

A STUDY OF
Macbeth
by William Shakespeare



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Shakespeare Timeline

This Shakespeare timeline describes the many chapters in Shakespeare's colourful life. From humble beginnings in Stratford to his marriage to the older Anne Hathaway and popular acclaim for his works, Shakespeare Timeline follows the life of literature's most famous playwright.

1564. William Shakespeare is born in Stratford upon Avon to local tanner John and Mary Shakespeare. His actual birthday is unknown but assumed and celebrated today on April the 23rd, just three days before his baptism was recorded in the Parish register of the Holy Trinity Church on April the 26th.

1571. Shakespeare is likely to have begun his formal education. By local tradition, children in the Stratford area, entered the local grammar school at age seven.

1575. Queen Elizabeth pays a visit to Kenilworth Castle, just a short journey from Stratford. Legend has it that an impressionable eleven year old William saw the Queen's procession, and recreated it several times later in his historical and dramatic plays.

1582. Shakespeare is in love... At age 18, he marries the considerably older Anne Hathaway (26 years old) from Shottery on November the 27th at Temple Grafton, a village just five short miles (8 km) from Stratford.

1583. Susanna, William and Anne Shakespeare's first child who lives a full 66 years, is born just five months after Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway's wedding (May 26th). Illegitimacy was not uncommon in the 1500s.

1585-1592. Shakespeare is believed to have left his family in Stratford to join a company of actors as both playwright and performer, starting his career in theatre.

1585. Shakespeare's twins, Judith and Hamnet are born, (February 2) Hamnet living only eleven years whilst Judith lived until 77.

1589-1590. Shakespeare is believed by most academics to have written his very first play, *Henry VI, Part One* in this year.

1590-91. Shakespeare is again believed to have written *Henry VI, Part Two* and *Henry VI, Part III*.

1592. Shakespeare begins to be noticed as a force within London theatre; Robert Greene's Groatworth of Wit famously calls Shakespeare an "upstart crow". He attacks Shakespeare as lacking originality since he borrows ideas from other for his own plays. Academics see this criticism as proof that Shakespeare was in London at this time.

Theatres in London close because of the plague.

1592-93. Shakespeare is thought to have written the poem *Venus and Adonis* and the plays *Richard III* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

1592-94. *The Comedy of Errors* written in this time.

1593. Shakespeare begins to compose the first of what will amount to a 154 sonnet collection. His narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* is his first ever published.

1593-94. *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew* are thought to have been penned by Shakespeare at this time.

1594. The Lord Chamberlain's Men, a theatre troupe including distinguished actor Richard Burbage and comic Will Kemp performs with Shakespeare in their group.

1594-1595. Shakespeare pens *Love Labour's Lost*.

1594-1596. *King John* is assumed to have been written.

1595. A busy year for Shakespeare as he is thought to have composed *Richard II* performed that very same year, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, thought to be composed for a wedding and the greatest love story of all time, *Romeo and Juliet*.

1596. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is thought to have been written. The Lord Chamberlain's Men lose their original patron, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon and Lord Chamberlain to be replaced by his brother George Carey, Second Lord Hunsdon, who succeeds his late brother.

1596-1597. *The Merchant of Venice* and *Henry IV, Part One* are thought to have been written.

1597. Shakespeare buys the New Place, one of Stratford's most preeminent homes. This fuels speculation today by some academics that William was really a successful businessman and not literature's celebrated playwright.

1598. William is thought to have written the play *Henry IV, Part Two* and Shakespeare's reputation as an actor is confirmed his performance in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* which clearly lists his name as a principal actor in the London play.

1598-99. William writes the play *Much Ado About Nothing* in this year.

1599. The Major shareholders of the Lord Chamberlain's Men lease land from Nicholas Brend, The Globe theatre opening later that same year. *Julius Caesar* is performed at the Globe Theatre for the first known time on September the 21st according to German tourist Thomas Platter's diary. John Weever praises Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus Adonis* in the poem *Ad Guglielmum Shakespeare*.

1600-1601. Shakespeare is thought to have composed arguably his greatest play, *Hamlet* at this time.

1601. The narrative poem, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' is thought to have been written.

1601-1602. *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, *All Well That Ends Well* and *Troilus and Cressida* are probably composed.

1603. *A Midsummer's Night* is performed at Hampton Court before Queen Elizabeth who dies later that year. James I originally James VI of Scotland proves to be an enthusiastic patron of the arts granting The Chamberlain's Men a patent to perform. In return the Company renames itself The King's Men to honour James I and they quickly become a favourite with the new king.

As You Like It is performed by the newly named King's Men before King James at Wilton. Acting-wise, Shakespeare is recorded as performing in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, Shakespeare's last recorded acting performance.

1604. *Measure for Measure* is believed to have been written in this year. It is later performed at King James I Court. *Othello* is also penned, being performed on November the 1st at Whitehall.

1605. *The Merchant of Venice* is performed twice at King James' Court earning a commendation from the King. *King Lear* is believed to have been composed in this year and as is *Macbeth*, the play's Scottish background and kind portrayal of ancestor Malcolm being intended as a celebration and honouring of King James Scottish ancestry.

1606. *Antony And Cleopatra* is believed to have been composed.

1607. *Hamlet* and *Richard III* are performed aboard the British ship *Dragon* off the west coast of Africa at Sierra Leone.

1607-1608. *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles* and *Coriolanus* are composed.

1608. The King's Men take on a twenty-one year lease of London's first permanently enclosed theatre, the Blackfriars Theatre in this year. Notes on stage directions, suggest *The Tempest* was penned with a performance at this theatre in mind.

The return of the plague forces a closure of all playhouses and theatres from the spring of 1608 through to early 1610.

1609-1610. *Cymbeline* is thought to have been composed.

1610. *Othello* is performed at Oxford College by the King's Men during a summer tour.

1610-1611. *The Winter's Tale* is written.

1611. *The Tempest* was written.

1612-1613. The King's men perform *Othello* and *Julius Caesar* amongst others in this year. Shakespeare is thought to have written *Cardenio*, his only lost play during this period and with John Fletcher as a likely contributor, composes *Henry VIII*.

1613. The Globe Theatre burns to the ground. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is penned. A 1634 entry within the Stationer's Registry confirms that both William Shakespeare and John Fletcher composed this play.

1614. The Globe Theatre reopens.

1616. William dies on April 23rd, his burial being recorded in the Stratford Holy Church Register two days later.

1619. *Hamlet* is performed as part of Christmas celebrations at court.

1623. Shakespeare's wife, Anne Hathaway dies, the same year, and fellow actors John Hemminges and Henry Condell gather together and publish for the first time, 36 of Shakespeare's 37 plays in a collection known as The First Folio.

Shakespeare FAQ

Was Shakespeare ever in love?

Yes, at age 18, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, a woman 8 years his senior. They stayed married the rest of Shakespeare's life for some 34 years until Shakespeare died in 1616, age 52.

Is it true nobody knows Shakespeare's birthday?

It is true we don't know Shakespeare's date of birth. We know it was in 1564 but our only record at this time was of his baptism at the Holy Trinity Church on April the 26th. By convention and some guesswork, Shakespeare's birthday is by tradition celebrated three days earlier on April the 23rd.

At what age did Shakespeare write his first play?

It is believed that Shakespeare penned his first play Henry VI, Part One, between 1589 and 1590. Shakespeare would have been 25 at the time. This play is believed to have been performed at The Rose Theatre in London.

Which are Shakespeare's most popular plays?

With 37 plays under his belt, it is hard to place some plays above others. Nonetheless, most academics and readers alike would agree that Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer's Night's Dream, King Henry V, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello and Antony and Cleopatra are amongst Shakespeare's most recognizable and hence most popular plays.

Was Shakespeare a victim of "breech of copyright"?

In 1609, Shakespeare's sonnets were published without the Bard's permission. Many academics considered it unlikely that Shakespeare wanted many of his deeply personal poems to be revealed to the outside world. It was not however the first time; in 1599, in a collection entitled "The Passionate Pilgrim", two of Shakespeare's poems had been printed without the Bard's permission.

What plays did Shakespeare write?

The list is extensive. In the best chronological order available, Shakespeare wrote Henry VI, Part One, Henry VI, Part Two, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Henry VI, Part Three, Richard III, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Titus Andronicus, The Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Richard II, King John, The Merchant of Venice, Henry IV, Part One, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry IV, Part Two, Much Ado About Nothing, Henry V, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Twelfth Night Or What You Will, Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, Othello, Measure for Measure, Timon of Athens, King Lear, Macbeth, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Cardenio Henry VIII.

Are any of Shakespeare's poems especially famous?

Perhaps one poem is more famous than the other 154 sonnets for the sheer number of times, popular movies (Clueless for example), books, TV programs (The Darling Buds of May) and reviews have used it's lines.

Sonnet 18 begins with the opening lines, "Shall I compare thee (you) to a summer's day? Thou (you) art (are) more lovely and more temperate: Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And Summer's lease hath all too short a date..."

Did Shakespeare "lose" a play?

Yes. He did not literally lose it in a park or on his travels. The play Cardenio, though written and performed in Shakespeare's time has not been recorded in the First Folio of 1623 as were Shakespeare's other plays. Cardenio has been lost to time for the modern reader.

Did Shakespeare have any children?

Eight, including twins Judith and Hamnet. Hamnet did not survive to adulthood. Susanna his first daughter lived a very ripe 66 years and Judith lived a very respectable 77 years. Shakespeare only lived to 52.

What events happened in Shakespeare's time?

Quite a few important historical occurrences. Shakespeare lived through the defeat of the Spanish Armada of 1588 (Shakespeare was 24 at the time), the discovery of the remains of Pompeii buried by Mount Vesuvius (Shakespeare was 28), Rembrandt was born, The Gunpowder plot was foiled with Guy Fawkes being executed (1605 and 1606) and Shakespeare lived in the reigns of both Queen Elizabeth and the reign of James I.

How can I read Shakespeare online?

Yes, quite simply here at [Absolute Shakespeare.com](http://AbsoluteShakespeare.com).

What are Shakespeare's lost years?

This is the time when William Shakespeare is said to have left his family inn Stratford whilst he pursued a career in acting and Theatre in London. Shakespeare is said to have returned to his family in Stratford at least once a year.

How many plays did Shakespeare write?

Thirty seven plays and 154 sonnets.

What was the Globe?

This was a Theatre, Shakespeare and his fellow actors (The Lord Chamberlain's Men later renamed The King's Men) performed the majority of their plays at. It was built for The Lord Chamberlain's Men expressly as a theatre on land leased from a Nicholas Brend. Opening in 1599, it was later burned to the ground in 1613 reopening a year later in 1614.

What is Shakespeare's most famous play?

Most academics would argue Hamlet is Shakespeare's greatest and most famous work. In popular culture, it would probably be considered Romeo and Juliet.

Is it true Shakespeare didn't write any of his plays?

A major controversy today is brewing over this very contentious issue. The traditional camp maintains that William Shakespeare was indeed a poet, playwright and an actor. Critics known as "Oxfordians" argue that a more likely contender may have been Edward de Vere (1550-1604) whom T.J. Looney in 1920, claimed authored Shakespeare's plays, Christopher Marlowe or even Queen Elizabeth herself! A problem for the Edward de Vere line is that many of Shakespeare's plays were said to have been written after Edward de Vere's death in 1604. Shakespeare died in 1616.

The Oxfordians argue quite reasonably, that proof of Shakespeare's authorship is largely circumstantial and sketchy at best. These scholars argue that Shakespeare was better known in Stratford as a businessman not a playwright. However despite putting up some plausible contenders for Shakespeare's throne, Shakespeare remains the most likely evidence wise. For now at least, it is still safe to say Shakespeare did indeed write the 37 plays and 154 sonnets credited to him.

Was Shakespeare really a successful businessman?

Yes, so much so that in 1597, he bought one of the most prestigious properties in all of Stratford, The New Place. Later, Shakespeare bought a considerable amount of land in Stratford, doubling his investment.

Was Romeo and Juliet based on a true story?

Yes but this was not "Shakespeare in Love". Romeo and Juliet was in fact based on the life of two real lovers who both died for each other and lived in Verona, Italy in 1303. Both the Capulets and Montagues existed in Verona at this time and Shakespeare is reckoned to have discovered this tragic love story in Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem entitled "The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet".

Where was Shakespeare born?

We assume it was in Stratford upon Avon since he was baptized in 1564 at The Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on April the 26th.

What is The First Folio?

The First Folio of 1623, compiled by Shakespeare's fellow actors John Hemminges and Henry Condell was the first ever publication of Shakespeare's plays. It contains all 36 plays that we can read today. All publications of Shakespeare's plays are derived from this Folio. Only 250 original copies are said to exist today, each worth roughly just 1 Pound in 1623. Today each Folio would fetch nearly 3 million dollars (US). Unfortunately Cardenio was not included and so this play has been lost to time for the present day reader.

Are there film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays?

Quite a few. Over 300 adaptations dating from as early as the 1930s have been recorded as being adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Recently both Hamlet, A Midsummer's Night and Romeo and Juliet have been successfully adapted to film.

Was "Shakespeare in Love" a true story?

Not really. First, there is no historical record of such a love affair ever having taken place. Second, the film is a work of plausible fiction. Third, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway at age 18 and penned *Romeo and Juliet* which features in the film in 1595 at the age of 31. Thus any depiction of such a love affair during the writing of *Romeo and Juliet* would have to have meant Shakespeare was cheating on Anne. Finally the depiction that Shakespeare was short on cash around 1595 simply doesn't wash; just two years later, he bought one of the largest properties in Stratford called The New Place and is considered to have penned 9 plays by 1595.

Was Shakespeare a "property developer" in Stratford?

Indeed Shakespeare was, purchasing both the new place and a large holding of land in the Stratford area. He was also a co-owner of the Globe Theatre with the other members of The Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1599.

Was Shakespeare recognized in his own time?

Unlike many famous poets and artists, Shakespeare not only did not die penniless but was a frequent performer before the Court Queen Elizabeth I (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1596, *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* in 1603) and King James I who commended The King's Men's two performances of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1605.

Was Shakespeare an actor as well as a playwright?

Few people realize that aside from writing 37 plays and 154 sonnets, Shakespeare was an actor as well. Besides performing many of his own plays with his theatre company The Lord Chamberlain's Men (changed to The King's men to honour James I in 1603), Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's play *Sejanus* in 1603.

Did Shakespeare ever collaborate in the writing of his plays?

Surprisingly, Shakespeare is said to have penned *Henry VIII* with the likely help of noted dramatist John Fletcher between 1612 and 1613. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, composed in 1613 is credited in a 1634 Stationer's Registry entry as being the work of both William Shakespeare and John Fletcher.

Did Shakespeare have any critics?

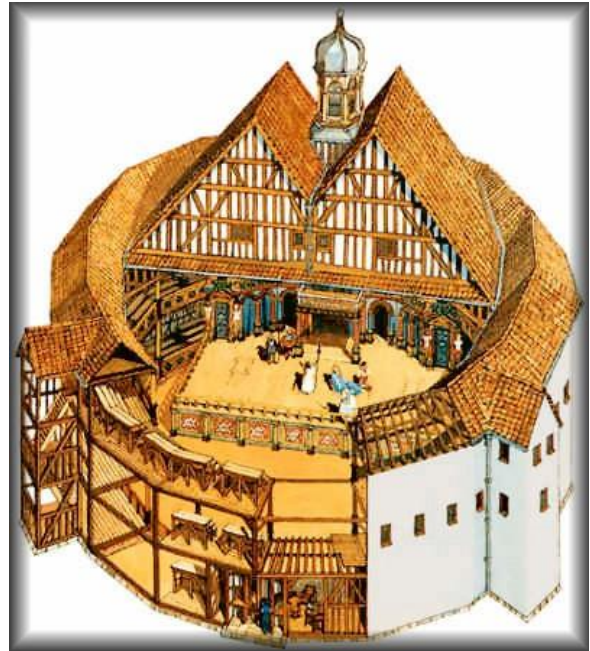
Described by First Folio publishers John Hemminges and Henry Condell who said "His mind and hand went together and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.", there were many who did not like Shakespeare's work. Robert Greene really got the ball rolling by calling Shakespeare "an upstart crow" in his 1592 pamphlet entitled "Greene's Groatsworth of Wit" whilst Samuel Pepys ruthlessly described the 1595 "A Midsummer's Night's Dream" as "the most insipid, ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life." Even Voltaire stepped into the ring by saying that "Shakespeare is a drunken savage with some imagination whose plays please only in London and Canada," before adding that "Shakespeare is the Corneille of London, but everywhere else he is a great fool".

Did Shakespeare invent words?

Yes, among them the word "assassination". Furthermore, Shakespeare is said to have had a vocabulary of some 29,066 words. An average person's today might use just 2000 words used in everyday conversation. With a vocabulary like that, who needs a dictionary?

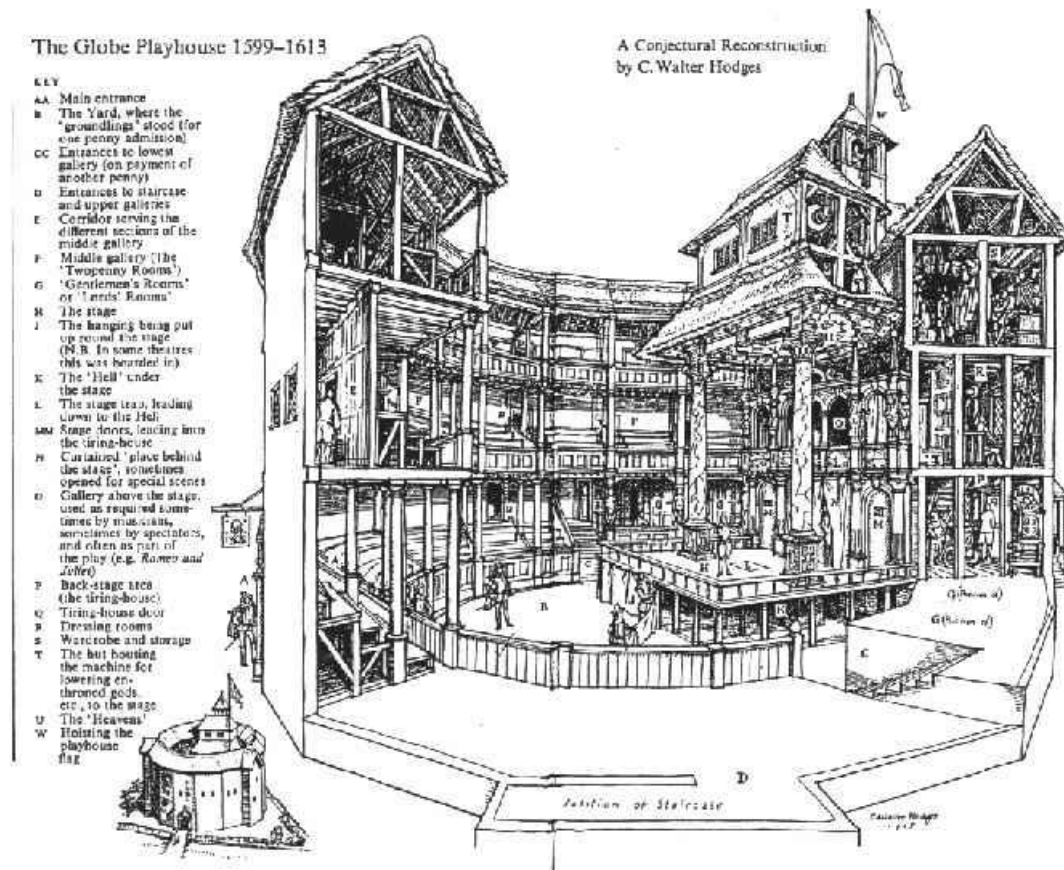
The Globe Theatre

The original Globe Theatre was built in 1599 by the playing company Lord Chamberlain's Men, to which Shakespeare belonged, and was destroyed by fire on 29 June 1613. The fire was caused by an accident with a cannon during a production of Henry VIII. The theatre was rebuilt by June 1614 (the exact opening date is not known), but was officially closed by pressure of Puritan opinion in 1642 and demolished in 1644. A modern replica now stands in its approximate place in London, opened in 1997.



- All social classes visited the theatre to be entertained and see people.
- It was a very social event.
- The Globe Theatre didn't just show plays. It 'acted' also a bear pit, brothel, and a gambling house.
- The actors were all men in Shakespeare's day. The parts of women were played by boys who still had light voices. In fact, during the first performance of Macbeth, William Shakespeare himself was forced to play Lady Macbeth when the boy designated to play her suddenly became overcome with sickness and died. King James was so displeased with the play that it was banned for five years.

The interior of the globe was divided into social classes:



A: The Yard, where the 'groundlings' stood for one penny admission.

B: The Middle Gallery ('Twopenny Rooms')

C: Gallery above the stage used either in some productions (e.g. *Romeo and Juliet*) or for upper-class people to sit.

D: The 'Hell' under the stage.

E: The 'Heavens'.

Shakespeare in Love

Watch the film clips and add to your notes about The Globe Theatre.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_KXbKa2crl

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3PIhGgtWTs>

What would it have felt like to watch a play in The Globe if you were:

A. Lower-class?

B. Upper-class?

Reading Shakespeare's Plays

Before you start to read Shakespeare's plays, you will want to take a look at some of the language uses that might stand in your way of understanding the script.

Types of Language

The language used by Shakespeare in his plays is in one of three forms: prose, rhyme or blank verse, each of which he uses to achieve specific effects.

PROSE refers to ordinary speech with no regular pattern of rhythm. Lines of text do not all have the same number of syllables nor is there any noticeable pattern of stresses. If you are unsure if a passage is in prose or in blank verse, look for the following visual clue: a long passage in prose is typically printed in your text like an ordinary paragraph with right and left justification. The lines of print extend from left to right margin with no "hard return" in the middle of a sentence. Standard rules of capitalisation are followed: only proper nouns (names and place names), the pronoun "I" and the first letter of a new sentence are capitalised.

PROSE is used whenever verse would seem bizarre: in serious letters, in proclamations, and in the speeches of characters actually or pretending to be mad. Prose is used for cynical commentary or reducing flowery speech to common sense terms. It is used when the rational is contrasted with the emotional. It is used for scenes of everyday life; for low comedy; and for bantering, relaxed or unbuttoned conversation.

RHYME is usually in rhymed couplets, i.e. two successive lines of verse of which the final words rhyme with another. The rhyme pattern is conventionally represented aa bb cc etc. Because rhyme is easy to hear, typically no visual clue is needed for you to recognize that a passage is in rhyme; however, note in rhymed passages that 1) the line of print does not extend to fill the whole page (there is a "hard return" after every rhyme word, so that the text appears as a column that does not fill the whole page); and 2) the first word of every line is capitalised without regard to standard rules of capitalisation. These two printing conventions are a visual clue that a speech is in verse rather than in prose.

Rhyme is often used for ritualistic or choral effects and for highly lyrical or moralistic passages that give advice or point to a moral. Rhyme is also used for songs; in examples of bad verse; in Prologues, Epilogues and Choruses; in masques and in plays-within-plays, where it distinguishes these imaginary performances from the "real world" of the play. It is also used for many displays of the supernatural like fairies and witches - but not for ghosts, who retain the human use of blank verse.

BLANK VERSE refers to unrhymed iambic pentameter. Blank verse resembles prose in that the final words of the lines do not rhyme in any regular pattern (although an occasional rhyming couplet may be found at the end of a speech or scene in blank verse, in which case it is called a 'capping couplet'.) Unlike prose, there is a recognisable meter: most lines consist of ten syllables alternating unstressed and stressed syllables. If you are unsure if a passage is in blank verse or in prose, READ IT ALOUD. If you can discern the regular rhythmic pattern of iambic pentameter (da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM), it is in blank verse. If you are STILL uncertain whether the passage is in blank verse or prose, look for the following visual clue: as in rhymed verse, in blank verse 1) the line of print does not extend to fill the whole page (there is a "hard return" at

the end of every line, so the text appears as a column that does not fill the whole page); and 2) the first word of every line is capitalised without regard to standard rules of capitalisation.

Blank verse is employed in a wide range of situations because it comes close to the natural speaking rhythms of English but raises it above the ordinary without sounding artificial (unlike the "singsong" effect produced by dialogue in rhyme). Blank verse, as opposed to prose, is used mainly for passionate, lofty or momentous occasions and for introspection; it may suggest a refinement of character.

Unusual Word Arrangements

Many students ask if people really spoke the way they do in Shakespeare's plays. The answer is no. Shakespeare wrote the way he did for poetic and dramatic purposes. There are many reasons why he did this--to create a specific poetic rhythm, to emphasize a certain word, to give a character a specific speech pattern, etc. Let's take a look at a great example from Robinson's *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language*.

I ate the sandwich.

I the sandwich ate.

Ate the sandwich I.

Ate I the sandwich.

The sandwich I ate.

The sandwich ate I.

Robinson shows us that these four words can create six unique sentences which carry the same meaning. When you are reading Shakespeare's plays, look for this type of unusual word arrangement. Locate the subject, verb, and the object of the sentence. Notice that the object of the sentence is often placed at the beginning (the sandwich) in front of the verb (ate) and subject (I). Rearrange the words in the order that makes the most sense to you (I ate the sandwich). This will be one of your first steps in making sense of Shakespeare's language.

Omissions

Again, for the sake of his poetry, Shakespeare often left out letters, syllables, and whole words. These omissions really aren't that much different from the way we speak today. We say:

"Been to class yet?"

"No. Heard Ulen's givin' a test."

"Wha'sup wi'that?"

We leave out words and parts of words to speed up our speech. If we were speaking in complete sentences, we would say:

"Have you been to class yet?"

"No, I have not been to class. I heard that Mrs. Ulen is giving a test today."

"What is up with that?"

A few examples of Shakespearean omissions/contractions follow:

'tis ~ it is
ope ~ open
o'er ~ over
gi' ~ give
ne'er ~ never i' ~ in
e'er ~ ever
oft ~ often
a' ~ he
e'en ~ even

Unusual Words

Most of us run into problems when we come across archaic words that are no longer used in Modern English. Or worse, when we run across words that are still used today but have much different meanings than when Shakespeare used (or invented!) the words. This is particularly troublesome, because we think we know what the word means, but the line still doesn't make sense.

Although it is frustrating when we come across these unknown words, it is not surprising. Shakespeare's vocabulary included 30,000 words. Today our vocabularies only run between 6,000 and 15,000 words! Because Shakespeare loved to play with words, he also created new words that we still use today.

Check out this website for a glossary of language used in Shakespeare's day.

<http://www.shakespearehigh.com/classroom/guide/page3.shtml>

Terminology: talking about Shakespeare

Soliloquy (see also Dramatic Monologue):

a monologue spoken by a character who is alone (or assumes that he or she is alone) on stage, revealing their inner thoughts and motives. Soliloquies may appear to involve the character 'thinking aloud', or may be addressed to the audience. Example:

Macbeth's *soliloquies* reveal the evil intentions he masks from the other characters.

Dramatic Irony (see also Tragic Irony):

a technique employed by a text, where a circumstance in a play or narrative leads to the audience or reader knowing more than one of the character's does, which leads to that character doing or saying something very inappropriate. Example:

The play employs *dramatic irony* to amplify the audience's feelings of dread of what they know will happen because of Macbeth's inappropriate actions and speech.

Paradox:

a statement that is apparently self-contradictory but still holds truth. Example:

"I am bent to know by the worst means ... for mine own good" Macbeth

"I must be cruel to be kind" Hamlet

Oxymoron:

a figure of speech in which two apparent opposites are combined for striking effect. Example:

The *oxymoron*, "fair is foul and foul is fair" is expressed by the witches to foreshadow the blurring of Macbeth's perception of right and wrong as his ambition heightens. Others: "parting is such sweet sorrow", "I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief."

Imagery (see also Motif):

descriptions of objects and sensations (and patterns of comparisons or descriptions) which can be read as representing a particular emotion or idea in the text. Example:

Macbeth repeats images of darkness, death and disease, which support and amplify the tragic narrative.

Shakespearean Tragedy:

Common features include:

- involves CONFLICT, of universal significance
- the hero is of high birth and position (emphasises the importance of the protagonist's moral decision and downfall)
- the hero has many good qualities
- the hero's one tragic flaw (hamartia) is played upon by circumstances. Character *and* circumstance bring about tragedy.
- the hero's tragic flaw (hamartia) brings about his downfall and death
- widespread man-made consequences and the suffering of innocent people, often large body counts!
- the audience is encouraged to feel pity, fear and a sense of wastage at the end
- involves abnormal conditions of insanity (Lady Macbeth and Macbeth in Macbeth, Ophelia in Hamlet)
- involves the supernatural (ghosts, witches, fate, superhuman forces)
- the narrative is influenced by chance or accident at some point (fate!)

- follows the format: *exposition * growth of conflict * man-made catastrophe*, with the tragic hero discovering 'truth' or wisdom before his death (suffering brings wisdom) * *catharsis* (purging) of the emotions of an audience through the terror and pity evoked

Macbeth as a Tragedy

In the beginning of the play, The Tragedy of Macbeth, Macbeth is merely a nobleman and a Scottish general in King Duncan's army. Macbeth later becomes the deserving Thane of Glamis and Cawdor and the undeserving King of Scotland. In the beginning Macbeth is a man with good intentions and a good heart; sometimes he just has a hard time following his good instincts and heart. Macbeth's ambition and the persuasion of his wife lead him to commit several horrible deeds. Macbeth is brave, good-hearted, disobeying, easily persuaded, overly-ambitious, and literal-minded and unimaginative.

Throughout the play, Macbeth is a character who shows extreme bravery. The audience can see his bravery through his efforts and victories on the battlefield. The Captain speaks of Macbeth's bravery when he is describing Macbeth's triumph over Macdonald and his strong forces, "But all's too weak,/For brave Macbeth - well he deserves that name-/Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel/Which smoked with bloody execution,/Like Valour's minion carved out his passage" . . . (I.i.5). The captain then goes on to tell how Macbeth and Banquo fought successfully through an assault of fresh Norwegian troops. Macbeth is obviously a loyal general who fights hard and with courage for his country. Macbeth displays his bravery when he kills Duncan and Duncan's two guards. Killing someone is in itself a brave act. In order to actually go through with the act of murdering somebody takes much courage. Murdering a person is an act that requires bravery to commit, but it also requires bravery to face the consequences if one is caught. Another instance of Macbeth's bravery is when Macbeth fights Macduff at the end of the play. All of Macbeth's soldiers and friends flee in terror of the approaching army. Macbeth is the only one to stand his ground and fight to the death.

Macbeth shows signs of having a good heart and good intentions, but he also shows that he has a weak mind that ignores and disobeys what his good heart tells him is right. The audience can see Macbeth's good heart when Lady Macbeth tries to persuade him to kill Duncan. At first Macbeth refuses to do such a horrible deed. He knows in his heart that killing Duncan is wrong and deceitful. Just after Macbeth has received the news from the witches that he will be King, he thinks to himself, "This supernatural soliciting/Cannot be ill, cannot be good. . . . If good, why do I yield to that suggestion,/Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair/And make me seated heart knock at my ribs/Against the use of nature?" (I.iii.17). Macbeth's heart is telling him that this suggestion of killing Duncan cannot be good. The reader can see that Macbeth tries to listen to his good heart when he tells Lady Macbeth that he will not kill Duncan, "We will proceed no further in this business./He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought/Golden Opinions from all sorts of people,/Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,/Not cast aside so soon" (I.vii.33). Although Macbeth has a good heart with good intentions, he does not obey and listen to his heart. He allows Lady Macbeth to persuade him into doing what he knows is wrong. Macbeth knows he has chosen the wrong path when he says, "I'll go no more./I am afraid to think what I have done;/Look on't again, I dare not" (II.ii.45). Therefore Macbeth is disobeying of what he knows is right. In fact, Macbeth speaks of the distrust he has for his heart when he says, "False face must hide what the false heart doth know"(I.vii.35). All Lady Macbeth has to do to convince Macbeth to kill Duncan is call him a coward and unmanly a few times. The fact that Macbeth is so easily persuaded to kill a man just from being called a coward and unmanly is certainly a sign of a weak mind which does not trust the heart.

In the end Macbeth's excessive ambition --his tragic flaw-- gets him killed. Macbeth becomes so obsessed with the idea of becoming King that he isolates himself from his good heart. After Macbeth kills Duncan, he becomes so set on becoming king that he tries to have Banquo's son, Fleance, killed, so that there is no one in his way of becoming king. Macbeth's ambition forces him to murder two other innocent people. After the three witches tell Macbeth to beware of Macduff, Macbeth sends his people to murder Macduff. Macbeth's people end up killing Macduff's wife and son. Macbeth's excessive ambition leads him to the 'point of no return'.

Another of Macbeth's traits is his literal and unimaginative mind. For instance, when the witches tell Macbeth that he is to be Thane of Cawdor and King, he is confused about how he can be Thane of Cawdor if the Thane is alive. Macbeth's confusion is ended only after Ross tells Macbeth that Duncan has given the death sentence to the present Thane of Cawdor, and has declared Macbeth the future Thane of Cawdor. Once his head is clear again, Macbeth begins to wonder how he can be King when Duncan is alive. Instead of wondering how fate will allow him to be King, he decides that the only way to become King is to kill Duncan. Macbeth does not trust fate; he only trusts himself to make the prophecy come true. Therefore Macbeth does not have faith, which demands imagination. The reader sees Macbeth's literal mind when he so easily accepts what the witches tell him. Just because three witches tell Macbeth of his future, does not mean it is a true prophecy.

So, Macbeth can be seen a good man who is too easily persuaded by his wife to commit several awful deeds. Macbeth's ambition and disobedience gets him killed. Macbeth is given a prophecy to be King and that pressure is applied by his wife, but his ambition is the tragic flaw that kills him in the end. Macbeth can be seen as a brave, good hearted man, who possesses a weak mind which allows his ambition and the persuasion of his wife to lead him down the wrong paths, ultimately leading to his destruction.

Macbeth's Tragic Flaw

Macbeth's "vaulting ambition", though it is what brings him to his height of power, it is also what leads him to his downfall. Vaulting Ambition is Macbeth's flaw; it disables him to achieve his utmost goals and forces him to face his fate. Without this ambition, though, Macbeth never would have been able to achieve his power as King of Scotland or have been able to carry out his evil deeds. In these instances, ambition helped Macbeth do what he wanted to do. But, consequently, Macbeth's ambition has another face and is what leads him to his tragic downfall. Had he not been so enveloped with becoming King and remaining powerful, he would not have continued to kill innocent people in order to keep his position. It was because of these killings and his overbearing attitude that caused him to be overthrown and killed himself.

Macbeth, at the beginning of the play seems to be a very noble person. He is characterised as being very loyal and honourable. He fights in the battle against Norway, proving his loyalty, then he is appointed Thane of Cawdor which proves that he is honourable in the eyes of royalty. However, as soon as the witches spark ambition in him, he is no longer trustworthy and becomes evil and deceiving. Even before he reaches his home, thoughts of murder creep into his head and he is overcome with the desire to be powerful.

"The prince of Cumberland: that is a step on which I must not fall down, or else o'erleap, for in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires, let not light see my black and deep desires, the eye wink at the hand. Yet let that be, which the eye fears when it is done to see" (Shakespeare 21). At this point in the play, Macbeth's ambition starts to come into view. The seed has been planted, and there seems to be no turning back. Macbeth becomes bloodthirsty and powerstricken, forcing himself further and further into a web of ambition from which he is unable to detach himself.

Macbeth's ambition is what allowed him to become powerful, allowing him to overcome his obstacles and come closer to his final goals. He first murders Duncan so that he will become king. Macbeth's ambition is directly the cause of this tragic incident. This murder is in cold evil blood by Macbeth's own hand; at this point he starts seeking his future on his own and will overcome any obstacles in his way. Then, Macbeth ventures on even farther to protect his crown. He proceeds in his evil plans by killing Banquo. This is the climax of the play as well as the height of Macbeth's vaulting ambition.

Macbeth, up to this point, is almost drunk with his own power and ambition. He does not even hesitate to make rash decisions. He is obsessed with reigning as king, but does not realize that what he is doing to make himself more powerful is actually leading him to a tragic and fatal downfall. First of all, he resorts to spying on Macduff and makes the rash decision to seize his castle. "Seize upon Fife, give to th'edge o'th'sword His wife, his babes, and all infortunate souls that trace him in his line". This causes Macbeth to seem tyrannical and results in more people turning against him. He is only interested in himself and his power, but does not even take into consideration that his actions are causing him to be less powerful. Macbeth, while trying to

stay powerful, also becomes paranoid. He never feels like he is at his height of power, and therefore feels like others were out to take his power away from him. Macbeth, then goes to whatever lengths he can to stay powerful. He murders numerous people, causing King Edward of England to organise troops to overthrow him.

Anything that happens to Macbeth is traced back to his vaulting ambition. This ambition can be blamed for his great power, as well as his downfall. Macbeth's entire character is an example of this quote by Shakespeare: "The heavens themselves, the planets and this center [earth] Observe degree, priority, and place... Take but degree away, untune that string, and hark, what discord follows!" Macbeth created discord and led himself to his tragic death. Ambition helped him to become extremely powerful, but his vaulting ambition is what finally led him to his tragic death. The text suggests that, had it not been for Macbeth's obsession with power, he would have been able to remain powerful, but it is because of his ambition that causes him to become less powerful and leads him to his downfall.

Tragic Hero/ine:

the principal character in a tragedy who begins in a position of social importance (a king, prince or general) and who is held in high esteem, but through a **tragic flaw** or **hamartia** (error of judgment or momentary lapse of reason) brings about their own downfall and destruction. Fated: controlled by forces other than him/herself.

Macbeth is the *tragic hero* in Macbeth, whose hamartia (tragic flaw) is his vaulting ambition.

Protagonist:

the main character (or the most important persons) in a play or story or situation; often the hero/heroine. Example:

Macbeth is the *protagonist* in Macbeth.

The heroic qualities of the *protagonist* are highlighted in this scene.

Antagonist:

the chief opponent or rival of the *protagonist* in a play or narrative and is used to block the effects of the chief character to attain his or her goal. Example:

The audience is encouraged to respond negatively to the *antagonist* in the play.

Juxtaposition:

literary technique of placing close together, or side by side, events, characters or objects to highlight some particular aspect. Example:

The text uses the *juxtaposition* of dark and light imagery to highlight the struggle between good and evil.

The text *juxtaposes* free will with fatalism to highlight the flaws in the society depicted in the text.

Antitheses / Binary Oppositions / Dyads / Dichotomies:

patterns of opposing concepts or ideas which work to reproduce a set of beliefs or values and serve a particular interest (think back to the Great Chain of Being). Example:

Macbeth explores the *binary oppositions* of mind and body, male and female and rational and emotional.

The text explores the *antithesis* of order and chaos.

The *dichotomised opposites* of rationality and insanity begin to blur.

The *antithetical opposites* of darkness and lightness are employed by the text to highlight the theme of evil's struggle with goodness.

Microcosm:

small world. Example:

Macbeth's character represents a *microcosm* of Humanity, exhibiting a complex capacity for both good and evil.

Macrocosm:

big world. Example:

On a *macrocosmic* level, Macbeth presents a view of the world where the antithetical forces of order and chaos, good and evil and light and dark, constantly compete for power.

Dramatic Conventions

Using the definitions above and good old Google, create a dictionary definition and your own definition of the following terms.

<i>Conventions</i>	<i>Dictionary Definition</i>	<i>Your Definition</i>
<i>Verbal Conventions</i>		
Speech		
dialogue		
Tone of voice		
tenor		
rhythm		
rhyme		
Volume		
soliloquies		
asides		
monologues		
<i>Non- Verbal conventions</i>		
characters		
clothing		
setting		
Props		
symbols		
lighting		
SFX		
juxtaposition		
Body language		
Position on stage		
Stance, position in relation to other characters		
Signs or written code, off stage effects, sounds		

Dramatic Elements and ‘reading’ the play

“Reading” a printed playscript differs from the experience of ‘reading’ a performed play.

Reading a playscript

- Much of the meaning an audience gains about the drama text is from what we understand as we read the printed text.
- We position ourselves as readers in the way we respond to the story, are drawn into following the line of action and empathising with some characters while rejecting/condemning others.
- Our responses may be influenced by other members of the audience- “aesthetic” reading when experiencing the play being performed.
- A playscript is a blueprint for the production.
- **Shakespearean plays- use of explicit instructions (Extradialogic instructions)** and take the form of detailed descriptions of aspects of the set or characters (eg. Downstage is a large, padded armchair covered with a pink and mauve floral, patterned fabric) or use of single words interpolated in the dialogue as an instruction to an actor as to how to speak or move, (eg. Sadly, or, Pause)
- **Intradialogic instructions-** those which are implicit in the dialogue (eg. “Be there tears wet?”) Shakespearean plays often feature these instructions so that ‘the text itself... states the terms of its own staging.”
- **Procedural** texts- playscripts which contain extradialogic and/ or intradialogic stage directions. These texts require the reader to stand outside the text and extricate from it, the information required and from this information to visualise what is happening on stage. This mode of reading is called “**efferent**” reading.
- **Efferent reading-** means to not only look at the words and have them evoke personal response, as if they are real speech of characters, but to also see and understand the directions for the play’s performance. Directions or instructions are embedded in the lines spoken by actors, and are not only indicators of how to speak, but also of the **kinesics** (the way in which certain body movements and gestures serve as a form of non-verbal communication) and proxemics (**the use of space/distance between characters on stage- can represent the relationship between characters of the performance**).
- **Context of Shakespearean plays-** were written and performed in a particular cultural, social and theatrical context. Readers need to understand the and reconstruct the values, ideologies and social relationships that we believe to have been part of the that context.

Our reconstructions will be shaped by our own set of values and attitudes. Therefore, a study of a Shakespearean play will reflect **our context of reception as modern readers**.

- **The process of meaning making**

- Consider yourself and your interpersonal relationships with others**
- Consider the cultural/social context in which you live**
- Consider the aesthetics of theatre art, including printed and performed texts. You need to understand the play a construct, an artefact, a crafted work of art.**

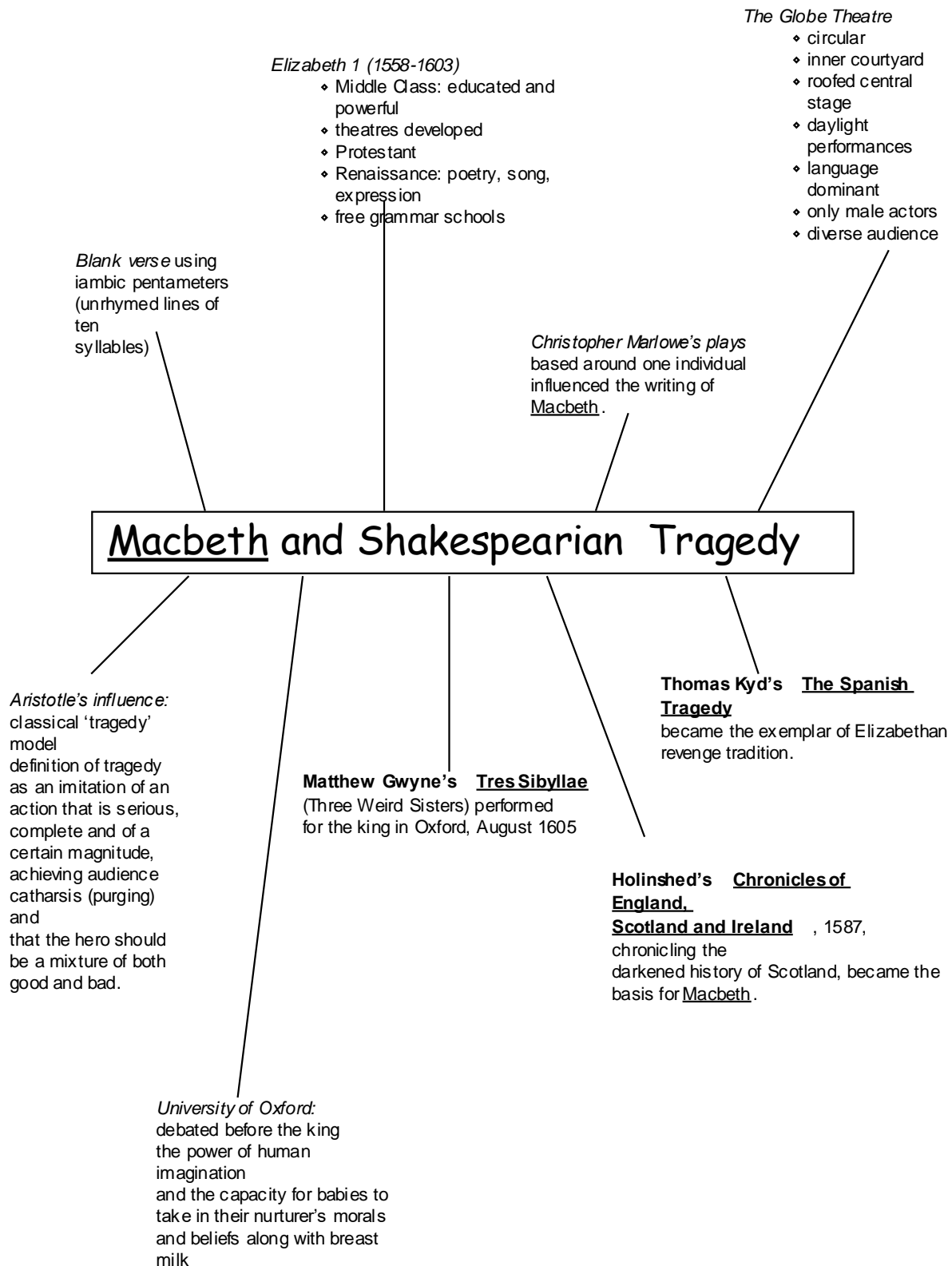
Staging of the play's production

Elizabethan audiences often viewed plays in an 'inn yard' where they surrounded the performers.

Shakespearean plays shared common production elements:

- Close proximity** of players and audience
- **Fixed stage backdrop**- demanded that emphasis was placed on spoken words and gestures of actors as costume changes/ set changes/ props and lighting and visual effects were limited or not available.
- **Alterations of mood and scene change** achieved through use of tone and pace of language and music.
- Play itself moved in a **"naturalistic"** form.
- Characters knew they were able to act in non-naturalistic ways eg. as witches or goblins on stage. (no fourth wall existed)
- Asides and soliloquies**- due to proximity between actors and audience- actors could directly address and acknowledge the audience using these devices which may have invited an audience comment.
- Lack of visual imagery**- bare, minimal props on stage required emphasis placed on verbal communication and **dramatic imagery, and the visual imagery of costumes.**
- Costumes signalled change of scenes and served as a visual metaphor for action eg. Macbeth's descent into madness.**
- Use of directions within dialogue** eg. 'See where he comes' to signal movement-entrance/exits from the stage.
- Use of down stage for action scenes or intimate**
- Use of up stage for ceremonial/ static action/eavesdropping**

The Social and Historical Context of *Macbeth*



Background

Shakespeare wrote ***Macbeth*** sometime between 1603 and 1606, shortly after King James of Scotland took over the English throne from Queen Elizabeth I. The period of James' reign was marked by political and religious conflict, much of which focused the kingdom's attention on the danger of regicide (the act of killing a king). As a result, much of the literature of the time also focussed on this topic.

Following the process used to create many of his plays, Shakespeare drew the plot for ***Macbeth*** from historical sources—particularly Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577). Although Holinshed contains the story of the real-life Macbeth and Duncan, Shakespeare did not rely on this source only; instead, he combined different stories and different versions of the same story to create his drama. Therefore, although the sources from which Shakespeare worked all referred to events that had taken place in eleventh-century Scotland, the play itself is not an accurate historical document.

Macbeth is set in Scotland soon after the end of English rule, which had dominated Scotland from the beginning of the tenth century. However, Shakespeare adopted and adapted the time and setting of his play for the purposes of building drama, creating a suggestion of medieval Scotland whose mood would frame the actions of his fictional Macbeth. Nonetheless, the play refers often to details of Scottish culture at that time, without an understanding of which the audience can miss some of the play's meaning.

The Norse invasion—raiders and settlers

During the ninth century Scotland found itself under invasion by raiders from Norway and Denmark, commonly known as Vikings or Norsemen, who dominated the northern seas for several hundred years. The villages and monasteries of Scotland, often isolated in a landscape comprised of offshore island chains, deep inlets or fjords, and rugged mountains, were easy targets for the Norse rovers. The Scandinavian pirates launched raids on Scotland from the surrounding islands, and few monasteries or villages could hope to defend themselves from these attacks.

King James I

It is often thought that *Macbeth* was written to be played not in the Globe theatre, but as a private performance before King James I. The story contains many reflections of James' interests: the family tree of Scottish royalty, the issue of "just" kingship, the threat of regicide, and witchcraft.

James I believed in the Divine Right of kings – that kings were appointed by God. This was accepted by most people, probably including Shakespeare. James wrote at length about the role of kings, including their responsibilities.

King James on Witchcraft

One of King James' greatest passions was the study of witchcraft. In 1597 he wrote *Daemonologie*, an influential text in which he contended that witchcraft was a reality and that its practitioners must be punished.

The Great Chain of Being

The concept of a Chain of Being stemmed from the Christianity of the Middle Ages and persisted in late 16th/ early 17th century England. (The play is set in 11th century Scotland.) The Great Chain of Being was a belief in the cosmic order of the universe; that everything was arranged in a certain hierarchical sequence. This belief proposed that any break in this prearranged order of things would upset the order of the universe and create chaos. This advocated and perpetuated existing economic and social hierarchies and discouraged resistance to the accepted 'order'. Therefore, the structure of a well-ordered state/society was a microcosm of this cosmic hierarchy, with the monarch at the head, ruling by Divine Right, subject to God's rule.



Witchcraft

Like many European cultures of the period, medieval Scotland maintained a belief in witches, including their ability to make prophecies and to affect the outcome of certain events. The stereotypical notions of 'witch' were operating in Shakespeare's time. Witches were associated with the dark and death. In Christian countries they were thought to be the agents of Satan, gathering at night and near graves to conduct evil rites, make poisonous concoctions, see into the future, control the weather, cause death, call up the dead and make themselves invisible. Shakespeare's depiction of Macbeth's encounters with the witches drew on both eleventh-century Scottish belief in witches and Renaissance English belief in witches.

Witches were believed to have the following powers:

- They could speak with the devil, and with his help they could communicate with the dead. Some could see into the future.
- They could make people fall ill by using spells and potions, and kill people at a distance.
- They could fly through the air, and make themselves invisible at will.
- They use animals such as cats as disguises for the evil spirits who serve them.
- They can cause bad weather and storms, affecting ships at sea and spoiling the crops.

In other words, they could be blamed for everything and anything that went wrong.

In general, witchcraft was regarded as an evil practice, involving some kind of relationship with the devil, and was therefore considered a threat to society. Scottish authorities often took extreme

measures against witchcraft, and women suspected of witchcraft were often illegally tortured. If found guilty they were hanged, in England, or burnt at the stake, in other countries.

The three fates (the three weird sisters)

a mythological trio of women who are said to weave the thread of human destiny. The three fates have appeared in literature and mythology in many guises: as the three fates in the television series such as Hercules and Charmed, as the three witches or 'weird sisters' in Shakespeare's Macbeth, as fairy godmothers in children's stories. They have been constructed as both the good and nasty sides of "woman". They represent the paradox of feminine identity, having been depicted as good and evil, sacred and profane, mother and whore, virgin and temptress. They emphasise the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the labelling of 'woman'.

There was also a strong belief in fate, the supernatural and forces beyond humanity's control. Astrology, the signs of the zodiac, and the Wheel of Fortune were popularly believed in. Here, people could not control their own destiny. Rather, lives were controlled by a cosmic 'wheel' of fate that determined the events of a person's existence.

A twelve-year-old crippled girl, Agnes Brown, testified on oath that she saw the imp of Joan Waterhouse, whom she accused of causing her lameness: it had, she said, the face of an ape, a short tail, horns, a silver whistle round its neck and carried in its mouth the key of the milk house door.

In Scotland between 1590 and 1680, it is estimated that 4400 witches were executed. The best known case is that of the North Berwick witches in 1590-92. Among other things, they were accused of worshipping the Devil in a church at night, flying in sieves, raising storms and attempting to murder King James I by melting a wax image of him in a fire. The king took the threat seriously and interrogated them himself. One witch, Agnes Sampson, was able to whisper in his ear the words he and his wife had spoken privately to each other on their wedding night, which naturally impressed him. The North Berwick witches finally confessed and were all executed.

The following law was passed by Parliament on the wishes of James I in 1563. It was not repealed until 1951.

That "if any person shall use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit; 2. Or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed or reward any evil or cursed spirit to or for any intent or purpose; 3. Or take up any dead man, woman or child out of the grave, - or the skin, bone, or any part of the dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; 4. Or shall use practice, or exercise any sort of witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment; 5. Whereby any person shall be destroyed, killed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in any part of the body; 6. That every such person being convicted shall suffer death."



Macbeth: Analysis

Characters

Macbeth

Macbeth is the protagonist in the play. In the beginning of the play he is a nobleman and Scottish general in King Duncan's army. Macbeth later becomes the Thane of Glamis and Cawdor and King of Scotland. Macbeth is a man who is easily persuaded, brave, good-hearted, and overly-ambitious. In the beginning of the play Macbeth is a man with a good heart and good intentions, but he is too easily persuaded by his wife into killing Duncan. Macbeth also has several other people killed. Macbeth is a very brave man who shows his bravery throughout the play. Macbeth's tragic flaw is his vaulting ambition. In the end it Macbeth's ambition and bravery which get him killed.

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth takes advantage of her husband's love and devotion to her to goad him into killing Duncan and starting down the immoral road of choices and decisions which ultimately lead to Lady Macbeth's suicide and Macbeth's death. Her ambition, unlike her husband's, is unbridled by morals. She even requests the heavens to "unsex" her of any feelings that might inhibit her ability to become queen. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, although they love each other, grow further apart throughout the play.

Banquo

Banquo, a friend to Macbeth early in the play, is the only other person who directly interacts with the witches. Their prophecy for Banquo is that "Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none" (I.iii.65). This means that Banquo's descendants are to be kings, but Banquo himself will never be king. Later, when Macbeth becomes obsessively paranoid, he orders both Banquo and Fleance killed. Banquo is killed by the assassins, but Fleance escapes, so the prophecy can come to be.

Donaldbain is King Duncan's younger son and brother to Malcolm. In the beginning of the play he is present, but he does not have any speaking parts. Fearing for his life and future, he suggests to Malcolm that they flee; Donaldbain flees to Ireland. Donaldbain plays a minor role in the play, and after he flees to Ireland, does not return to the action of the play.

Malcolm

Malcolm is King Duncan's elder son and brother to Donaldbain. Duncan announces Malcolm Prince of Cumberland, which puts him in line to become the next King of Scotland. Upon Donaldbain's suggestion to flee, Malcolm flees to England for fear of his future. Malcolm is the man who kills Macbeth and fills his rightful position as the King of Scotland. Malcolm is a man that believes in fighting for what he thinks is right. Malcolm leads the army against Macbeth. He is a brave man who faces his enemy, Macbeth, and kills him.

Duncan

Duncan is the loyal King of Scotland. He seems to be a good king, and a competent leader on the battle field. Duncan is a man who is liked by the people of Scotland. He has two sons; his elder son is named Malcolm and his younger son is named Donaldbain. Duncan announces Malcolm as the Prince of Cumberland and next in line to be King of Scotland. Duncan is a good and loyal friend to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Duncan is Macbeth's first victim. Duncan is a man who cares for his

friends and for his people. Duncan is a good king, who is betrayed and killed by a supposed friend, Macbeth.

Lennox

Lennox is a Thane of high nobility who seems to be a friend of Macbeth's. He does not play a very big role in the play and does not serve any great significance. During the night of Duncan's murder, he hears a large procession of noises. However, he never seems to connect Duncan's murder to Macbeth.

Macduff

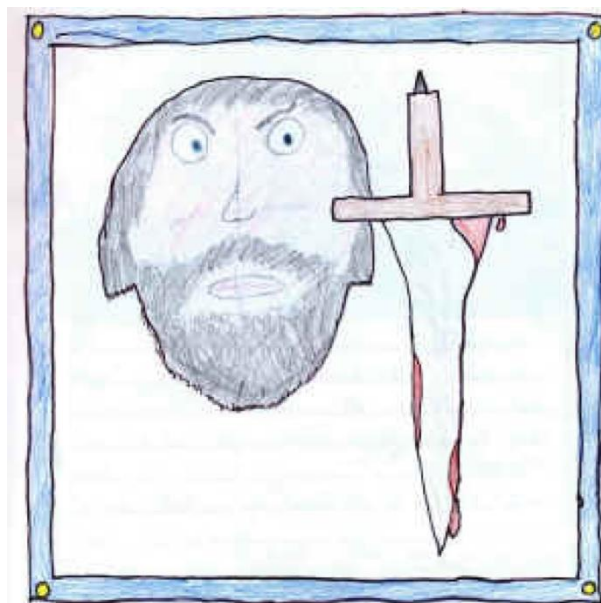
Macduff, is sceptical of Macbeth early in the play, and remains so until the end, at which time he flees Scotland, at the cost of his family's life, to raise an army with Malcolm to overthrow Macbeth. Macduff, being born via caesarian section and therefore not of "woman naturally born," kills Macbeth in one of the final scenes of the play avenging his family's untimely and cruel death.

Ross

Ross is a Thane and a very high ranking individual. He is regarded with respect and also seems to be outspoken. The day after Duncan is killed he claims that he saw Duncan's horses eating each other. He also, at Macbeth's banquet after Banquo is killed, is the first to ask Macbeth about his strange sightings. Ross, is also a hypocrite. He goes to see Lady Macduff and reassures her that Macbeth's tyranny is not going to last forever. Then, when he leaves Lady Macduff's castle, he waves in the murderers to kill everyone in the household.

The Three Murderers

At first there are only two murderers. They are very bitter and crude and Macbeth even calls them dogs. One murderer does not care about life in the slightest and the other will do anything even if it causes his own death. At the last minute though, Macbeth sends a third murderer. His identity is not known, but he seems to be educated and might even be Macbeth in disguise.



Imagery

- Darkness and light (and other binary oppositions like health/disease, order/disorder, good/evil, guilt/innocence)
- Blood
- Disease
- Feasting
- Animals
- Children (think about innocence)
- Sleep (think about innocence)
- Clothes (eg: “borrowed robes”)



Overarching Topics

- Ambition
- Evil
- Order and Disorder (the nature of order, within society and within the individual)
- Appearance and Reality (think about outward appearances and inner truths/turmoil)
- Tyranny, Violence and Society
- Power and Authority
- Guilt and Conscience (also, sanity and insanity, rationality and passion)
- Masculinity and identity

Think also about the binary oppositions in the play, the motifs of: dark and light, male and female, order and disorder, cleanliness and dirtiness, health and disease, good and evil, peace and violence, power and powerlessness, guilt and innocence, Heaven and Hell.

Consider: what are the messages or ideas about these topics?

The 32-second *Macbeth*

Actors 1, 2, 3 Fair is foul and foul is fair

Actor 4 What bloody man is that?

Actor 2 A drum, a drum! Macbeth doth come

Macbeth So foul and fair a day I have not seen

Actor 3 All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Macbeth If chance will have me king, then chance will crown me

Actor 5 Unsex me here

Macbeth If it were done when 'tis done

Actor 5 Screw your courage to the sticking place

Macbeth Is this a dagger that I see before me? (Actor 4 dies)

Actor 5 A little water clears us of this deed.

Actor 6 Fly, good Fleance, fly! (dies)

Macbeth Blood will have blood

Actors 1, 2, 3 Double, double, toil and trouble

Actor 7 He has kill'd me, mother! (dies)

Actor 8 Bleed, bleed, poor country!

Actor 5 Out damn'd spot! (dies)

Macbeth Out, out, brief candle!

Actor 8 Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth Lay on Macduff! (dies)

Actor 8 Hail, king of Scotland!

Character Analysis

Macbeth is a tragic hero because of a grave error of judgment and his own ambition cause him to murder Duncan, leading to chaos, destruction, and eventually his own death. According to Aristotle's theory of tragedy, the tragic hero must begin the play as a high status individual so that his fall from grace carries impact. Aristotle believed that since the aim of tragedy is to provoke intense emotion in the audience, that goal is more easily met by showing something terrible happen to a king or a noble man than by telling a tragic story about a shepherd or a farmer. Also, when a hero is of high status, his actions have repercussions for the whole community, such as disrupting line of inheritance of the throne. Macbeth begins the play as a wealthy and high status Scottish nobleman who has also just distinguished himself and earned the king's favor due to his bravery and skill as a warrior. The audience initially admires him for his accomplishments, and can relate to his desire to be king, since ambition is a common human drive.

Macbeth as a Tragic Hero

	Statement	Example	Effect on reader
Macbeth Act 1 Scene 2 Speech Actions Appearance Others (think of him)			
Lady Macbeth's influence			
The role of the witches			
Macbeth End of Act 1 Scene 3 Speech Actions Appearance Others (think of him)			
Macbeth Act 3 Scene 1 Speech Actions Appearance Others			

Characters

Statement	Example	Effect on reader
Macbeth		
Lady Macbeth		
Malcolm		
Duncan		

Banquo		
Witches		
Macduff		

Conflict

	Statement	Example	Effect on reader
Conflict between characters			
Conflict with society			
Conflict with oneself			

Conflict with supernatural forces			
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Theme

<p>Theme</p> <p>Step in</p> <p>(Literally state the ideas about the theme presented and how it this is constructed)</p>	<p>Effect on reader</p> <p>Step out</p>
Ambition	
Appearance and Reality	
Loyalty	

Fate and Free Will	
Guilt	

Signs and symbols in Macbeth

Sign or symbol	Effect on reader
<p>Step in</p> <p>(Literally state the sign, symbol and where it appears)</p>	<p>Step out</p>
<p>EG: Blood</p> <p>"Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts! unsex me here, And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-full Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood, Stop up the access and passage to remorse, That no compunctious visitings of nature Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts, And take my milk for gall"</p>	<p>Lady Macbeth asks that her blood be thickened, alluding to the concept that she is weak and womanly and she must become strong like a man in order to go through with the murder of the King. This line shows that in the beginning Lady Macbeth does have some conscience and worries she will not be able to go through with it. This signals her later guilt where she constantly sees blood.</p>
<p>Blood</p>	
<p>Sleep</p>	
<p>Dreams and hallucinations</p>	

Magic	
Womanhood	
Manhood	
Darkness	
Dagger	
Prophecy	
Others?	

Practice Questions

Modern audiences are much more sympathetic to the character of Macbeth than an Elizabethan audience. Respond.

	Ideas	Examples
Thesis		
Paragraph 1		
Paragraph 2		
Paragraph 3		
Paragraph 4		

Murder, betrayal and ambition attract audiences at any time. How is language used in Macbeth to affect audiences' engagement with these ideas?

	Ideas	Examples
Thesis		
Paragraph 1		
Paragraph 2		
Paragraph 3		
Paragraph 4		

Macbeth's *hamartia* impacts audiences to an extent that they respond with little sympathy to his predicament. Discuss.

	Ideas	Examples
Thesis		
Paragraph 1		
Paragraph 2		
Paragraph 3		
Paragraph 4		

Discuss how Macbeth fosters intellectual and emotional responses in the reader.

	Ideas	Examples
Thesis		

Paragraph 1		
Paragraph 2		
Paragraph 3		
Paragraph 4		

Good Answer Introductions

Question 4

Discuss the representation of masculinity or femininity and response to these representations by a particular audience.

Literature's ability to convey a representation of gender roles and their part in the correct functioning of a society has characterised the work of famous canonical writers through time, and the continued prevalence of the social construct of gender in today's society, encourages a modern, 21st century audience to review and reflect of the representations of gender presented through literary texts over time. British playwright, William Shakespeare's Macbeth (1606), originally performed over 500 hundred years before the birth of its modern audience, offers an insight into historical gender roles, masculinity and femininity, which have formed the cornerstone of those Western audiences still conform to today. By employing a gendered reading practice, a contemporary reader can interrogate and critically respond to the gender roles represented in the text. The notable characterisation of Lady Macbeth through her violent soliloquies and religious allusions to the Adam and Eve creation story, shock modern audiences, who sympathise with her constrained gender role, but are repulsed by her murderous intentions. Furthermore, Lord Macbeth suffers the scorn of a modern audience who deem his attempts to consolidate his masculinity through tyranny and murder, and the symbolism of blood, as an exaggerated caricature of what is defined to be a man. His eventual death is a catharsis for both a modern and historical audience who perceive his actions as fatally flawed, but motivated by his misconception that he would be more of a man in doing them. Finally, audiences find some salvation in the one-dimensional masculinity of Banquo whose dialogue and the stage directions employed at his death reveal that he remains true to the pinnacle of masculine identity typified in Elizabethan/Jacobean society: loyalty and duty. Overall, modern audiences, whose own gender roles still dictate their own identity and thus, their society, appreciate how a persons' gender can inform their personality. However, through a gendered reading and by reflecting on the representations of masculinity and femininity in William Shakespeare's Macbeth, 21st century audiences can recognise the futility of categorising a persons' personality through their gender roles alone, as these often do not, and should not, reflect their behaviour.

Question 3

Explain how the dramatization of one or two character's inner life creates tension and conveys specific ideas.

The purpose of soliloquies and asides within the drama genre enable playwrights to explore the inner world of characters. Dramatized through the medium of theatre, plays must reach out to and enthrall an audience, all the way from the stalls to the heavens. William Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth (1606) creates tension between characters and themselves, as well as their environment and other characters, through the employment of verbal dramatic conventions. Macbeth's inner struggle as he contemplates the potential for him to ascend the throne of Scotland reveals his internal conflict and develops his characterisation as one easily swayed by temptation.

Furthermore, his wife, Lady Macbeth, is similarly characterised through soliloquies laden with dark and violent imagery. Her infamous conflict between herself and Macbeth's own moral beliefs conveys the idea that women are capable of great cruelty, and their words can cut deep into a man's psyche, leading to the eventual madness of both parties. Finally, Lady MacDuff's heart-wrenching soliloquy spoken moments before the death of all her children, and herself, as she pleads her innocence, further communicates the horror and tyranny of a king upon a throne he has no claim to. Although a subplot to the overall tragic tale, her death, and that of her son, effectively communicate the senselessness of a king given over to superstition, fear and deception. Overall, the dramatization of the characters inner lives reveals the true cost of Macbeth's ascent to the throne: his morality, Lady Macbeth's mind and Lady MacDuff's life; the play operates in this manner to achieve that moment of catharsis, whereby the natural order of things is restored and the innocence of the land and its people can live in peace, and its audience can leave, feeling satisfied justice has been done.