YOUR 4-Step CHECK-UP ON MACBETH

Step 1 PLOT AND CHARACTERS

Where are you in your Macbeth studies? Start by answering these quiz-style questions to check your knowledge of the plot and characters.

1. The play opens with a group of three on a ‘heath’. Who are they?
2. Who is King of Scotland at this point in the play?
3. We first meet Macbeth and Banquo in person in Act 1 Scene 3. What brutal event have they been involved in?
4. What different things do the witches promise Macbeth and Banquo when they meet them?
5. What is Lady Macbeth doing when we first meet her in Act 1 Scene 5?
6. What ghostly vision does Macbeth see on his way to murder the king in Act 2 Scene 1?
7. How does Lady Macbeth try to make it look like the king’s grooms have murdered him?
8. Who discovers the King murdered in the morning?
9. What do the king’s sons, Malcolm and Donaldbain, decide to do?
10. In what way do the murderers hired by Macbeth to kill Banquo and his son fail in their task?
11. How does the banquet in Act 3 Scene 4, which is supposed to be a high point for Macbeth, turn into a disaster?
12. What three prophesies do the witches reveal to Macbeth in Act 4 Scene 1?
13. In the same scene, what apparition shown to Macbeth horrifies him?
14. What happens to Lady Macduff and her children in the scene which follows?
15. Who does Macduff go to see in England? Why is Macduff initially disappointed at this meeting?
16. What is Lady Macbeth doing when the doctor and ‘gentlewoman’ observe her sleepwalking?
17. How does the prophecy about Birnam Wood moving to Dunsinane come true?
18. Who becomes king at the end of the play?
19. What is the name of the young soldier Macbeth kills?
20. When Macduff kills Macbeth, what other two prophecies are proved correct?
How much do you know about the language and themes of the play?

1. Here are **five quotations** from the play. Can you identify **who** is speaking (and, where relevant, who they are speaking to)?
   a) ‘Come, you spirits/That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here’ (Act 1 Scene 5)
   b) ‘O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!’ (Act 3 Scene 2)
   c) ‘Avaunt, and quit my sight, let the earth hide thee—/Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold...’ (Act 3 Scene 4)
   d) ‘Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to scorn/The power of man; for none of woman born/Shall harm Macbeth’ (Act 4 Scene 1)
   e) ‘Here’s the smell of the blood still—all the/perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. O,/O, O.’ (Act 5 Scene 1)

2. Read these **further quotations**. What **theme(s)** do you think they are linked to, or explore, e.g. Good and evil? Ambition? Why?
   a) **Banquo (to Macbeth):** ‘oftentimes, to win us to our harm,/The instruments of darkness tell us truths...’ (Act 1 Scene 3)
   b) **Macbeth (to Lady Macbeth):** ‘False face must hide what the false heart doth know’ (Act 1 Scene 7)
   c) **Macbeth (after the murder to Lady Macbeth):** ‘I’ll go no more:/I am afraid to think what I have done.’ (Act 2 Scene 2)
   d) **Macbeth (to himself):** ‘Stars, hide your fires,/Let not light see my black and deep desires’ (Act 1 Scene 4)
   e) **Malcolm (about the Macbeths):** ‘this dead butcher, and his fiend-like Queen’ (Act 5 Scene 7)

**Step 3  WRITING SKILLS**

A student has drafted this paragraph about the character of Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth finally disintegrates in Act 5 Scene 1 haunted by the bloody murders of .................................................. and Lady Macduff. She sleepwalks and desperately wonders will these hands ne’r be clean? This is ironic given that she was the one in Act 2 Scene 2 who was angry with Macbeth when .................................................................

1. Copy out the paragraph and add in the **missing detail** in the **first sentence**
2. Put **quotation marks** around the quotation the student uses
3. **Finish** the paragraph, completing the **last sentence**
This scene comes from Act 2 Scene 2 of the play. Macbeth has just returned from killing the king and refuses to take the daggers he used back to the room.

LADY MACBETH
Infirm of purpose;  
Give me the daggers; the sleeping, and the dead,  
Are but as pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood  
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;  
For it must seem their guilt.

Exit. Knocking within

MACBETH
Whence is that knocking?  
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?  
What hands are here? Ha! they pluck out mine eyes.  
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No—this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

Enter LADY MACBETH

LADY MACBETH
My hands are of your colour, but I shame  
To wear a heart so white.

Why is this scene important? Write one to two paragraphs (between 75 and 100 words) about:

- What it tells us about the characters or relationships at this point
- Any themes or ideas which are suggested from the language
- How the scene could link with other scenes or parts of the play

Well done for completing your 4-Step Check-Up on Macbeth!

You'll find lots of help with studying and revising the play, including revision cards and practice tests, on our website www.yorknotes.com