

GCSE (9–1)

Exemplar Candidate Work

ENGLISH LITERATURE

J352

For first teaching in 2015

Component 02: Exploring poetry and Shakespeare Section B: Shakespeare Sample script - Macbeth

Version 1



Introduction

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the GCSE (9–1) English Literature examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. Here is an example of a response to the sample extract based question on *Macbeth*, to illustrate with commentary how questions in this section of the paper might be rewarded.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

The sample assessment material for these answers and commentary can be found on the GCSE (9–1) English Literature web page and accessed via the following link: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-english-literature-j352-from-2015/>

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Explore the idea that Macbeth gradually loses control of himself and his relationships. Refer to this extract from Act 3 Scene 2 and elsewhere in the play.

[40]

In Act 3 scene 2 Shakespeare uses imagery to explore the idea that Macbeth loses control. A quote to show this is 'And make our faces vizards to our hearts'.¹ This tells us that Macbeth is nervous of what he has done. He afraid that if anyone sees his heart it will be dark and souless but to hide it they have to put on a dangerous face. The key word in this quote is vizards. This shows that their faces are masks of their real person. The person they are to other people is only an act because behind that mask is a cruel person. This shows the audience that Macbeth is a horrible person and has to be a complete new personality just to be King. In Jacobean times this would have been seen as a terrible act. The King was considered like a God and to kill him would be unheard of.² The audience back then would see his treachery and betrayal and be shocked at what lengths he would go to, to become King.

Shakespeare uses the imagery to show the madness in Macbeth coming through. When Macbeth says 'O full of Scorpions is my mind'.³ It creates an image of his mind being confused and muddled up with the events going on that time. The quote shows the audience that Macbeth's mind is no longer sane and that killing⁴ Duncan has affected him mentally. The key word in this quote is 'scorpions'⁵ because it suggests his mind has loads of ideas running around everywhere and that he has lost control of himself and cant straighten things out from right to wrong. Furthermore this would have affected a Jacobean audience⁶ because Macbeth is getting mad and Kings at the same time can go mad with power and forget about the meaning of King.

Thirdly Shakespeare uses deception to show that Macbeth is getting mad with power he says 'to be thus is nothing but to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo stick deep'.⁷ Macbeth is plotting to kill Banquo purely because of his own fear in Banquo. The quote shows the audience that Macbeth just cares about being King and that he will do what ever it takes to defeat all opponents from the play. The audience see that the witches prophecy have started to get to him and that he is worried about Banquo's children becoming King. We know that he is troubled by this because he says, 'thou has placed on me a fruitless crown'.⁸ He is shaken up by this and we can see in both quotes he is becoming mad with power. The key award is the quote is 'thus'⁹ because Shakespeare uses this word for it to mean King. He says there is no point being King if you are not safely King. This tells us he is losing his mind and overthinking everything believing that everyone is against him. At the time of Shakespeare this would be a very unknown thing to happen. A King killing his own soldier even his own friend.¹⁰ This really emphasises how mad Macbeth has gone and what lengths he will go to to become safely King.

Lastly Shakespeare uses the [unknown] of a metaphor to show the changing relationship of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. He says 'Be innocent of the knowledge dearest chuck',¹¹ this quote shows the audience that the relationship has changed. Before when Macbeth was planning to kill Duncan it was Lady Macbeth who encouraged him to do the deed. Now Macbeth is dominating telling her what to do and not telling her everything.¹² The key word is 'chuck'¹³. This tells us that Macbeth is downgrading her as a lesser person than he is. It marks it if Lady Macbeth isn't as strong and a weaker person. At the time of this play this wouldn't of been as big of a deal because women were rated as the maid

¹ AO1: relevant quotation selected and followed by some analysis of the effects of the language.

² AO3: clear understanding of context and develops comment on how it affects audience response.

³ AO1: relevant textual reference.

⁴ AO1: awareness of wider text demonstrating personal response.

⁵ AO2: attempts to analyse the effects of the language.

⁶ AO3: links the language to relevant context.

⁷ AO1: relevant textual reference which is then linked to the events of the wider text.

⁸ AO1: quotation used from the wider text, linked relevantly to the passage.

⁹ AO1 & AO2: effective selection of key word and analyses its impact.

¹⁰ AO3: relevant link to context.

¹¹ AO1: relevant quotation selected.

¹² AO1: evidence of understanding the change in their relationship through use of language.

¹³ AO2: identifies key word to support the point.

or the cook or the assistant of their husband. It was not a unorthodox sight to see a man be the dominant force in the relationship.¹⁴

¹⁴ AO3: relevant comment on context.

Overall¹⁵ I think that in Act 3 the power that Macbeth takes hold as takes over him and his relationship. It changes his life making him always look over his shoulder.

¹⁵ AO1: overview of the link between power and corruption explored in the wider text, but not developed very fully.

Overall response comment

This shows a credible critical style and is a detailed personal response showing clear understanding supported by relevant textual references. More developed and convincing use of context, and more thoughtful examination of language, especially in later parts of the extract or in cross-reference, would be needed for Level 5, but this is a good Level 4 response.



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