Characters:** Murderers, Macbeth, Banquo, Fleance

**Language:** metaphor

#### **Resources**

- Remind students that the Murderer has told Macbeth that Banquo is dead but that Fleance escaped.
- Display the lines below (**SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4 – serpent and worm**) and explain this is what Macbeth says in response to the news.

'There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled  
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,  
No teeth for the present.'

- Ask if students remember the term for comparing one thing to another by describing one thing as a something else (metaphor, see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 3](#))

- Build on what they say to explain that Macbeth is using a metaphor to describe what has happened and invite them to work out the metaphor with you.
- Invite three students to become one long snake.
- Invite one more student to be a small worm.
- Ask the students who Macbeth is comparing to this poisonous snake. (Banquo)
- Explain that in Shakespeare's time, people thought worms were baby snakes and ask: if Banquo is the poisonous snake, who is the worm? (Fleance)
- Banquo has been killed so the serpent lies dead - encourage the three-person snake to die. But Fleance escapes – encourage the worm to wriggle away.
- Ask: If the worm is a baby snake, what will happen to it in a few years? (It will grow into a snake.)
- Invite two more students to join the worm to make another snake.
- Ask: What might this fully grown poisonous snake do? (It could come back to bite Macbeth.)
- Tell the students that Macbeth is not too worried at the moment, because the snake is still a worm. Ask the three-person snake to become a one-person worm. The worm doesn't have any teeth to bite Macbeth yet.

#### **Exercise 4: Banquo's Ghost**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo*

**Themes:** *fear, the supernatural, appearance vs. reality*

#### **Resources**

- Display or print out [Handout: Exercise 4: 'Banquo's Ghost' narrative](#) (SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 3 SCENES 3–4).

- Organise students to return to the roles they played in [Act 3 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 1](#) and [Exercise 2](#), and explain that you are returning to the banquet to see what happens next.
- Encourage students to follow the narrative as you sign / speak it and to mime what you describe.
- After completing the narrative, invite all students to suggest what Macbeth and Lady Macbeth might be thinking at the end of this scene.
- Invite the students playing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to speak aloud/sign their thoughts, having heard the suggestions.
- Invite students to comment on how this scene adds to the theme of appearance vs. reality in the play.
- In small groups, invite the guests to improvise a conversation about what they might say to each other outside of the room:
  - Perhaps they comment on how strangely Macbeth behaved?
  - Perhaps they try to get others to say something first because they are scared of seeming to criticise Macbeth?
  - Perhaps they remember some of the things Macbeth said and suspect him of killing Banquo?
  - Perhaps they feel sorry for Lady Macbeth?
- **Creative writing outcome:** Ask all students to imagine they are one of the guests speaking to someone who wasn't at the banquet. Invite them to write what they would say to that person: including 'the facts' of what happened, but also adding descriptions about what they saw, and adding what they thought and felt as it all unfolded. Encourage them to think about the themes of fear, the supernatural, and appearance vs. reality as they write.



- Suggest the possibility that Lady Macbeth feels anxious on the inside, but tries to appear calm on the outside.

### **Exercise 6: The Macbeths' hopes and fears**

**Characters:** Lady Macbeth, Macbeth, (Banquo)

**Theme:** fear

#### **Resources**

- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 6: 'Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#) (see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 6](#)).
- Discuss how her hopes and fears have changed and encourage students to add to the columns. (Perhaps Lady Macbeth fears her husband is going mad or that he will confess his crimes? Perhaps she hopes that he will pull himself together and show he is a strong leader, or that he will find some peace and sleep?)
- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 2: 'Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#) (see [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 2](#)).
- Discuss how his hopes and fears have changed and encourage students to add to the columns. (Perhaps Macbeth fears he is going to hell or will be forever haunted by Banquo? Perhaps he hopes that he can now rule in peace, or pass on the crown to his own children?)

### **Act 3 Scenes 3–4: Killing Banquo – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 3 Scenes 3–4
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 1: ['The Murder of Banquo' text](#)
  - Exercise 4: ['Banquo's Ghost' narrative](#)
  - Exercise 6: ['Lady Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)
  - Exercise 6: ['Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#)

- **Additional resources:**

- Exercises 2, 3, and 4: Crown for Macbeth
- Exercises 2, 3, and 4: Sashes for Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Thane of Ross, Thane of Lennox
- Exercise 4: Marker pens for creative writing outcome
- Exercise 6: Marker pens for [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#) and [‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)

## Descriptions for freeze frames

1. Banquo and Fleance walk back to the castle, talking about the weather. The Murderers hide, ready to jump out.
2. The Murderers kill Banquo. Fleance runs away.
3. Banquo is dead. The Murderers look around for Fleance.

## Lines for the scene:

**Murderer:** 'Tis he.

**Murderer:** Stand to it.

**Banquo:** It will be rain tonight.

**Banquo:** Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

**Murderer:** The son is fled.

**Murderer:** Well, let's away.

### **Banquo's Ghost narrative**

Lady Macbeth sees Macbeth talking quietly in a corner to the Murderer. The Murderer leaves. Lady Macbeth goes to Macbeth and tells him to join his guests. He follows her and all the guests cheer to see him.

Lennox and Ross ask Macbeth to sit down. Macbeth looks around the table and suddenly sees the ghost of Banquo.

*Ask one of the guests to change roles and become Banquo's ghost.*

Macbeth points at the ghost and looks shocked. He says 'Never shake thy gory locks at me' (*Don't shake your head, covered in blood, at me*). But nobody else can see the ghost.

*Invite some of the guests to speak/sign how they feel about what is going on.*

The ghost of Banquo leaves. Macbeth is relieved. He turns back to his guests and raises his glass and the guests raise their glasses too and cheer.

Suddenly the ghost of Banquo returns. Macbeth points at it again, terrified. He says 'Hence, horrible shadow!'. But still nobody else can see what Macbeth sees.

*Again invite some of the guests to speak/sign how they feel about what is going on.*

Lady Macbeth steps forward and smiles at her guests. She tries to pretend that everything is fine.

*Ask Lady Macbeth to speak/sign how she really feels about what is going on.*

The ghost of Banquo leaves but Macbeth is still upset. Lady Macbeth tells the guests to leave. They all go, saying 'Good night'.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are left alone. Macbeth says 'blood will have blood' (*harm and violence brings more harm and violence*).

## ACT 4

### Signing Shakespeare resources and activities for teaching Act 4 of *Macbeth*



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### ACT 4 SCENES 1–3: THE APPARITIONS

In these activities, students explore Macbeth's second meeting with the Witches, when they show him three apparitions who make further prophecies about his future. Students can see the Apparitions, as well, in three short BSL films. The activities include opportunities to explore Macbeth's terrible action of killing Macduff's family after hearing the prophecies; this is supported by short films of Macbeth's plan for Macduff in BSL and VS.

## Act 4 Scenes 1–3: The Apparitions

### Exercise 1: The Apparitions

**Characters:** Macbeth, the Witches, Macduff, (Banquo, King Duncan)

**Themes:** the supernatural, ambition

#### Resources

- Tell the students that Macbeth seeks out the Witches again.
- Ask: Why do you think Macbeth might want to visit the Witches again? (To see if they have more predictions, to see if he is now safe, having killed Banquo etc.)
- Tell students that Macbeth demands that the Witches reveal more to him about his future. The Witches have been planning to meet Macbeth again. They are ready for him and conjure three apparitions (spirits or demons) to give him the answers he seeks.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for the **Apparitions (SLIDE 2 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3)**. This introduces the Apparitions with their sign name and an image of the actors playing the Apparitions in the videos. You might like to tell your students that these actors are students like them who went to Braidwood Trust School for the Deaf.
- Explain that you are going to watch a film of the Apparitions and see what they tell Macbeth.
- Play **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 1** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- Ensure students understand the Apparition’s message to be wary of Macduff.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macduff (SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3)** as a reminder and ask what the students remember about Macduff. (He was the first to find the body of King Duncan after Macbeth murdered him. He chose to go home to Fife rather than see Macbeth crowned king in Scone. He ignored Macbeth’s invitation to the banquet.)
- Ask students to discuss in pairs how Macbeth might feel about what this First Apparition says and then to share with the class.

- Display Macbeth’s response to this prophecy (**SLIDE 4 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – Macbeth’s response to Apparition 1**). Discuss what Macbeth says and draw out that this confirms his fears that Macduff is out to cause trouble for him.
- Play **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- Ensure students understand the Apparition’s message that no man that has been born of a woman can harm Macbeth.
- Ask students to discuss in pairs how Macbeth might feel about what this Second Apparition says and then to share with the class. (Perhaps Macbeth feels invincible since every man has a mother who gave birth to him?)
- Display Macbeth’s response to this prophecy (**SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – Macbeth’s response to Apparition 2**). Discuss what Macbeth says. Draw out that Macbeth feels he no longer needs to fear Macduff, but will have him killed anyway just to be sure.
- Play **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- Ensure students understand the Apparition’s message that Macbeth cannot be defeated until a forest of trees called Birnam Wood moves to a place called Dunsinane.
- Show the map (**SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – map**).
- Ask students how Macbeth might feel about what this Third Apparition says. (Perhaps even more invincible since trees don’t move?)
- Display Macbeth’s response to this prophecy (**SLIDE 7 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – Macbeth’s response to Apparition 3**). Discuss what Macbeth says and draw out that Macbeth feels that he is safe because no-one can make trees move.

## **Exercise 2: Macbeth's hopes and fears**

**Character:** *Macbeth, the Witches, Macduff, Banquo*

**Themes:** *fear, kingship, fate vs. free will*

### **Resources**

- Recap with students what the three Apparitions told Macbeth: to beware Macduff; that he cannot be defeated by any man who was given birth to by a woman; that he will not be defeated until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane castle.
- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 2: 'Macbeth's Hopes and Fears' chart](#) (see [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 2](#) and [Act 3 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 6](#)).
- Ask: Who or what might Macbeth still fear? (Perhaps Macduff? Perhaps that Banquo's children will become kings?)
- Tell students that Macbeth demands that the Witches answer one last question about whether Banquo's children will ever rule in Scotland and that he is horrified to see a strange image of many kings who all descend from Banquo. Then the Witches disappear again and leave him standing alone.
- Discuss how Macbeth's second encounter with the Witches and their supernatural predictions compares to the first:
  - Does he seem more or less fearful now?
  - More or less ambitious?
  - More or less violent?
  - Do you think he is making decisions of his own free will, or is he being controlled by the Witches?
- Discuss how Macbeth's hopes and fears have changed after this second meeting with the Witches and encourage students to add to the columns on their sheets. (Perhaps Macbeth fears Macduff and Banquo's children, but hopes he cannot be defeated because of what the Apparitions said?)

### **Exercise 3: Macbeth and Macduff**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Thane of Lennox, Macduff, (Lady Macduff)*

**Theme:** *violence and war*

#### **Resources**

- Tell students that as Macbeth finds himself alone after the Witches vanish, Lennox arrives and tells him that Macduff has fled to England.
- Ask: What do you think Macbeth will do now?
- Play **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [VS](#).
- Display the text from this film (**SLIDE 8** in **GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – ‘The castle of Macduff’**) and ask students in pairs to discuss these questions:
  - What does Macbeth want to do? (Surprise Macduff’s castle in Fife and kill Macduff’s wife and children and any other family)
  - Why do you think Macbeth wants this?

### **Exercise 4: Macduff and Malcolm**

**Characters:** *Macduff, Macbeth, Malcolm, Thane of Ross, Lady Macduff*

**Themes:** *violence and war, revenge*

#### **Resources**

- Recap Macbeth’s relationship with Macduff so far by asking the following questions (**SLIDE 9** in **GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – questions**):
  - What did the First Apparition tell Macbeth? (To ‘Beware Macduff’)
  - Where is Macduff? (He fled to England)
  - What did Macbeth say he would do when he heard where Macduff had gone? (Kill Macduff’s wife and children)
- Explain that you are going to jump to England and find out what Macduff is up to.

- Ask students what they remember about Malcolm. Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Malcolm (SLIDE 10 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3)** as a reminder. (He is King Duncan’s eldest son. He ran away to England as soon as he heard his father had been murdered.)
- Organise students into pairs and ask for each pair to choose a Malcolm and a Macduff.
- Explain that you will play Ross and put on the ‘Thane of Ross’ sash.
- As ‘Ross’, enter and greet the pairs as Malcolm and Macduff. Sign/say that you have come from Scotland where things are very bad under Macbeth’s rule. Explain you have some bad news for Macduff and give each pair a copy of ‘Macduff’s News’ from [Handout: Exercise 4: ‘Macduff’s News’](#) and pens. You can also display the message (**SLIDE 11 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – Macduff’s News**).
- Ask each pair to discuss what they think the news is. Ask them to write a caption for each panel of the scene shown on [Handout: Exercise 4: ‘Macduff’s News’](#).
- After allowing time for this, ask pairs to share their ideas with the whole class. Ensure the key fact emerges from this discussion that Macbeth has done what he said: he sent murderers to Macduff’s castle in Fife and those murderers killed Lady Macduff and her children and destroyed the castle.
- Here are some of the things that Macduff says:

‘My children too?’/ ‘My wife killed too?’/ ‘All my pretty ones?’/ ‘Did you say all?’

(**SLIDE 12 in GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – Macduff’s lines**)

- Ask – why do you think he keeps asking questions? (He can’t believe what has happened).
- Ask pairs to create a freeze-frame of Malcolm and Macduff showing how they feel.
- Discuss what Macduff might want to do next. (Perhaps punish Macbeth and stop him hurting anyone else? Perhaps kill him in revenge for the death of his family?)

### **Exercise 5: 'Let grief convert to anger'**

**Characters:** *Malcolm, Macduff, (Macbeth)*

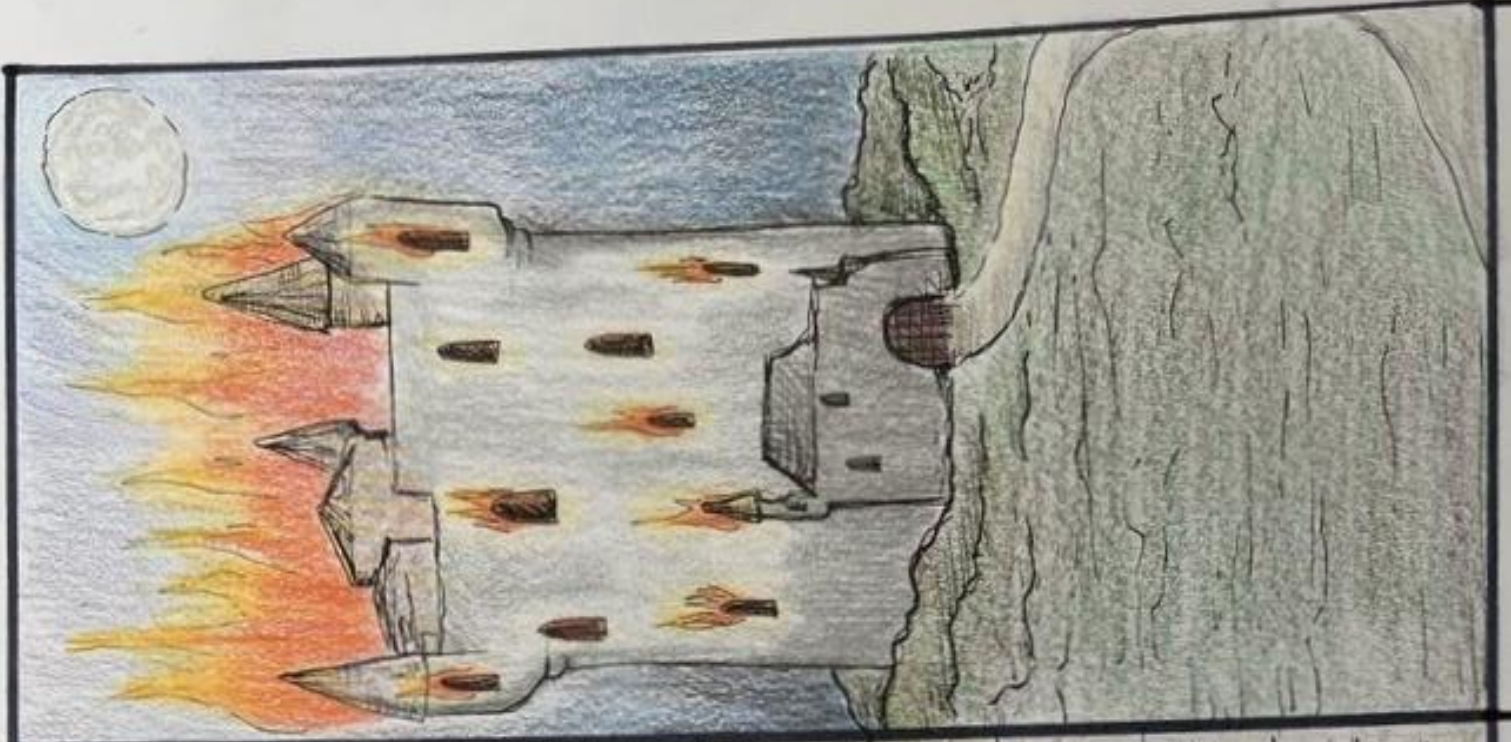
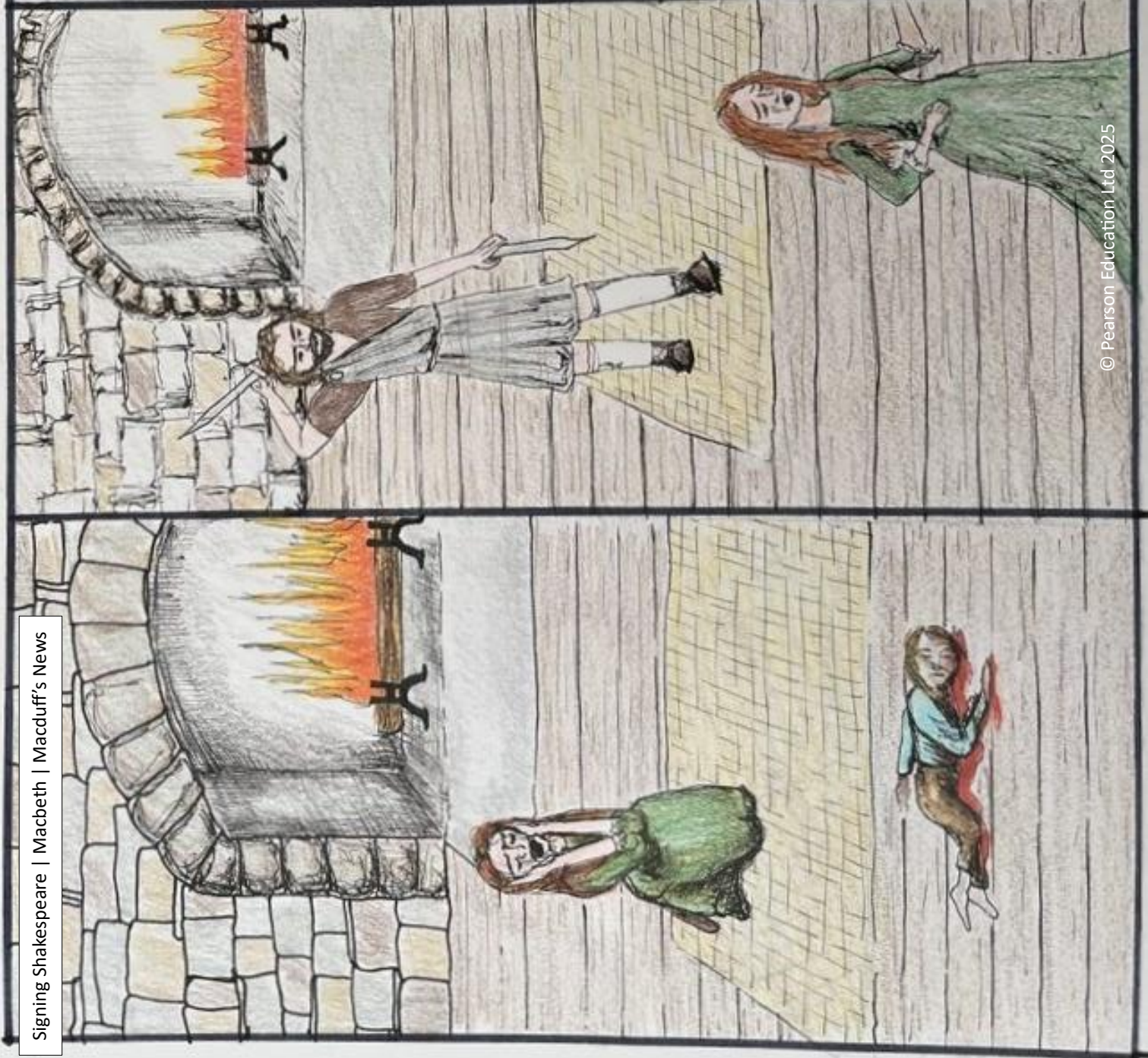
**Theme:** *revenge*

#### **Resources**

- Display the lines spoken by Malcolm to Macduff (**SLIDE 13** in **GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – 'Let grief convert to anger'**).
- Organise students into pairs and ask them to come up with a movement showing grief changing to anger.
- Display the line spoken by Macduff to Malcolm (**SLIDE 14** in **GALLERY: ACT 4 SCENES 1–3 – 'Front to front...'**). You can also give them a copy of these lines from [Handout: Exercise 5: 'Let grief...' text](#).
- Discuss what these lines mean (Macduff wants to face Macbeth, calling him a fiend or devil, so that he can fight him).
- Ask students to show in pairs what Macduff hopes will happen.
- Tell students that Macduff and Malcolm plan to march to Scotland and defeat Macbeth with the support of an army from England.
- Discuss how the theme of revenge is developing in the second half of the play:
  - Who feels they have something to revenge?
  - Why is that revenge important to them?

## **Act 4 Scenes 1–3: The Apparitions – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 4 Scenes 1–3
  
- **Playlist resources:**
  - Exercise 1:
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 1 ([BSL](#))
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2 ([BSL](#))
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3 ([BSL](#))
  - Exercise 3: FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Macbeth ([BSL](#) and/or [VS](#))
  
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 2: [‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
  - Exercise 4: [‘Macduff’s News’](#)
  - Exercise 5: [‘Let grief...’ text](#)
  
- **Additional resources:**
  - Exercise 2: Marker pens for [‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
  - Exercise 4: Marker pens for [‘Macduff’s News’](#)
  - Exercise 4: Sash for Thane of Ross



**MALCOLM** Let grief convert to anger.

**MACDUFF** Front to front

Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself.

Within my sword's length set him.

## ACT 5

### Signing Shakespeare resources and activities for teaching Act 5 of *Macbeth*



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### **ACT 5 SCENE 1: LADY MACBETH**

In this activity, students explore how the guilt of the murders is tormenting Lady Macbeth and causing her to walk and talk in her sleep. The activity includes a short film of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in BSL and SSE. Students are invited to observe her, noticing her language and behaviour, as if they are her doctor and are writing notes for a report.

## Act 5 Scene 1: Lady Macbeth

### **Exercise 1: Lady Macbeth sleepwalking**

**Characters:** Lady Macbeth, Doctor, (Banquo, Macduff, Macbeth, Lady Macduff)

**Context:** Medieval / Jacobean beliefs about the supernatural

**Themes:** fear, guilt

### **Resources**

- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 6: ‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#) (see [Act 1 Scenes 5–7, Exercise 6](#); [Act 2 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 1](#); [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 5](#); [Act 3 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 6](#)).
  - Discuss how Lady Macbeth may be feeling about everything that has been happening:
  - How might she feel about the murder of Banquo and of Macduff’s family?
  - How might she feel about Macbeth making those decisions without asking her?
  - Perhaps proud, perhaps lonely, anxious or guilty?
- Discuss how Lady Macbeth’s hopes and fears may have changed.
- Explain that Lady Macbeth has been acting strangely. She has been walking in her sleep and her maid has called a doctor to watch her.
- Invite all students to imagine they are the doctor. They are going to see how Lady Macbeth behaves and what she says and make notes for their report.
- Give each student a copy of [Handout: Exercise 1: ‘Doctor’s Report’](#) to complete.
- Play **FILM: Act 5 Scene 1 – Lady Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#).

- After watching the film, ask students to make notes answering the questions on the doctor's report. You can display Lady Macbeth's lines on the slide (**SLIDE 2** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – 'Yet here's a spot...'**) and support them with the following additional questions. You can also watch the films again as needed:
  - Description of behaviour:
    - What is Lady Macbeth doing? (Walking in her sleep; her eyes are open but she doesn't know where she is; showing her hands; rubbing and washing her hands; smelling her hands; looking around; looking confused, looking determined...)
  - Description of speech:
    - What seems most important in what Lady Macbeth signs/says? Which words or signs stand out most to you? Is there any repetition?
    - Who is she talking to when she says 'my lord'? (Macbeth, her husband – but he isn't there – she is imagining him)
    - Do you remember when in the play Lady Macbeth told Macbeth not to be afraid and to behave more like a man? (Just before and just after the murder)
    - Who does she talk about? (The old man who had so much blood in him - King Duncan; the wife of the Thane of Fife, Macduff's wife; Banquo)
    - What do these people have in common? (They are all dead, killed by Macbeth)
  - State of mind:
    - Does Lady Macbeth seem happy, anxious, guilty...?
    - Does she seem dangerous - might she hurt herself or someone else?
  - Conclusions:
    - Why do you think Lady Macbeth is behaving like this? (She seems to be reliving terrible things that have happened in the past. She seems to be haunted by nightmares. (Perhaps her mind seems full of scorpions – see [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 4](#)).

- Suggested treatment:
  - What would you suggest to help Lady Macbeth? (medication or exercise or talking to someone?)
  - Can she be left alone or should she be looked after?
- Remind students that in the time the play was set and in the time in which it was written, many people believed in supernatural powers. The doctor has to write a professional report, but how might they feel having witnessed Lady Macbeth's speech?
  - Perhaps scared that they know too much about what the Macbeths have been doing?
  - Perhaps scared that bad spirits or demons are involved?
- You might like to ask students to write up a final draft of their report.

### **Act 5 Scene 1: Lady Macbeth – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 5
- **Playlist resource:**
  - Exercise 1: FILM: Act 5 Scene 1 – Lady Macbeth ([BSL](#) and/or [SSE](#))
- **Handouts:**
  - Exercise 1: [‘Lady Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
  - Exercise 1: [‘Doctor’s Report’](#)
- **Additional resource:**
  - Exercise 1: Marker pens

# DOCTOR'S REPORT

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**Date:**

**Name of Doctor:**

**Subject:** Lady Macbeth, Queen of Scotland

## Description of behaviour

What is the subject doing?

## Description of speech

Include: key words spoken and any repetitions; what the subject talks about.

## State of mind

Include: emotions shown.

Does the subject seem a danger to themselves or others?

## Conclusions

What seem to be the reasons for the subject's behaviour?

**Suggested treatment**

Medication/activity/therapy?

Supervision required?

## ACT 5 SCENES 2–9: SCOTLAND AT WAR

In this series of activities, students explore how the Scottish thanes have turned against Macbeth, and how they join with an army from England to defeat him. Students are invited to consider the language and imagery of one of Macbeth’s famous speeches: ‘Tomorrow and tomorrow...’, supported by films in BSL, SSE, and VS. They are also given opportunities to understand how the prophecies from the Apparitions come true, but not as Macbeth expects.

### Act 5 Scenes 2–9: Scotland at war

#### Exercise 1: The state of Scotland

**Characters:** *Thane of Lennox, Macduff, Thane of Ross, (Macbeth, King Duncan, Malcolm)*

#### Resources

- Explain that many Scottish thanes are unhappy with how Macbeth is ruling Scotland and want to get rid of him. These include: Lennox, Macduff and Ross.
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Lennox (SLIDE 3 in GALLERY: ACT 5)** and ask what they remember about Lennox. (He arrived with Macduff to the Macbeth’s castle to see King Duncan the morning after Macbeth murdered King Duncan. He met Macbeth after Macbeth saw the Apparitions and told him that Macduff had fled to England.)
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Macduff (SLIDE 4 in GALLERY: ACT 5)** and ask what they remember about Macduff. (He did not attend Macbeth’s coronation and ignored his invitation to the banquet. He went to England to support King Duncan’s son Malcolm. He heard his wife and family had been murdered on Macbeth’s orders. He wants revenge on Macbeth. He joined with Malcolm and the English army to depose Macbeth.)
- Play the **dramatis personae video** for **Ross (SLIDE 5 in GALLERY: ACT 5)** and ask what they remember about Ross. (He took the message from King Duncan to Macbeth about being Thane of Cawdor. He spoke with Macduff after King Duncan was murdered. He saw Macbeth behaving strangely at the banquet when Banquo went missing. He took the news to Macduff in England about the murder of his family. He joined Malcolm and Macduff to fight against Macbeth.)

## **Exercise 2: Macbeth in his castle**

**Characters:** Macbeth, the Witches, Macduff, Malcolm, Thane of Ross, Thane of Lennox

**Theme:** loyalty and betrayal

### **Resources**

- Ask students when we last saw Macbeth? (When he met the Witches again and saw the Apparitions)
- Play the following in the [Playlist](#) to remind students:
  - **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 1:** [BSL](#)
  - **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2:** [BSL](#)
  - **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3:** [BSL](#).
- Ensure all students are clear on the three prophecies: Beware Macduff; Macbeth cannot be defeated by any man who was given birth to by a woman; Macbeth will not be defeated until Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane castle.
- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 2: ‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#) (see [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 2](#); [Act 3 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 6](#); [Act 4 Scenes 1–3, Exercise 2](#)) as a reminder of how he felt when we last saw him.
- Invite one student to be Macbeth and give them a crown to wear.
- Ask all other students to make an image of strong castle walls around Macbeth.
- Ask how Macbeth might feel in his castle. (Perhaps strong and safe?)
- Invite one student to leave the castle walls to become Macduff. Give them a sash to wear.
- Ask: Where is Macduff? Build on what they say to establish that Macduff is on his way to fight Macbeth with the English army accompanied by Malcolm and Ross. Ask Macduff to stand outside the castle as if waiting to attack Macbeth.

- Invite two more students to leave the walls and become Malcolm and Ross. Give them sashes and ask them to stand with Macduff.
- Ask: Does Macbeth fear Macduff? (Perhaps yes because of the First Apparition's warning. Perhaps no because the Second Apparition told him no man born of woman could harm him.)
- Explain that Macbeth knows some of the Scottish lords, including Lennox, have joined Macduff, Malcolm, Ross and the English army.
- Invite one student to become Lennox. Give them a sash and ask them to stand with Macduff.
- Invite one or two other students to leave the walls and stand with Lennox as other Scottish rebels.
- Ask: Do you think Macbeth fears he will be killed or defeated by this army? (Macbeth believes no man can harm him because of what the Second Apparition said. Because of what the Third Apparition said, he believes he cannot be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. He thinks that is impossible.)
- Ask students to look at how the walls of Macbeth's castle now have gaps or have grown smaller where he has lost the support of the Scottish thanes. Macbeth still feels strong because of the prophecies, but in reality, he is losing strength as he loses support.
- Discuss with students the theme of loyalty and betrayal:
  - Are the Scottish thanes being disloyal to Macbeth or loyal to Scotland?
  - Is Macbeth being loyal by fighting for his country or betraying his country by being a bad king?
  - What do you think might happen next?

### **Exercise 3: Birnam Wood**

**Characters:** *Malcolm, the Witches, Macbeth*

**Themes:** *fear, the supernatural*

#### **Resources**

- Invite one student to be Malcolm and give them a sash. Remind students that Malcolm is leading an army against Macbeth.
- Organise the remaining students into pairs standing behind 'Malcolm' as their leader.
- 'Malcolm' leads his army by doing actions that they follow. If he marches, they march. If he salutes, they salute. If he crouches or crawls, they do the same.
- Display the map of Scotland (**SLIDE 6 in GALLERY: ACT 5 – map**) and show students that the army has arrived in Birnam and Macbeth is in Dunsinane.
- Organise some students to become trees in the forest of Birnam. They should stand spread out around the space with their arms spread wide as branches.
- Now ask 'Malcolm' to lead his army as before but through the trees.
- Ask 'Malcolm' to bring his army to a halt in the forest.
- Ask students if they have any ideas how this forest might move to Dunsinane where Macbeth is.
- After hearing their ideas, explain that Malcolm gives another instruction to his army. He tells them to all cut a branch off each tree to carry with them as they march.
- Model this by going up to a 'tree' and gently touching one of their arms. Ask the 'tree' to then put that arm behind their back, as you mime holding up a branch.
- Tell 'Malcolm' to give the instruction to his soldiers and encourage all 'soldiers' to 'cut a branch from a tree' as you modelled.

- Ask 'Malcolm' to lead his army forward away from the trees towards Dunsinane and tell all students to freeze in a freeze frame showing their determination and bravery as they march to save their country, carrying their branches. Then to relax.
- Discuss Malcolm's plan:
  - What does Malcolm hope to achieve by cutting down the branches? (To use them as a disguise for the army to hide behind)
  - Does Malcolm know anything about what the Third Apparition said? (No.)
  - What did the Third Apparition say?
    - **SLIDE 7** in **GALLERY: ACT 5**
    - **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
  - So, what will Macbeth think when he sees the forest getting closer? (Perhaps scared that the prophecy has come true? Perhaps angry that the Witches misled him?)

#### **Exercise 4: The queen is dead**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Seyton, (Lady Macbeth)*

**Language:** *iambic pentameter*

**Theme:** *appearance vs. reality*

#### **Resources**

- Display the line (**SLIDE 8** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – 'I'll fight til from my bones my flesh be hacked'**) and discuss what Macbeth means when he says this. (He is determined to fight until he is no longer able to.) You might also like to remind students about iambic pentameter (see [Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 2](#)) and notice how this line follows that rhythm.
- Invite all students to stand as Macbeth getting ready to fight. Encourage them to join you as you mime putting on armour and trying a few movements with a heavy sword.
- Ask students to freeze in a position showing Macbeth ready to fight bravely.
- Now ask students to change that image to show how Macbeth feels on the inside. (Perhaps scared, angry, tired, lonely...?) (Note the theme of appearance vs. reality.)

- Ask students to return to the first image.
- Explain to students that you will enter as Macbeth's servant Seyton and ask them to be ready to react to the news you bring.
- Enter as Seyton and say/sign:

'The queen, my lord, is dead'.

- Draw attention to some of the reactions to this news. (Perhaps shocked, confused, upset...)

### **Exercise 5: 'Tomorrow and tomorrow'**

**Character(s):** Macbeth, (Lady Macbeth)

**Language:** repetition, alliteration, personification, metaphor, iambic pentameter

#### **Resources**

- Explain that you are now going to see what Macbeth says in Shakespeare's play when he hears this news.
- Play **FILM: Act 5 Scene 5 – Macbeth** in the [Playlist: BSL, SSE, and/or VS](#).
- Discuss with students what they liked, and found interesting or surprising, about this speech.
- Display the text (**SLIDE 9** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – 'Tomorrow and tomorrow...'**) and build on what they said to draw attention to how Macbeth uses repetition, alliteration, personification and metaphors. Explain how these things catch the attention of someone hearing or watching the speech.
- You might also like to remind students about iambic pentameter (see [Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 2](#)) and notice how these lines follow that rhythm.
- Focus on metaphors and remind students that when we compare one thing to another without using the word 'like' it is called a metaphor.

- Draw attention to how Macbeth uses metaphors to describe life, as in the lifespan of a person from birth to death. He describes this lifespan as being like two things in two different sentences.
- Ask: What two things does he compare life to? (A bad actor and a bad story)
- Play the films again and ask students to notice particularly how Macbeth signs these two metaphors about life.
- Display the two life metaphors (**SLIDE 10** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – life metaphors**).
- Discuss the first metaphor of life as a bad actor shouting and stamping around the stage.
- Discuss the second metaphor of life as a story told by an idiot.
- Organise students into groups and give each group one of the two metaphors. Ask them to create a short performance of their sentence by speaking/signing the words, taking inspiration from the video but trying out their own ideas too.
- Discuss what these metaphors suggest about how Macbeth feels about life. (Perhaps that it is pointless or confusing?)
- Ask groups to make a second performance creating their own metaphor about life. Encourage them to show something more cheerful, such as: Life is a walk in the park; Life is a rollercoaster...

## **Exercise 6: Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane**

**Characters:** Macbeth, Messenger, (the Witches, Lady Macbeth)

**Language:** rhyme

**Themes:** violence and war, fear, the supernatural

### **Resources**

- Explain to students that as Macbeth is thinking about life and his wife, more news comes.
- Ask students if they remember what the Third Apparition said? Remind them as needed:
  - **SLIDE 7** in **GALLERY: ACT 5**
  - **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3** in the [Playlist: BSL](#).
- Organise students into pairs and tell them they are both Macbeth sitting in his castle.
- Explain that you will play a Messenger.
- Enter as the Messenger and bow to the Macbeths. Sign/say that you have very strange news and give each pair a copy of the 'Birnam Wood Message' (see [Handout: Exercise 5: 'Birnam Wood' message](#)) and pens. You can also display the message (**SLIDE 11** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – Birnam Wood Message**).
- Ask each pair to discuss what they think the news is. Ask them to write a caption for each picture in the space provided.
- After allowing time for this, ask pairs to share their ideas with the whole class. Ensure the key facts emerge from this discussion that Birnam Wood is moving closer towards the castle on Dunsinane hill.
- Show students what Macbeth says when he sees this image (**SLIDE 12** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – 'Fear not, till Birnam Wood...'**).
- Ask pairs to create a freeze frame of Macbeth and the Messenger at this moment, showing how Macbeth feels. (Perhaps shocked and disbelieving? Perhaps angry with the messenger or angry with the world?)

- Tell students that Macbeth says:

‘I ‘gin to be aweary of the sun/ And wish th’estate of the world were now undone./ Ring the alarum bell. Blow wind, come wrack,/ At least we’ll die with harness on our back’.

**(SLIDE 13 in GALLERY: ACT 5)**

- Check for understanding (‘gin is short for ‘begin’; ‘aweary’ is another word for ‘tired’).
- Draw out the fact that Macbeth seems tired with the world (‘aweary of the sun’) but that he is still determined to fight. He believes that there is something honorable about dying in battle: ‘At least we’ll die with harness on our back’ (i.e, wearing armour)
- You might want to note the rhyme here – sun and undone (more difficult to spot because the words don’t look alike), wrack and back. We have encountered the idea before (see [Act 1 Scene 1 Witches, Exercise 3](#) and [Act 2 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 2](#)) that Shakespeare uses rhyme at the ends of speeches, to give a stamp of finality.
- Revisit [Handout: Exercise 2: ‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#) (see [Act 3 Scenes 1–2, Exercise 2](#); [Act 3 Scenes 3–4, Exercise 6](#); [Act 4 Scenes 1–3, Exercise 2](#); [Act 5 Scenes 2–9, Exercise 2](#)). Discuss what has changed, thinking especially about the themes of violence and war, fear, the supernatural.
- Encourage students to add any new hopes and fears to the two columns.

### **Exercise 7: The final battle**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Thane of Lennox, Malcolm, Macduff, Thane of Ross*

**Themes:** *loyalty and betrayal, violence and war*

#### **Resources**

- Organise students into three groups.

- Invite one student in group 1 to be Macbeth and give them a crown and the Macbeth sashes for Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor. Tell group 1 that they are Macbeth's army.
- Invite one student in group 2 to be Lennox and give them the Lennox sash. Tell group 2 that they are the rebel army of Scottish thanes who hate Macbeth.
- Invite one student in group 3 to be Malcolm and give them the Malcolm sash. Tell group 3 that they are the army brought from England.
- Ask: Who else was with Malcolm? (Macduff and Ross). Invite two students in group 3 to become Macduff and Ross and give them sashes.
- Ask: What was Malcolm's army doing last time we met them? (They were marching towards Dunsinane from Birnam Wood disguised by tree branches – see [Act 5 Scenes 2–9, Exercise 3](#)).
- Ask 'Malcolm' to lead group 3 as they march across the space, carrying their branches, to face group 1. When they arrive, they throw down their branches.
- Ask 'Lennox' to lead group 2 as they march across the space and join group 3.
- Groups 2 and 3 are now a combined force facing group 1, Macbeth's army.
- If you completed the battle exercise in [Act 1 Scene 1 Warriors, Exercise 3](#) you can remind students of that battle.
- Introduce a drum and tell students that they are going to make four battle moves, which they will perform after each drum beat. Explain you will make a big movement of striking the drum and they should watch or listen for that cue.
- Ask all students to raise their arms with their hands grasped and index fingers pointing as their swords. Remind them they can swipe down, left or right. Model a possible sequence of battle moves: swipe, freeze, swipe, freeze, swipe, freeze, swipe, freeze.

- Beat the drum slowly four times to allow students to practise their moves. Ensure the movement of banging the drum is big enough to see for students who cannot hear the beat.
- Now, add a final fifth move: Malcolm's army (groups 2 and 3) should indicate victory - they have won the battle. Macbeth's army should indicate defeat - they have lost the battle.
- Practise this last action, then put the sequence together with the five moves for the battle.

### **Exercise 8: The death of Macbeth**

**Characters:** *Macbeth, Macduff*

**Language:** *metaphor*

**Themes:** *violence and war, fear*

#### **Resources**

- Tell students that they will perform their battle one last time (see [Act 5 Scenes 2–9, Exercise 7](#)) but this time you will add in some lines from Macbeth and Macduff.
- Ask the two armies to face each other again ready for the start of the battle.
- Invite the students playing Macduff and Macbeth to step forwards into the space between the two armies.
- Ask the student playing Macduff to say/sign:

‘Turn hell-hound, turn.’ (*Face me you tyrant, you hell-hound.*)

**(SLIDE 14 in GALLERY: ACT 5)**

- Ask: What is a hell-hound? And who is he describing as a hell-hound? (Macbeth). Remind students that this is another metaphor, comparing Macbeth to something evil and dangerous.
- Discuss with students whether they think Macbeth should be afraid of Macduff.

- Play **FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2** in the [Playlist](#) to remind them of the prophecy and Macbeth’s belief that Macduff cannot harm him: [BSL](#).
- Now ask ‘Macbeth’ to say/sign: ‘I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to one of woman born.’ (*My life is protected by magic. No-one given birth to by a woman can kill me.*) You can also display this line (**SLIDE 15** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – ‘I bear a charmed life...’**).
- Ask ‘Macduff’ to say/sign: ‘Macduff was from his mother’s womb untimely ripped.’ (*Macduff was taken from his mother’s womb before he was born.*) You can also display this line (**SLIDE 16** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – ‘Macduff was from his mother’s womb...’**).
- Discuss with students what Macduff means. (That he was born by what today we call Caesarean section, rather than ‘natural’ childbirth. This means he can kill Macbeth and not contradict what the Apparition says.)
- Invite ‘Macbeth’ and ‘Macduff’ to mime a slow-motion sword fight ending with Macbeth being killed.
- Invite all students to repeat their battle moves from [Act 5 Scenes 2–9, Exercise 7](#).
- Encourage the Scottish rebels to cheer! They have won and Macbeth, the tyrant, is dead!

## **Exercise 9: The king is dead**

**Characters:** *All characters in the play*

**Themes:** *violence and war, the supernatural*

### **Resources**

- Ask students to return to their positions at the end of the final battle from [Act 5 Scenes 2–9, Exercise 7](#). Anyone who was wearing a character’s sash should wear the same sash again. ‘Macbeth’ should have his crown. Ask all students who were ‘still alive’ at the end of the battle to stand up and anyone who ‘died’ in the battle to sit down. Of those wearing sashes, ‘Macduff’, ‘Ross’, ‘Lennox’ and ‘Malcolm’ should be standing. ‘Macbeth’ should be sitting down.
- Ask: Who else has died during the play? (Lady Macduff, the Macduff children, Banquo, King Duncan, Thane of Cawdor, Lady Macbeth)
- Ask: Which other characters that we have met are still alive? (Donalbain, Fleance, the Witches)
- Invite some students to stand up and take on the roles of Donalbain, Fleance and the Witches. Give sashes to the students playing Donalbain and Fleance.
- Display the table on **SLIDE 17** in **GALLERY: ACT 5 – alive and dead**.
- Draw out the fact that a lot of people have died in the process of the play.
- Ask: Who was responsible for each of these deaths?
  - Lady Macduff and her children – Who killed them? (Murderers employed by Macbeth)
  - Banquo – Who killed him? – (Murderers employed by Macbeth)
  - King Duncan – Who killed him? (Macbeth)
  - Thane of Cawdor – Who killed him? (King Duncan commanded his death)
  - Macdonald – Who killed him? (Macbeth)

- But to what extent are the people who killed them actually responsible for the deaths? Is Macbeth really responsible for the deaths of Lady Macduff, her children and Banquo, for example?
- Malcolm blames Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, calling them:

‘this dead butcher, and his fiend-like queen’

**(SLIDE 18 in GALLERY: ACT 5)**

- Talk about the use of the word ‘butcher’ – it implies brutality.
- Draw out the meaning of fiend – ‘an evil spirit or demon’.
- Ask: What about the Witches? Are they responsible in any way for the deaths?
- Discuss who is responsible for the death of Macbeth. (Although Macduff kills Macbeth, is Macbeth actually responsible for his own death? Are the Witches responsible? In what ways?)
- Who is responsible for the death of Lady Macbeth? (Herself? Macbeth?)
- Tell students that Malcolm reports that Lady Macbeth killed herself:

‘by self and violent hands/ Took off her life’

**(SLIDE 19 in GALLERY: ACT 5)**

### **Exercise 10: Long live the king!**

**Characters:** Macduff, Malcolm, Donalbain, Fleance, (King Duncan, Macbeth)

**Theme:** kingship

#### **Resources**

- Ask students to step out of their roles and to discuss in pairs who they think should be the next king of Scotland and be ready to give their reasons.

- Share ideas as a group:
  - Perhaps it should be Macduff, because he is strong and killed Macbeth as Macbeth killed King Duncan?
  - Perhaps it should be Malcolm, as King Duncan's eldest son?
  - Perhaps Donalbain, as he is another of King Duncan's sons?
  - Perhaps it should be Fleance, because the Witches said Banquo's children would be kings?
- Tell the students that King Duncan named his eldest son Malcolm as his successor. The Scottish thanes agree to this and so Malcolm is crowned the next king.
- Ask 'Macduff' to take the crown from 'Macbeth' and give it to 'Malcolm' and to sign/say 'Hail, King of Scotland' (**SLIDE 20** in **GALLERY: ACT 5**).
- Ask everyone to repeat 'Hail, King of Scotland' and show a final freeze frame of how the Scottish people feel now. (Perhaps relieved the fighting is over? Perhaps hopeful for peace? Perhaps happy that Macbeth is dead?)

### **Act 5 Scenes 2–9: Scotland at war – resources**

- **Gallery presentation:**
  - Act 5
- **Playlist resources:**
  - Exercise 2:
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 1 ([BSL](#))
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2 ([BSL](#))
    - FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3 ([BSL](#))
  - Exercise 3 and 6: FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 3 ([BSL](#))
  - Exercise 5: FILM: Act 5 Scene 5 – Macbeth ([BSL](#), [SSE](#), and/or [VS](#))
  - Exercise 8: FILM: Act 4 Scene 1 – Apparition 2 ([BSL](#))

- **Handouts:**

- Exercise 2 and 6: [‘Macbeth’s Hopes and Fears’ chart](#)
- Exercise 6: [‘Birnam Wood’ message](#)

- **Additional resources:**

- Exercise 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10: Crown for Macbeth
- Exercise 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10: Sashes for Macbeth (Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor), Macduff, Malcolm, Thane of Ross, Thane of Lennox
- Exercise 3: Sash for Malcolm
- Exercise 6: Sashes for Macbeth (Thane of Glamis and Thane of Cawdor – 2 sets)
- Exercise 6: Marker pens
- Exercise 7: Drum
- Exercise 9: Additional sashes for Donalbain and Fleance



## APPENDIX: THE WITCHES

In this Appendix, you will find additional images of witches – photographs from performances of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* as well as historical depictions. You may wish to share these with students as you explore the play and, in particular, the characters of the Weïrd Sisters.



Figure 1: *Macbeth*, National Theatre, 2023



Figure 2: *Macbeth*, Shakespeare's Globe, 2013



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Figure 3: *Macbeth*, RSC, 1996



Figure 4: *Macbeth*, RSC, 2018



Figure 5: A woodcut from a 1579 pamphlet showing a witch feeding her familiars



Figure 6: A woodcut from 1720 showing witches

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**Figure 1:** The National Theatre. Lucy Mangan, Danielle Fiamanya and Lola Shalam (the three Witches) from *Macbeth*, 2023. Photographer, Marc Brenner; **Figure 2:** Shakespeare's Globe. Billy Boyd, Cat Simmons, Moyo Akandé and Jess Murphy as Banquo and the Witches in *Macbeth*, 2013. Photographer, Ellie Kurttz / ArenaPAL; **Figure 3:** RSC. *Macbeth*, 1996; The Witches. Photographer, Reg Wilson; **Figure 4:** RSC. *Macbeth* production 2018. Photographer, Richard Davenport.

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