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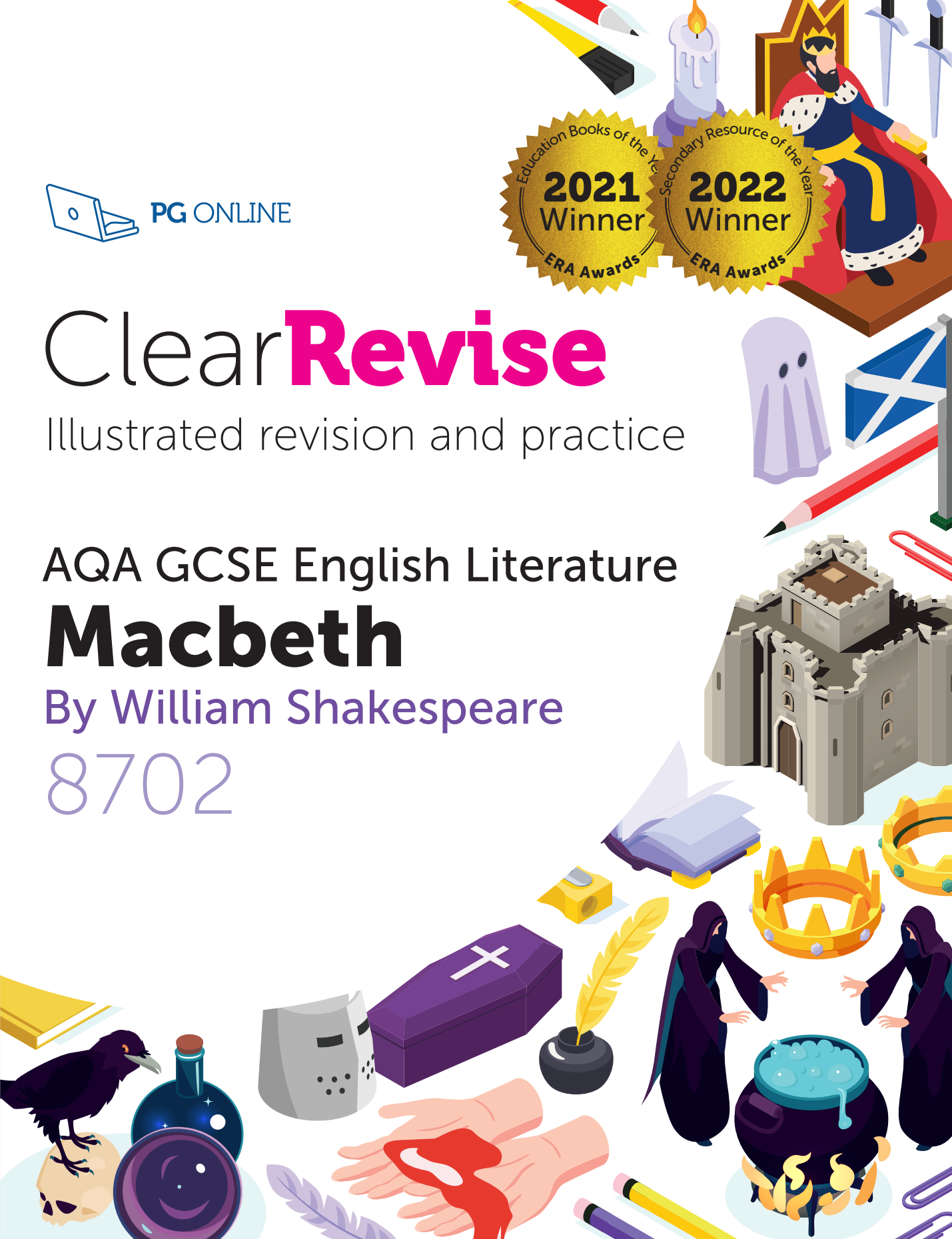
Illustrated revision and practice

AQA GCSE English Literature

Macbeth

By William Shakespeare

8702



Clear**Revise**[®]

AQA GCSE **English Literature**

Illustrated revision and practice

Macbeth

By William Shakespeare

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PREFACE

Absolute clarity! That's the aim.

This is everything you need to ace the question on Macbeth and beam with pride. The content is laid out in a beautifully illustrated format that is clear, approachable and as concise and simple as possible.

The checklist on the contents pages will help you keep track of what you have already worked through and what's left before the big day.

We have included worked exam-style questions with answers. There is also an exam-style question at the end of the book. You can check your answers against those given on page 60.

LEVELS OF LEARNING

Based on the degree to which you are able to truly understand a new topic, we recommend that you work in stages. Start by reading a short explanation of something, then try and recall what you've just read. This will have limited effect if you stop there but it aids the next stage. Question everything. Write down your own summary and then complete and mark a related exam-style question. Cover up the answers if necessary but learn from them once you've seen them. Lastly, teach someone else. Explain the topic in a way that they can understand. Have a go at the different practice questions – they offer an insight into how and where marks are awarded.

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THE SCIENCE OF REVISION

Illustrations and words

Research has shown that revising with words and pictures doubles the quality of responses by students.¹ This is known as ‘dual-coding’ because it provides two ways of fetching the information from our brain. The improvement in responses is particularly apparent in students when they are asked to apply their knowledge to different problems. Recall, application and judgement are all specifically and carefully assessed in public examination questions.

Retrieval of information

Retrieval practice encourages students to come up with answers to questions.² The closer the question is to one you might see in a real examination, the better. Also, the closer the environment in which a student revises is to the ‘examination environment’, the better. Students who had a test 2–7 days away did 30% better using retrieval practice than students who simply read, or repeatedly reread material. Students who were expected to teach the content to someone else after their revision period did better still.³ What was found to be most interesting in other studies is that students using retrieval methods and testing for revision were also more resilient to the introduction of stress.⁴

Ebbinghaus’ forgetting curve and spaced learning

Ebbinghaus’ 140-year-old study examined the rate at which we forget things over time. The findings still hold true. However, the act of forgetting facts and techniques and relearning them is what cements them into the brain.⁵ Spacing out revision is more effective than cramming – we know that, but students should also know that the space between revisiting material should vary depending on how far away the examination is. A cyclical approach is required. An examination 12 months away necessitates revisiting covered material about once a month. A test in 30 days should have topics revisited every 3 days – intervals of roughly a tenth of the time available.⁶

Summary

Students: the more tests and past questions you do, in an environment as close to examination conditions as possible, the better you are likely to perform on the day. If you prefer to listen to music while you revise, tunes without lyrics will be far less detrimental to your memory and retention. Silence is most effective.⁵ If you choose to study with friends, choose carefully – effort is contagious.⁷

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2. Roediger III, H. L., & Karpicke, J.D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. *Psychological Science*, 17(3), 249–255.
3. Nestojko, J., Bui, D., Kornell, N. & Bjork, E. (2014). Expecting to teach enhances learning and organisation of knowledge in free recall of text passages. *Memory and Cognition*, 42(7), 1038–1048.
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7. Busch, B. & Watson, E. (2019), *The Science of Learning*, 1st ed. Routledge.

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MARK ALLOCATIONS

All the questions in this book require extended responses. These answers should be marked as a whole in accordance with the levels of response guidance on **page 61**. The answers provided are examples only. There are many more points to make than there are marks available, so the answers are not exhaustive.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

In the exam, your answers will be marked against assessment objectives (AOs). It's important you understand which skills each AO tests.

AO1

- Show the ability to read, understand and respond to texts.
- Answers should maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response.
- Use examples from the text, including quotes, to support and illustrate points.

AO2

- Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3

- Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

AO4

- Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

The AOs on this page have been written in simple language. See the AQA website for the official wording.



PAPER 1

Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel

Information about Paper 1

Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes (this includes the question on the 19th-century novel)

64 marks (30 marks for Shakespeare plus 4 marks for SPaG, and 30 marks for 19th-century novel)

40% of the qualification grade (20% each for Shakespeare and the 19th-century novel)

Questions

One extended-writing question per text

CONTEXT

Macbeth was written for a 17th-century audience. The context of the 1600s is important for understanding the deeper meaning of the play.

History

Macbeth is set in Scotland during the 11th century. Although the play is very loosely based on real people, most of the play's events are fictional.



You need to comment on the play's context to get marks for AO3 (see page vi).

King James I

James (right) was King James VI of Scotland, and after Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, he also became King James I of England and Ireland. James claimed to be descended from Banquo, so the procession of kings that Macbeth sees in Act 4, Scene 1 is a reference to James' lineage.

In Act 4, Scene 1, Macbeth sees some of Banquo's descendants carrying "treble sceptres". This is a reference to James being ruler of three countries: England, Scotland and Ireland.

Comment: James I sponsored Shakespeare's acting company, and it became known as The King's Men, so Shakespeare would have been careful to present Banquo in a flattering way.

King James I (1566–1625)



Divine Right of Kings

During the Middle Ages and the medieval period, people believed in the **Divine Right of Kings**. This meant that the king (or queen) was appointed by God, and overthrowing a monarch was comparable to directly disobeying God. Since most people in the 17th century were religious, the idea of overthrowing the king would have been abhorrent.

Macbeth renounces the Divine Right when he murders Duncan. As a result, terrible things happen to Macbeth and to Scotland. The play is a warning to anyone contemplating **regicide** (killing a monarch). (See the Gunpowder Plot on page 4.)

Religion

Religion was very important in 17th-century Britain and most people would have followed a version of Christianity. Witchcraft (see page 4) was seen as the work of the devil.



SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

Shakespeare's plays were written over 400 years ago, so the language and punctuation can be tricky for modern-day audiences to understand.

Pronouns

In the 17th century, people used second-person pronouns that are no longer used today:

thou / thee – you

thy – your

thine – yours

The pronoun 'you' is sometimes spelt 'ye'.

Apostrophes

Sometimes letters have been removed from words and replaced with apostrophes. This can be done to adjust the number of syllables in the line and maintain the rhythm of the text.

*That look not like the inhabitants o'
the earth,*

And yet ye are on't?

*That look not like the inhabitants of
the earth,*

And yet ye are on it?

For more information about the text's rhythm, turn to pages 8–9.

Verbs

Some verbs are written with '-(s)t' at the end, for example 'didst', 'hadst', 'art'. These verbs agreed with the second person pronouns 'thou' and 'thee'. If you remove the 'st', the verb should be recognisable.

Thou didst You did

Thee hadst You had

Thou art You are

Some verbs are written with '-th' at the end. For example, 'hath' and 'doth'. These verbs agree with third person pronouns, e.g. 'he', 'she' and 'it'. If you remove the '-th', you should be able to recognise the verb.

He hath He has

It doth It does



LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES

Shakespeare uses a lot of linguistic and dramatic techniques in *Macbeth*.

Symbolism

Symbolism is when objects, colours or characters represent concepts. There are plenty of examples of symbolism in *Macbeth*. Here are a few of the most recognisable ones.

Bloody hands

Blood in *Macbeth* symbolises guilt. One example of this is in Act 2, Scene 2, when Macbeth questions: "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" Macbeth is implying that he feels so guilty over Duncan's murder that his hands will never be truly clean again. This **foreshadows** (see **page 11**) Lady Macbeth's guilt in Act 5, Scene 1: "will these hands ne'er be clean?"



Sleep

Just like bloody hands, sleeplessness symbolises guilt. In Act 2, Scene 2, Macbeth thinks he hears a voice say "Macbeth doth murder sleep." In Act 3, Scene 2, Macbeth admits he's been having nightmares ("these terrible dreams / That shake us nightly") and that he's envious of Duncan in death because "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well". The references to sleeplessness foreshadow Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in Act 5, Scene 1.

Weather

Stormy weather in *Macbeth* reflects the chaos and turmoil that Macbeth's actions have brought. For example, the night that Duncan is murdered there is an "unruly" storm, and Lennox hears "strange screams of death." The stormy weather links back to the Witches who enter the stage in Act 1, Scene 1 to "**Thunder and lightning**".

Shakespeare also uses imagery of planting and growing to symbolise being nurtured by a good king. See **page 57** for more.

Soliloquies

A **soliloquy** is a dramatic technique. It describes a moment in a play where a character speaks their thoughts aloud. Soliloquies are usually directed at the audience, rather than other characters, allowing the audience to understand that character's innermost feelings. For example, Macbeth's soliloquy in Act 1, Scene 3 reveals his thoughts about murdering Duncan.

ACT 1

Act 1 introduces most of the major characters and establishes the key themes of the play.

Act 1, Scene 1

The play opens with *"Thunder and lightning"*.

Comment: Thunder and lightning creates an ominous mood, and connects the Witches to the stormy weather in Act 2, Scene 3.

Three Witches decide when and where they will meet Macbeth.

Comment: The Witches speak in **rhyming couplets**, which makes their speech sound unnatural, as if they are invoking a spell. This hints at their **supernatural** nature. For more on rhythm and speech patterns in *Macbeth*, turn to **pages 8–9**.

The scene closes with the line, *"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"*. The Witches often use **antithesis** (see **page 11**) in their speech, and this contradictory language reinforces the theme of **appearance and reality** (see **page 54**). This line suggests something which looks innocent might be *"foul"* which **foreshadows** Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's betrayal of Duncan.

Act 1, Scene 2

The Scottish King, Duncan, and his sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, along with Lennox (a Scottish noble) await news of a battle. The Scottish army are fighting invading Norwegian forces as well as two Scottish rebels, the Thane of Cawdor and Macdonald.

Comment: The battle is a dramatic opening and establishes an atmosphere of violence and conflict. It also foreshadows the battle in Act 5.

A bloodied captain tells the men that Macbeth and Banquo fought bravely and were ferocious in battle: *"Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds"*.

Comment: This is the audience's first introduction to Macbeth's character. In the context of battle, Macbeth's violence is worthy of praise. He is presented as a fearless, savage soldier, but the image of him bathing in blood foreshadows the bloodshed yet to come. See **pages 33–35** for more on the character of Macbeth.

A bloodied captain tells Duncan about the battle



CHARACTERS: MACBETH

Macbeth is the play's **protagonist**. His character is complex, and he changes throughout the course of the play.

Act 1

Brave: Before he even appears on stage, the other characters speak of Macbeth's bravery. *"For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name."*

Comment: Shakespeare presents Macbeth as brave and heroic at the start of the play. This makes his descent into tyranny more shocking.

Violent: In Act 1, Scene 2, Macbeth is reported to have sliced a man in half and hung the man's head on the walls of the castle. *"Till he unseamed him from the nave to th' chops, / And fixed his head upon our battlements."*

Comment: Although the other characters think this is *"valiant"* (heroic) behaviour, it's the audience's first hint that Macbeth isn't afraid to kill. However, the men that Macbeth kills on the battlefield do not affect his conscience in the same way as Duncan and Banquo.

Ambitious: When the Witches make the prophecy about Macbeth becoming king, he immediately thinks about killing Duncan: *"My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical"*.

Comment: This demonstrates that Macbeth is prepared to do anything to become king.

Uncertain: Although he contemplates murdering Duncan, he still has doubts. Thinking about murder *"Shakes so my single state of man"*.

Comment: At this point, Macbeth still has a conscience and recognises that murder is wrong. This attitude changes as the play progresses.



Macbeth is a brave warrior at the start of the play

In Act 1, Scene 3, Macbeth speaks to himself several times. This hints at his deceptive behaviour, as he's hiding his true thoughts from Banquo.

Act 1, Scene 5

Lady Macbeth reveals a lot about her husband in her soliloquy at the very start of Act 1, Scene 5. She acknowledges that Macbeth *"Art not without ambition"*, but she is concerned that he is *"too full o' th' milk of human kindness"* to realise his true potential. She believes that Macbeth is too honourable, commenting that he *"wouldst not play false"*. This suggests that Macbeth was an honourable man before he is corrupted by his ambition.



CHARACTERS: BANQUO

Banquo possesses all the noble qualities that Macbeth doesn't. Unfortunately, his honourable nature gets him killed.

King James I claimed to be descended from Banquo, so Shakespeare portrays Banquo in a positive way to flatter the king.

Banquo acts as a **foil** to Macbeth. See **page 11** for more.

Act 1

Brave: Banquo fights bravely on the battlefield. The bloodied captain tells Duncan that Banquo and Macbeth seemed as afraid of battle as *"sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion."*

Cautious: He is wary of the Witches' predictions and believes that the Witches intend to deceive to cause harm: *"Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's / In deepest consequences."*

Comment: He is suspicious of the Witches' intentions and less easily deceived than Macbeth.



Like Macbeth, Banquo is a brave warrior.

Act 2

Restrained: Banquo admits he has dreamt about the prophecies and doing terrible things to make them come true: *"Restrain in me the cursèd thoughts that nature / Gives way to in repose."*

Comment: Although he is tempted to do terrible things to make the prophecies come true, unlike Macbeth, he resists. Banquo represents an alternative course of action.

Honourable: Macbeth implies that if Banquo supports him in the future, he will be rewarded. Banquo agrees he will support Macbeth provided it doesn't bring him dishonour. *"but still keep / My bosom franchised and allegiance clear."*

Comment: Unlike Macbeth, Banquo prizes honour above his ambition. However, his reluctance to act dishonourably probably seals his fate.

Act 3

Suspicious: Banquo suspects Macbeth is responsible for Duncan's murder: *"I fear / Thou played'st most foully for 't."*

Comment: Although he is perceptive enough to suspect Macbeth, Banquo is naïve to think he isn't in any danger. Just like Duncan, he is deceived by Macbeth's flattery (*"Here's our chief guest"*) before he is killed by the hired murderers.

Banquo is the only murdered character to reappear as a ghost. This suggests that Macbeth feels especially guilty for killing him.

THEMES: SUPERNATURAL

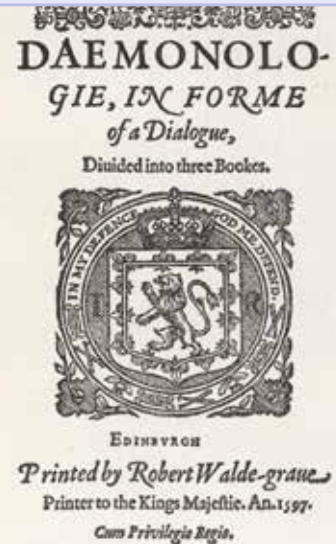
As well as being a theme, the supernatural is also a structural device. It drives Macbeth's actions throughout the course of the play.

Context of the supernatural

The supernatural elements in *Macbeth* are presented as evil and unnatural. This may be because of King James' negative attitude towards witchcraft, and the panic surrounding witch hunts in the 17th century (see [page 4](#)). Seventeenth-century audiences would have been both fearful and fascinated by the supernatural.

Comment: The supernatural elements in the play present an opportunity to create a spectacle for the audience. The Witches may have entered the stage via a trapdoor in the floor to show that they have travelled up from Hell.

King James wrote a book about witchcraft in 1597 called *Daemonologie*.



The Witches and Hecate

The Witches and Hecate are the most recognisable supernatural elements in the play. The Witches are very powerful; they can predict the future, summon storms and vanish into thin air. They use their powers for evil, either to get revenge (i.e. the sailor in Act 1, Scene 3) or to manipulate and control (i.e. Macbeth). The portrayal of the Witches would have reflected 17th-century attitudes towards witchcraft: malevolent forces used to torment and bring misfortune.

Comment: Although the Witches have supernatural powers, it's their ability to exploit and manipulate Macbeth that makes them dangerous. The Witches don't harm any of the characters in the play directly; the murders are all committed by Macbeth.

The Witches are associated with stormy weather, and they enter the stage to "**Thunder and lightning**". This suggests that the Witches are linked to disturbances in the natural world.

Comment: Shakespeare warns the audience against getting involved in witchcraft, suggesting that the supernatural will only ever bring misfortune.

The Witches are described as having "*beards*", which gives their characters a masculine quality, and implies that they will not have the characteristics stereotypically associated with women at that time: kindness, weakness and subservience.

The ghostly dagger

The ghostly dagger that Macbeth sees in Act 2, Scene 1 is a dramatic device which shows how supernatural forces have overcome Macbeth. It's not clear whether the dagger is real, or just a figment of Macbeth's imagination. The dagger draws Macbeth towards Duncan, and its presence encourages Macbeth to go through with the murder.

Some productions of *Macbeth* show the ghostly dagger on-stage, while others do not.



The ghost of Banquo

Banquo is the only murdered character to come back as a ghost. Like the ghostly dagger, it's unclear whether the ghost is real, or just a hallucination since only Macbeth can see him. The appearance of the ghost suggests murdering Banquo weighs heavily on Macbeth's conscience, and symbolises how the supernatural continues to torment him.

Comment: The ghost of Banquo sits in Macbeth's chair. This represents how Banquo's descendants will ultimately replace Macbeth as king.

The apparitions

In Act 4, Scene 1, the Witches summon three apparitions to answer Macbeth's questions: an armoured head, a bloodied child and a child wearing a crown holding a branch. The three apparitions symbolise Macbeth's downfall: the armoured head represents his beheading; the bloodied child represents Macduff, and the child with a crown represents Malcolm holding the branches of Birnam Wood. It's ironic that Macbeth cannot see his own undoing even when the Witches present it to him in the form of the apparitions. This shows just how blinded by ambition he has become.



Read the following extract from Act 4, Scene 1 of *Macbeth*. At this point in the play, Macbeth has gone to see the Witches to ask them to answer his questions.

SECOND WITCH

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks.

MACBETH enters.

MACBETH

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags?
What is 't you do?

ALL

A deed without a name.

MACBETH

I conjure you by that which you profess—
Howe'er you come to know it—answer me.
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches, though the yeasty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up,
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down,
Though castles topple on their warders' heads,
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations, though the treasure
Of nature's germens tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you



Use the introductory sentences above the extract to help you identify where in the play the extract is taken from. This will help you to think about the play as a whole.

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents the attitude of Macbeth towards the supernatural.

Write about:

- How Shakespeare presents the attitude of Macbeth towards the supernatural in this extract
- How far Shakespeare presents the attitudes of Macbeth towards the supernatural in the play as a whole [30 + 4 marks]

Your answer may include:

AO1 – show understanding of the text

- *Macbeth realises that Witches are powerful. He knows they can “untie the winds”.*
- *Macbeth recognises that the Witches are evil, but he doesn’t care about the consequences of their actions on others: “Though castles toppled on their warders’ heads”. He only cares how the Witches’ powers can benefit him.*
- *This extract shows Macbeth’s arrogance towards the supernatural. Even though the Witches are powerful and dangerous, Macbeth demands answers from them.*
- *Macbeth is reliant on the Witches. He actively seeks them out to hear their predictions and to reassure himself. The Witches’ predictions cause Macbeth to have false confidence.*

AO2 – show understanding of the writer’s language choices

- *Macbeth uses demanding language to try to control the Witches. He repeats the phrase “answer me”.*
- *The destructive imagery of castles crumbling, shipwrecks and trees being blown down suggests that Macbeth has a negative attitude towards the supernatural and sees it as evil.*
- *The supernatural is used as a structural device to drive the plot. The Witches’ predictions in Act 1, drive the plot in the first half of the play. This scene drives the action in Acts 4 and 5.*

AO3 – relate the play to the context

- *17th-century audiences would have recognised the Witches as evil characters who bring misfortune on others. This portrayal would have supported their attitudes.*
- *17th-century audiences would have been fearful and fascinated by the supernatural.*
- *Shakespeare uses the play to warn against getting involved in witchcraft, implying that it will only bring misery.*
- *The supernatural elements in the play would have been a dramatic spectacle for the audience.*

This answer should be marked in accordance with the levels-based mark scheme on pages 61.



Make sure your answer to this question is in paragraphs and full sentences. Bullet points have been used in this example answer to suggest some information you could include. There are four marks available for spelling, punctuation and grammar, so make sure you read through your answer carefully, correcting any mistakes.

EXAMINATION PRACTICE

Read this extract from Act 2, Scene 2. At this point in the play, Macbeth has just murdered Duncan, but he has forgotten to plant the daggers next to Duncan's sleeping servants.

MACBETH

I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.

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.

LADY MACBETH exits
A knock sounds offstage

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.

Starting with this point in the play, explore how Shakespeare presents the attitudes of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth towards guilt.

- How Shakespeare presents the attitudes of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth towards guilt in this extract
- How far Shakespeare presents the attitudes of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth towards guilt in the play as a whole.

[30 + 4]

EXAMINATION PRACTICE ANSWERS

In this extract, Shakespeare presents Macbeth's guilt through fear. Macbeth refuses to return to the scene of Duncan's murder to plant the daggers on the sleeping servants: "*Look on 't again I dare not.*" This is not the first time that Macbeth has killed a man, as there were reports in Act 1, Scene 2 that he killed men in battle, but Macbeth's guilt over Duncan's murder has transformed him from a heroic warrior, into a fearful, paranoid man. Macbeth uses imagery of washing his hands in "*great Neptune's ocean*" to show the magnitude of his guilt; he feels so guilty he would turn "*The multitudinous seas incarnadine*" [red]. Throughout the play, references to handwashing symbolise guilt, and this reference foreshadows Lady Macbeth's handwashing in Act 5. Macbeth's language also presents his guilty and tormented state of mind. The repetition of rhetorical questions such as "*What hands are here?*" imply that he is confused and disturbed by Duncan's death. The act of regicide would have been very shocking to 17th century audiences, especially with the regard to the Divine Right of Kings, whereby it was believed that kings were chosen by God. As such, killing a king would have been interpreted as a direct attack on God.

Contrastingly, Lady Macbeth shows no remorse in this extract. Rather than feeling guilt for Duncan's death, she's angry that Macbeth has forgotten to frame the servants and she chides him for it: "*Infirm of purpose!*" She is the one who returns to Duncan's room to finish the job. She calmly remarks that corpses are "*but as pictures*", showing that she has detached any humanity from Duncan's body, which suggests her indifference and lack of guilt. Lady Macbeth's lack of remorse in this scene would have been shocking to 17th century audiences, who would have expected women to be the weaker, gentler sex, but here, Lady Macbeth is the more fearless of the two.

In Act 3, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth both shows signs of remorse. Lady Macbeth remarks that they " *dwell in doubtful joy*" and Macbeth tells her that it is "*Better be with the dead.*" Although Macbeth is initially plagued by guilt, it doesn't stop him from committing crimes, showing that he is prepared to endure guilt to achieve his ambitions. He orders three men to kill Banquo, and after the murder has been committed, Macbeth's guilt manifests as the ghost of Banquo. Banquo is the only character who appears as a ghost, suggesting that Macbeth feels especially guilty for this crime. However, by Act 5, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's attitudes towards guilt are entirely reversed. Lady Macbeth has been driven mad by guilt, as shown by her sleepwalking and incessant handwashing, to the point that she kills herself. Macbeth on the other hand, becomes indifferent towards his actions, and shows no remorse for the atrocities he has committed, such as slaughtering the Macduffs.

LEVELS-BASED MARK SCHEMES FOR EXTENDED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Questions that require extended writing use mark bands. The whole answer will be marked together to determine which mark band it fits into and which mark should be awarded within the mark band.

The descriptors have been written in simple language to give an indication of the expectations of each mark band. See the AQA website for the official mark schemes used.

Level	Students' answers tend to...
6 (26–30 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the text as conscious construct (i.e. a play written by Shakespeare intended to have a deliberate effect). • Produce a logical and well-structured response which closely uses the text to explore their argument / interpretation. • Analyse the writer's craft by considering the effects of a writer's choice, linked closely to meanings. • Understand the writer's purpose and context.
5 (21–25 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start to think about ideas in a more developed way. • Think about the deeper meaning of a text and start to explore alternative interpretations. • Start to focus on specific elements of writer's craft, linked to meanings. • Focus more on abstract concepts, such as themes and ideas, than narrative events or character feelings.
4 (16–20 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain a focus on an idea, or a particular technique. • Start to consider how the text works and what the writer is doing. • Use examples effectively to support their points. • Explain the effect of a writer's method on the text, with a clear focus on it having been consciously written. • Show an understanding of ideas and themes.
3 (11–15 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain their ideas. • Demonstrate knowledge of the text as a whole. • Show awareness of the concept of themes. • Identify the effects of a range of methods on reader.
2 (6–10 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support their comments by using references to / from the text. • Make comments that are generally relevant to the question. • Identify at least one method and possibly make some comment on the effect of it on the reader.
1 (1–5 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the text. • Retell the narrative. • Make references to, rather than use references from, the text.
0 marks	Nothing worthy of credit / nothing written.

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EXAMINATION TIPS

With your examination practice, use a boundary approximation using the following table. Be aware that the grade boundaries can vary from year to year, so they should be used as a guide only.

Grade	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Boundary	88%	79%	71%	61%	52%	43%	31%	21%	10%

1. Read the question carefully. Don't give an answer to a question that you think is appearing (or wish was appearing!) rather than the actual question.
2. Spend time reading through the extract, and think about what happens before and after, and how it links to other parts of the play. The statement above the extract will help you identify where in the play it is from.
3. It's worth jotting down a quick plan to make sure your answer includes sufficient detail and is focused on the question.
4. The question will ask you about the extract and the play as a whole, but you don't need to spend an equal amount of time on both. If you're struggling to make close textual references about the extract, you can concentrate on the rest of the play instead.
5. A discussion of Shakespeare's methods can include his language choices, but also structural choices (such as the ordering of events), how characters develop, and what their actions tell you about their characterisation.
6. Include details from the text to support your answer. These details might be quotes, or they can be references to the text. Don't worry if you can't remember quotes from other parts of the play. You will be marked on the strength of your answer to the question, not the accuracy of your quotations.
7. Make sure your handwriting is legible. The examiner can't award you marks if they can't read what you've written.
8. The examiner will be impressed if you can correctly use technical terms like 'foil', 'soliloquy', 'iambic pentameter', 'rhyming couplets' but to be awarded the best marks, you need to explore the effect of these techniques.
9. Use linking words and phrases to show you are developing your points or comparing information, for example, "this reinforces", "this shows that" and "on the other hand". This helps to give your answer structure, and makes it easier for the examiner to award you marks.
10. If you need extra paper, make sure you clearly signal that your answer is continued elsewhere. Remember that longer answers don't necessarily score more highly than shorter, more concise answers.
11. There are 4 marks available for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Save some time at the end of the exam to read through your answer and correct any mistakes.

Good luck!

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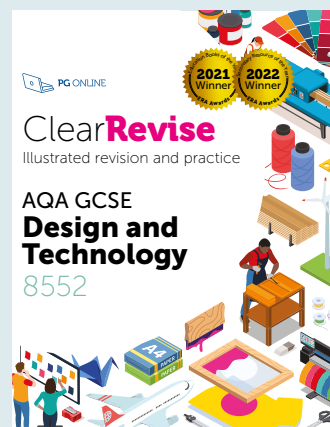
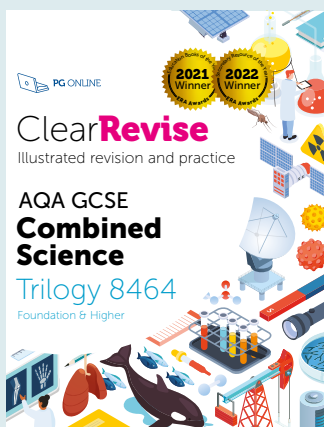
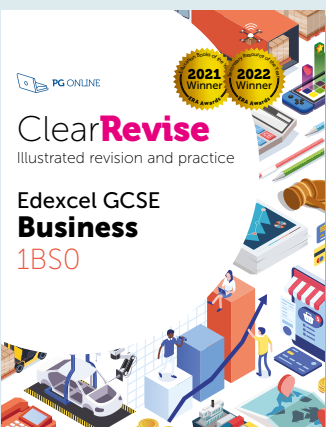
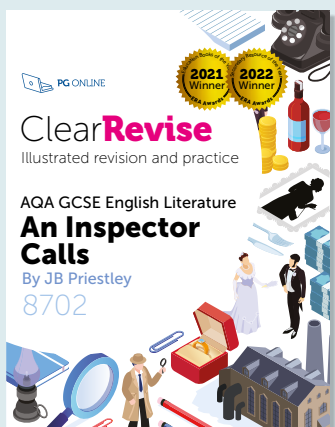
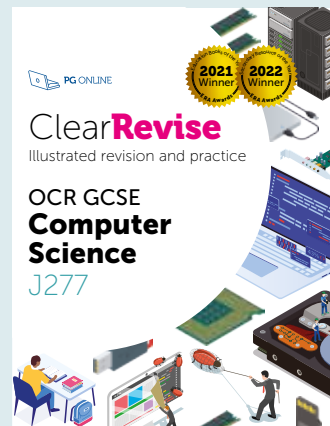
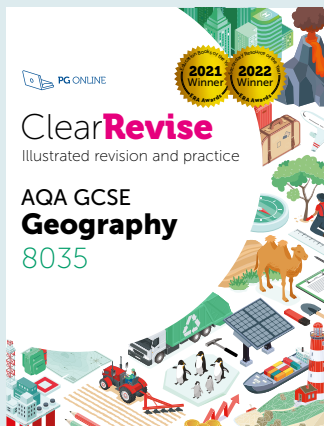
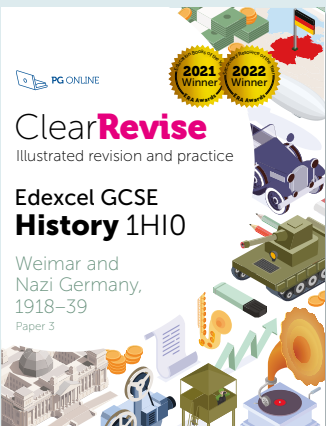
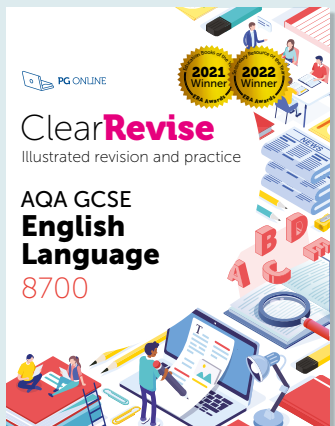
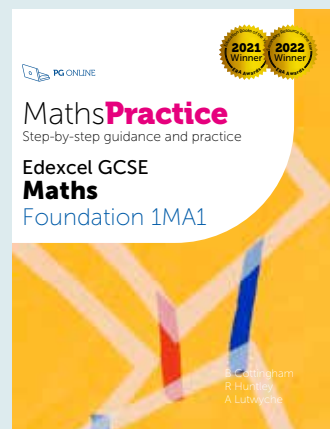
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