

Macbeth

The text of the play

If you have the text of the play as an electronic document (an e-text), you can use your text editor (such as WordPad) or word processor (such as Word, WordPro or WordPerfect) to search for items of interest, and help you in other ways. To get a copy of the play as a text file, go to the e-text library of Project Gutenberg.

The play in performance

Ideally, you should see the play in live performance. If you cannot do this you can watch a videotape of a good production. Roman Polanski's film-version is very accessible while Channel 4's recent TV version for schools condenses the play without losing the most important action and dialogue. If you have time, then the more versions you see, the better - you can compare these different interpretations, when you do the tasks on this guide or which your teacher sets for you. The following versions of *Macbeth* are available to buy or rent on DVD:

- Orson Welles' version, 1948
- Roman Polanski's version, 1971
- Jeremy Freestone's version, 1996.

About the play

Macbeth is a play: Shakespeare did not write it to be read in schools, but to be seen and heard in live performance. It is possible, and can be enjoyable, to act out Shakespeare's plays, but you should not expect to understand everything. Why not? Because Shakespeare uses a form of English that often differs from how we speak today. Even in his own day, he used a far wider vocabulary (range of words) than almost anyone in his audience. He refers to ideas, people or objects with which the audience in his day would be familiar because these things were part of their education or current events. But modern audiences will not always know about them in detail. Also, the plays require great skill in the actors: it is easy to perform them incompetently. Shakespeare makes great demands of his actors, because he knows how good they are at what they do.

Although there are many beautiful and interesting speeches, Shakespeare was just as interested in narrative that tells a story in words and actions. Modern editions of the plays, for use in schools, have extensive notes to explain the meaning of odd terms or unfamiliar ideas. If you use these for your own reading and acting, you may begin to enjoy the plays. You should also try to see video or feature film versions, or listen to radio productions, but a good performance in the theatre should be better than all of these.

This guide is intended to support study of the play by an examination class. A range of activities will be described, from which students should make their own choice, or a selection negotiated with the teacher.

How to write about Shakespeare's plays

Let the teacher/examiner assessing your written (or spoken) work see that you know that a play is drama. It happens in performance in a theatre (or, today, in a feature film or TV or radio broadcast). It is not a book and there are no readers. You may have used a book containing the characters' lines, some basic stage directions and lots of notes to help you study the play. But this is not what Shakespeare intended for his audience.

Show that you understand the difference between (fictional) characters in the play, and the (real) actors who play the parts. And don't call the play a 'film' or a 'book'.

Quotation

Try not to copy long passages from the text of the play. Do quote short phrases or single words, putting these in speech marks. Do not write the verb 'quote' to introduce a quotation. Always explain, or comment on, what you quote, using your own words. Note also that you do not have to quote directly all the time - indirect quotation is perfectly acceptable. To see the difference look at these two examples:

Direct quotation

Macbeth says: 'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player/That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.'

Indirect quotation

Duncan says (of the Thane of Cawdor) that you can't judge someone's mind by looking at his face.

How to avoid retelling the story

Make judgements, and support these with reference to the play in detail or by direct (short) quotation. To see how quotation should be set out, look at the examples above. Where the point of your quotation is not obvious, you should explain it, and what it has to do with your argument. As a rule of thumb, your comment should follow the pattern of

- statement
- evidence (direct quotation or reference to detail)
- explanation of evidence (where needed)
- interpretation and judgement.

It is a good idea to keep sentences short (don't try to make multiple comments). Ensure that you avoid basic spelling errors: get the names right, and remember how to spell 'characters'.

Starter activities

The following ideas are suggested as ways into the text.

Acting parts of the play

For this you print a brief extract of the play on a card. Read through and act this out. A good variant on this is a technique (originally from Japan) which the German playwright Bertolt Brecht used in preparing a performance. Two pupils can share each part: one reads the dialogue, while the other performs the actions. Another of you can direct the speakers and actors.

Present a tableau, illustrating one of the key ideas in the play - this means you form into a static position or 'freeze frame', like a statue. If you wish you may develop this into an improvisation, with actions and dialogue.

A given episode may be acted out by different groups, with the teacher, as 'director', prompting you to play the scene in differing ways.

Prediction

Make predictions for different parts of the play - try to give reasons for what you expect. When you find out what really happens, you can review your prediction, explaining why you were right or wrong. For example:

- In Act 1 try to forecast how Lady Macbeth will respond to Macbeth's letter
- In Act 2 forecast what will happen when Duncan stays at Macbeth's house
- In Act 3 predict what kind of ruler Macbeth will be
- In Act 4 try to guess how Malcolm will react to Macduff's visit
- In Act 5 forecast how the play might end.

Media study

Discuss how the play's themes are treated in soap-opera, television drama, feature films and popular magazines. This can be extended by writing of a script for such a treatment.

Alternatively, you can research the history of political assassinations and the treatment of the subject in the media: feature films (such as *JFK*, *The Parallax View* and *The Manchurian Candidate*), television or radio documentaries and newspaper features.

Transforming the text

Present an episode, or series of events from the play as it might appear in different newspapers, magazines or books by your favourite authors, showing awareness of style and presentation. How would Roald Dahl or Enid Blyton write about this story?

Language study

Update or translate a brief extract into modern English, possibly in more than one version: formal standard English, colloquial English and regional or ethnic registers. Discuss how well these might work on the stage, on TV or on film.

Using a word-processing program, find how often given words or roots of words occur in the text. Create tables or graphs to show this.

For an advanced version of this you could study recurring metaphors or thematic images, such as references to clothes, or to sickness.

Looking at themes

Make a short presentation (written or spoken) as a guide for your class on one or more of the themes of the play. Here are some suggestions, but you could add ideas of your own:

- ambition
- good and evil
- power
- appearance and reality
- politics
- the supernatural
- physical and mental illness.

Questions about the play

These questions can be used to test or develop your knowledge of the play. Teachers can ask pupils to discuss them. If pupils are to respond in writing it is best to do this in a form that is useful either for revision or to become part of an essay or other written assignment. In some exam syllabuses students may do spoken work for assessment in a GCSE Shakespeare study.

Act 1

- Why does Shakespeare open the play by showing the witches? Why is it good for Macbeth not to appear first?
- How does Duncan reward Macbeth for his bravery in defeating the rebels? Comment on the order in which Duncan announces it and Macbeth finds it out.
- Macbeth calls the day of the battle 'foul and fair'. Comment on what you think he means.
- When Macbeth is told of his new title, how do he and Banquo react? Can you think of reasons for the difference in reactions?
- Why does Macbeth call Malcolm 'a step on which' he 'must fall down or else o'er leap'? Which of these alternatives do you expect Macbeth to choose and how might he do it?
- What does Lady Macbeth fear about her husband, after she has read his letter?
- Lady Macbeth tells her husband to 'look like the innocent flower/But be the serpent under it'. Explain what she means (either generally or specifically or both, as you think appropriate).
- What is the purpose and effect of Duncan's and Banquo's comments when they approach Macbeth's castle?
- Why, in Macbeth's opinion, is the murder of Duncan so wrong?
- How does Lady Macbeth make sure that her husband murders Duncan?

Act 2

- Comment on Banquo's speech beginning 'There's husbandry in heaven...' and ending '...in repose'. Remember that this play would originally have been performed in the daytime, using natural light.
- After his servant leaves him (Act 2, scene 1, line 33 and following) Macbeth imagines he can see something (in some film versions the audience may be shown this, too). What is it? Explain why, you think, Macbeth sees this, especially at this time and in this place.
- When Lady Macbeth says, 'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold', what does she mean? Who are **'them'** and why should she want them to be drunk?
- Sometimes Shakespeare shows killing onstage (mostly at the end of a play). Why, in your view, is the killing of Duncan not shown, but understood to happen offstage?
- How is Macbeth's mind affected by the murder of Duncan?
- Who is more practical after the killing, Macbeth or his wife? Can you think of reasons for this?
- The scene featuring the porter makes a great contrast with what goes before and after it. Can you explain why Shakespeare should use comedy at this point in an otherwise not very comical play? (This is sometimes explained by the phrase '**Comic Relief**', which has recently been taken over by a well-known charity.)
- After Duncan's death, Macbeth says, "All is but toys". Explain what you think he means by saying this. He is, of course, concealing his part in the murder, but do you think he is sincere when he makes this statement? Why?
- How do Malcolm and Donalbain react to the murder of their father? Is this a wise course of action? Give reasons in favour of this and against it. Can you think of any other things they might do in this situation?
- An old man tells Ross about a 'mousing owl' that killed a falcon and about Duncan's horses turning wild and eating each other. What might be the point of this speech? Comment on the idea of things being 'unnatural' at this point in the play.

Act 3

- Why does Macbeth ask Banquo so many apparently casual questions about where he is riding? Why should Macbeth be worried about Banquo (think about what he knows and about his character)?
- How does Macbeth persuade the murderers to help him? He tells the murderers that it was really Banquo who did some things they thought Macbeth had done to harm them. Is this convincing?
- What does Macbeth say that he envies about Duncan (in scene 2)?
- How successful are the murderers in following Macbeth's instructions? Comment on what happens to Fleance, and why this matters to Macbeth.
- How does Lady Macbeth react when her husband sees (or believes he sees) Banquo's ghost? What similar thing does she recall? (Macbeth has not told her of this in the dialogue of the play, so we must suppose he has told her between scenes.)
- What does Macbeth mean when he says, 'We are yet but young in deed'? (Act 3, scene 4) What does this suggest about his future conduct?
- Who or what is Hecate and what does she think of the witches' involvement with Macbeth?
- What is Hecate's strategy for Macbeth? Comment on the way the audience learns of this before he does.
- In Act 3, scene 6, Lennox comments on Macbeth's actions. In your own words, try to explain what he says directly and what he really thinks or hints at. Why might he not want to say directly what is really in his mind?
- The lord's reply to Lennox contains some interesting information about Macduff. What is this, and how might it affect things in Scotland?

Act 4

- How do the witches lull Macbeth into a false sense of security?
- How does Macbeth feel after his second meeting with the witches? What things might reassure him, and what things might trouble him?
- When Macbeth says (Act 4, scene 1) that 'the flighty purpose never is o'ertook/Unless the deed go with it', what does he mean in general, and in the particular situation in which he says it?
- How does Lady Macduff feel about her husband's leaving her alone? Why has he done this?
- When Ross comes to see Lady Macduff, how does he behave and why?
- Briefly explain Macduff's description to Malcolm of the state of affairs in Scotland (Act 4, scene 3). What does the audience know which makes Macduff's account even more painful?
- Why might Malcolm be suspicious of Macduff? Does he know as much as the audience does about why Macbeth and Macduff are enemies?
- Malcolm pretends to be even more evil than Macbeth. Why does he do this? What does he discover by doing so?
- In Act 4, scene 3, there is an account of the miraculous healing powers of the English king - what is the purpose of this? What effect does it have on the audience?
- When Macduff asks Ross about his family, Ross replies, '...they were well at peace when I did leave 'em'. Explain why he gives this answer and what it might mean.

Act 5

- How does Lady Macbeth's behaviour in Act 5, scene 1 affect the way the audience sees her?
- Angus says that Macbeth's royal title is '...like a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief' (Act 5, scene 2, lines 21-22). Explain, in your own words, what this means, and whether it is a fair description of Macbeth. Can you find other references in the play to the wearing of clothes, as a metaphor or simile (as here) for something else?
- Why does Macbeth say (Act 5, scene 3) 'that he must not look to have...that which should accompany old age'? What are these things and what does he expect to have 'in their stead'?
- Why does Malcolm order his soldiers to cut boughs from the trees of Birnam Wood? Explain the ways in which the audience and (later) Macbeth see more in this action than Malcolm has intended in giving the order.
- Macbeth claims that he has 'almost forgot the taste of fears'. Is this a convincing claim? Give reasons for your answer.
- Perhaps the most famous speech in the play is the one that begins 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow'. In your own words, summarize the main points that Macbeth makes in this speech.
- When Macbeth fights Young Siward he is very confident of the outcome? Why is this? Is he right to be so confident?
- Macduff believes that he alone should kill Macbeth. Why does he think this? What other reason emerges, when he speaks with Macbeth, for his being the only person who should do this?
- How does Macbeth feel about fighting Macduff? What makes up his mind to do so?
- How does Old Siward feel about the death of his son? He makes a joke at this point - does this suggest that he doesn't care, or that he is controlling his feelings?

Macbeth - character

Macbeth at the start of the play

At the start of the play, Macbeth is a good man who knows his place. He is a loyal servant of the King. God appoints the King to rule. If the King rules well, then his subjects will love him and he will reward their love with gratitude and generosity. This is the ideal state of affairs at the start of *Macbeth*, though just before it, there has been a rebellion, and the play opens with an account of the defeat of the rebels.

Although God appoints the ruler, it is possible for a gross disturbance of the natural order of things to happen. And this may allow a rebel (usurper) to overthrow the rightful monarch. In *Macbeth*, this is what happens when the witches dabble in the affairs of men. But Hecate, who must obey the higher powers of the universe, shows the witches that order must be restored, and Macbeth removed from power.

Macbeth is very loyal to begin with, so his treachery against Duncan is especially shocking. It is only believable (plausible) because of the way the witches arouse powerful ambition in him. But though they suggest things to him, the witches do not force Macbeth to kill Duncan. His evil action is freely chosen and (as we say today) premeditated.

In fact Macbeth sees very good arguments against Duncan's murder but is stung into firmness by his wife's scorn. She says that if she had made a promise like her husband's, she could even have dashed out the brains of her own child. (Perhaps, though, this is bravado - later she admits that she could not have killed Duncan because he resembled her own father. Does this mean she feels more love for a parent than a child? Or does it suggest fear of a father's authority?)

In Shakespeare's ordered universe there is no such thing as private or personal morality, and individuals can only be good in their proper station in society. To aspire to a position above (or equally below) one's station is a sin. And an ordinary man, like Macbeth, does not have the qualities that a king needs. Macbeth lacks political skill, and turns the gracious office of king into the rule of a bloody tribal warlord. When Macduff goes (Act 4, scene 3) to see Malcolm in exile, Duncan's son shows how diplomatic he is, by testing his visitor. When he leads a military force against Macbeth, he leaves the fighting to the experts (Siward and Macduff), just as Duncan does at the start of the play.

Macbeth does not know how to manage the Scottish lords with any diplomacy and Scotland descends into a reign of terror. Those who can do so flee the country, and wait for an opportunity to return. Those who have not fled desert Macbeth as soon as it is safe. The powerful English lords, Siward and Northumberland, are unhappy with the refugees crossing the border, and are ready to help restore Duncan's royal line in the person of Malcolm. Macbeth knows that his policy is unwise (see Act 5, scene 3, lines 24-9) but he has no alternative strategy.

As a military leader (at the start of the play), Macbeth is a good man. He is an able general in two senses.

- He plans the tactics of his battle well (he is able to respond to the attacks of Sweno and Macdonwald).
- He is a brave fighter on the battlefield (as both Ross and the Captain show in Act 1, scene 2).

Macbeth is especially ferocious in killing Macdonwald because he hates traitors. He is very loyal by nature, so it requires massive 'vaulting' ambition to overcome this. He is also keen to relish the good reputation he has, after defeating the rebels - he says that he has bought 'golden opinions' which he wants to wear 'now in their newest gloss'.

So Act 1 shows an ideal relationship between the good king and his true subject:

AM

- Duncan is a generous, godly and fatherly king - he rules faithful and devoted retainers, who risk their lives in his service
- Macbeth is not the king, and he is not meant to be
- he holds high office
- he is an expert in his job
- he is a national hero.

The murder of Duncan

When Macbeth learns from Ross and Angus that he is now Thane of Cawdor, he thinks seriously about the third greeting of the witches. He thinks that they do speak true, but wonders what this means. Can he wait for chance to crown him king? Or must he act to bring it about? Lady Macbeth sees this as kind of hypocrisy. He wants the reward of evil but dare not commit the evil act:

**'Wouldst not play false
And yet would falsely win.'
(Act 2, scene 1, lines 19-20)**

Seeing him waver, Lady Macbeth goes to stiffen his resolve. She takes a familiar line of belittling his manhood - a point about which Macbeth seems very insecure. (Is this connected with his lack of an heir?)

Duncan has discovered from the previous Thane of Cawdor that you cannot see 'the mind's construction in the face', but is confident enough of Macbeth's loyalty to place himself in his keeping. Macbeth sees that this makes killing him even worse than it would be anyway. There are several powerful reasons against it:

- Duncan is the king, to whom everyone owes complete loyalty
- Duncan has been a particularly good and holy king
- Macbeth, as the host, has a duty to protect all visitors to his castle from harm - not be the cause of that harm.

Duncan's visit gives Macbeth a unique opportunity - but it is only for the one night. Lady Macbeth knows this, but is sure that she can arrange things and manipulate her husband to ensure that the deed is done.

As soon as he kills the king, Macbeth is full of remorse. He also loses any sense of proportion he had - after this terrible deed other killings become easy, even the murder of a friend (Banquo), a woman (Lady Macduff) or children (Fleance and the Macduff boys). Although Macbeth pretends to know nothing of the murder, he is probably sincere when he says that if he had died an hour earlier he would have 'lived a blessed time'. He means what he says when he states that 'there's nothing serious in mortality' and 'all is but toys'.

When Macduff and Lennox arrive, Macbeth's actions are largely automatic or directed by his wife. He makes mistakes, like bringing the daggers out of the room, and giving a wholly unconvincing explanation of his reason for killing the grooms. Lady Macbeth diverts suspicion by fainting, but Lennox (Act 3, scene 6) later reveals his doubts - he praises Macbeth for acting 'wisely' as it would have angered anyone to hear the men deny their guilt.

Macbeth as tyrant

Killing Duncan makes Macbeth less free - every move from now on is made to secure his throne: 'To be thus is nothing,/But to be safely thus'. Malcolm's and Donalbain's flight gives Macbeth a breathing space, as it suggests that they are behind their father's murder. Banquo, though, knows too much, and Macbeth cannot buy him off. Moreover, if Banquo and Fleance live, then the witches' forecast (that his heirs would be kings) may come true. Arranging the murder seems easy, and he does not need help from Lady Macbeth - instead he invites her to approve a deed, while being 'innocent of the knowledge'. What he says at the banquet, when he sees Banquo's ghost, will make little sense to guests who do not yet know the reason for Banquo's absence, but later they may seem suspicious.

Early in the play, as Macbeth gradually yields to temptation, the audience will sympathise with the plight of a good man who is tempted. But as he becomes more brutal, and less reflective, this sympathy is lost. Killing Banquo is less serious (in the eyes of the Jacobean audience) than the killing of a king, but is so coldly arranged, that we cannot excuse it. And the murder of Lady Macduff and her brood is gratuitous and grotesque - Macduff has left them undefended because he supposes that they are of no concern to the tyrant. In fact the sequence is a convincing portrayal of the unreason of a megalomaniac - the witches warn Macbeth about Macduff, so he decides to have him killed. But Macduff has already escaped. Macbeth blames himself for delaying (quite unreasonably) and out of anger or a desire to do something, gives the order for Macduff's family to be slaughtered.

The inevitable and predictable result is that those thanes (lords) who have so far accepted Macbeth's rule in the hope of being left alone now transfer their loyalty to the tyrant's opponents. The scene in which Lady Macduff awaits her killers is painful, and the resistance shown by her son pathetic. We see that Macbeth has become a monster, and regret this when we see from what a height he has fallen.

From this point on, Macbeth acts without guidance from his wife (she reappears only to show her insanity). He is furiously active, and acts on impulse, while the witches have confused him entirely. He cannot plan rationally when he is deserted by so many of his troops, yet believes that he is miraculously protected. He makes his headquarters at Dunsinane, perhaps because this is the place mentioned in the witches' forecasts. He puts his armour on and takes it off almost in order to find something to do.

Nemesis

What was it all for? The glorious prospect of kingship has proved illusory, and he envies Duncan, sleeping peacefully in death, with his reputation intact. Instead of 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends' he has 'curses' and 'mouth-honour' (lip-service; Act 5, scene 3). The queen's death reminds him of the brevity and meaninglessness of life: '...a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/Signifying nothing'.

While he is forced to wait for his enemies, they are seen moving inexorably northwards, their numbers growing all the time. It is a popular cause, almost a moral crusade and many 'unrough youths' are fighting for the first time. Caithness notes how wild and unrestrained Macbeth's actions are, but Angus passes the most damning judgement. He notes how Macbeth feels his 'secret murders sticking to his hands' (echoing Macbeth's words on the night of Duncan's murder, and those of Lady Macbeth more recently). Every minute, says Angus, a new revolt breaks out, and those who serve the tyrant do so only out of fear. A good king (like Duncan) has great moral stature but Macbeth lacks this - so his 'royal title' appears as ridiculous as would '...a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief'.

When Birnam Wood **does** come to Dunsinane, Macbeth supposes that no mortal can harm him, and when he kills Young Siward he is more confident still. Macduff's disclosure may strike audiences as a silly or hair-splitting distinction, but the point is well made by Macbeth that they are 'juggling fiends...that palter with us in a double sense'.

Shakespeare shows us in *Macbeth* a rapid degeneration from loyal general to bloody despot - a story, by the way, which has many parallels in the modern world. He also manipulates the audience's sympathy. At the start of the play we see Macbeth's inner debate, and even after Duncan's death we are sympathetic, seeing all that Macbeth has lost. Perhaps the watershed is the killing of Lady Macduff and her children. And we now see Macbeth from many other people's viewpoints - those of Macduff, Malcolm, Lennox, Angus and Ross). In Act 4, the action moves to England to show the contrast with Scotland (or what Scotland has lost through Duncan's murder). In Act 5, as Macbeth reviews his life, and sees how little he has really gained, we feel a slight renewal of sympathy. The killing of Macbeth is just, but also necessary - to purge Scotland of its moral sickness and restore its health. There is, therefore, a clear symmetry in the play: it begins and ends with the overthrow of a traitor. And Macdonwald's executioner now suffers at the hand of another.

Studying appearance and reality in *Macbeth*

The outline below shows you how to write or speak about one of the most important ideas in *Macbeth* - appearance and reality, or, if you like, things not being what they seem. You will find it organised under the three headings 'The Nature of the play', 'Stagecraft and appeal to audience', and 'Language'. If you keep to this pattern you will make it easier for your teacher to give you a good grade. This will also help you not to miss out any of the three sections. When you prepare your work, don't spend so long on the first one that you miss the other two. The second and third parts are where you show that you know this is a play, not a novel or story to be read on the page.

In each of these three categories, you will find bullet points for you, your friends and your teacher to develop or explain. You may also find notes in the copy of the text you have been given - if you can understand these and use your own words, you can do well.

The nature of play - implications and moral or philosophical significance

This means the ideas or themes in the play - what it is about but not simply its story. In studying appearance and reality in *Macbeth* this means at least the following:

The general idea of things not being what they seem

People who are not what they seem

- the former Thane of Cawdor
- Macbeth
- Lady Macbeth as hostess
- Malcolm, when he pretends to be evil
- the messengers Macbeth has sent to ask Malcolm to return to Scotland.

Supernatural deceptions

- the witches' appearing and disappearing
- Banquo's ghost
- the apparitions.

Things and places not being what they seem

- Macbeth's castle which Duncan thinks pleasant
- the dagger which Macbeth sees before killing Duncan
- the voices he hears before and after the murder
- Macbeth's telling the murderers that Banquo is their enemy
- Lady Macbeth's imagining that her hands are bloody
- Birnam Wood's coming to Dunsinane.

Stagecraft and appeal to audience

This means the way Shakespeare uses features of the live performance - actions, use of props and costume, as well as the play's structure. Some things for you to consider are:

- The effect of some of the things listed above.
- How they are presented - does the audience see the ghost, the dagger and so on?
- How we are aware of Macbeth's intentions while those on stage are not - how does Shakespeare make sure that we know what is going on?
- How Lady Macbeth's speech while sleepwalking reveals to the audience (and those on stage) that she cannot deny her part in Macbeth's evil deeds.
- The structure of the play - how the narrative us developed over five acts.
- How these things are played in productions that you have seen or studied
- Other details of particular productions - properties (objects like daggers or goblets), costume, actions, lighting and sound FX (you may wish to consider the set, but note that in Shakespeare's own time sets were very basic, without any scenery).

Language

Explain metaphor, symbolism, word-play and other effects of language in the extracts below. You can use a word processor to search a text file of the script. This will show you the context and the rest of the speech. Do not use the whole phrase as this may not match the original exactly - a short phrase, like 'foul and fair' should be enough.

Short extracts

- Fair is foul, and foul is fair (1.1)
- So foul and fair a day I have not seen (1.3)
- What are these.../That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,/And yet are on't? (1.3)
- Were such things here as we do speak about?/ Or have we eaten on the insane root/ That takes the reason prisoner? (1.3)
- There's no art/To find the mind's construction in the face (1.4)
- ...look like the innocent flower,/But be the serpent under it (1.5)
- Had he not resembled/My father as he slept/I had done't (2.2)
- The sleeping and the dead/ Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood /That fears a painted devil (2.2)
- A little water clears us of this deed (2.2)
- Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,/Till thou applaud the deed (2.2)
- Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;/Come like shadows, so depart! (4.1)
- My first false speaking/ Was this upon myself (4.3)
- Now does he feel his title/ Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief. (5.2)

Longer extracts

- Macbeth's 'Is this a dagger?' speech (2.1)
- Hecate's speech to the witches (3.5)
- Lennox's speech to the lord (3.6)
- Malcolm's speeches in 4.3
- Macbeth's 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' speech (5.5).

Conclusion

In conclusion, you should make a **personal judgement** both about the play and about the version(s) of it which you have seen. It helps if you can be positive without being obviously gushing and over the top in your compliments!