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| Context | **King James I** - James I had been James VI of Scotland before he succeeded to the English throne in 1603. In focusing on Macbeth, a figure from Scottish history, Shakespeare paid homage to his king’s Scottish lineage. Additionally, the witches’ prophecy that Banquo will found a line of kings is a clear nod to James’ family’s claim to have descended from the historical Banquo. **Witchcraft and Daemonologie** - King James was convinced that a group of witches were plotting to bring about his death and played an active role in the North Berwick witch trials. He later published *Daemonologie* in 1597. Charges of witchcraft continued in Great Britain, with Scotland in particular experiencing a number of witch hunt crazes throughout the 17th century.

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| Vocabulary |
| **Macbeth**: ambitious, courageous, deceitful, impulsive, ruthless, treasonous, tyrannical, zealous**Lady Macbeth**: cunning, dominant, emasculating, malevolent, mutinous, powerful, scheming, vulnerable**Banquo**: devoted, intuitive, loyal, trustworthy, virtuous**Duncan**: benevolent, faithful, honest, naïve, sincere**Macduff**: devout, fervent, heroic, merciless, patriotic, unwavering**Witches**: corrupt, ignoble, manipulative, sinister, subversive**The audience feel…**Astonished BewilderedDisgustedDisquietedDistressedNonplussedPerturbedScandalisedSurprised UnnervedUnsettled |

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|  **Themes** |
| **Fate and free will** – ‘If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me’**Ambition** – ’vaulting ambition’ **Appearance and reality** – ’look like th’ innocent flower, but be the serpent under’t’**Supernatural** – ‘double double toil and trouble’ |

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| **Dramatic devices** |
| **Soliloquy** – One character speaking to the audience**Dramatic irony** – Audience knows more than characters **Hamartia** – Fatal flaw which leads to tragic hero’s downfall**Hubris** – Excessive pride**Peripeteia** – Sudden reversal of fortune |

**Motifs**

Blood

Sleep and dreams

Light and dark

Nature

**Key quotes**

**Witches**: Fair is foul and foul is fair (1.1)

**Macbeth:** Stars, hide your fires/Let not light see my black and deep desires (1.4)

**Lady Macbeth:** Unsex me here (1.5)

**Macbeth**: Is this a dagger which I see before me? (2.1)

**Lady Macbeth**: My hands are of your colour but I shame to wear a heart so white (2.2)

**Macbeth:** Full of scorpions is my mind dear wife (3.2)

**Macbeth**: Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck (3.2)

Blood will have blood (3.4)

**Witch:** By the pricking of my thumbs/something wicked this way comes (4.1)

**Malcolm:** This tyrant whose sole name blisters our tongue was once thought honest (4.3)

**Lady Macbeth:** All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand (5.1)

**Macbeth:** Life’s but a walking shadow (5.5)

**Macbeth:** I bear a charmed life (5.8)

**Plot**

**Act 1**

Macbeth and Banquo meet witches, previous Cawdor executed, Lady M reads letter then manipulates husband, Duncan arrives

**Act 2**

Macbeth contemplates murder, sees dagger, Kills Duncan, Malcolm flees, Macbeth crowned.

**Act 3**

Banquo suspects Macbeth, Banquo murdered but Fleance escapes, Banquo’s ghost appears at banquet

**Act 4**

Macbeth goes back to witches, Macduff’s family murdered while Macduff is in England, Malcolm tests Macduff’s loyalty

**Act 5**

Lady M sleepwalks then commits suicide, Macbeth prepares for battle, Macduff kills Macbeth, Malcolm becomes king

**Content**

**Macbeth**

**English Literature**