Macbeth is a PLAY written by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. It is to be PERFORMED on a STAGE for an AUDIENCE to watch. It was first performed in 1606.

THEME TRACKER

ORDER AND
CHaos

ABANDON

A recurring theme. The witches’ prophecies in Act 1, propound Macbeth’s inner-evil and nucleus. In Act 2, Lady Macbeth appeals to the supernatural to possess her and give her power. Banquo refuses to submit to the supernatural.

SUPERNATURAL

GENDER,
MALE/FEMININE

APPEARANCE VS
REALITY

From Act 1 & 5 things are not at first natural. The natural order cannot be trusted. People are deceived eg (the Macbeths welcome Dothan to their home and then murder him.) Macbeth and Lady Macbeth experience visions at 10.

OTHER KEY TERMS:
Perpetual: a turning point/ reversal of fortune
Anagnorisis: discovery
Catharsis: a cleansing (eg at the end of the Play Macbeth is killed, and justice is restored. The Natural Order is resumed.

CONTEXT:

1. The Divine Right of Kings: God is at the top of the ‘hierarchy of being’ - Kings were chosen by God. Subjects are below the King. Men are above women. People were expected to respect the King, and this was enforced in law.

2. Alexander III, King of Scotland and later England 1567-1625. Depopular in Scotland, Shakespeare wrote the play to flatter King James.

3. The Gunpowder Plot: An attempt to assassinate King James 1. We remember this on 5th Nov (Bonfire Night) every year.

4. Witchcraft and the Supernatural - It was widely believed that witches could see into the future, control the weather, and control the dead. If a witch was supposed to be casting a spell, the wasos could be dismissed or drowned.

The role of women - Society was patriarchal - women bring about the downfall of men.