

# ***Macbeth* – Study Questions**

## **Act I**

Comment on “lost and won” (I, i, 4), “fair is foul, and foul is fair” (I, i, 11) “lesser [...] and greater” (I, iii, 65) and similar lines of paradoxes? What is the effect and what the meaning of these antitheses?

Find evidence in the text that shows Macbeth’s weakness.

Characterise Lady Macbeth.

How does Lady Macbeth persuade Macbeth to assassinate Duncan?

## **Act II**

After Macbeth has killed Duncan, in what ways is the feeling of horror revealed?

How does Lady Macbeth react to her husband’s horror?

Why did Macbeth kill the grooms? Was it a wise move? Explain.

Why do Duncan’s sons flee rather than remain to inherit the throne?

## **Act III**

For what reasons does Macbeth want Banquo murdered? What reasons does he give the murderers?

Some consider scene iv to be a turning point in the play. Explain why this might be considered the climax.

Compare Lady Macbeth’s behaviour with that of Macbeth during the appearance of Banquo’s ghost.

## **Act IV**

What are the three new prophecies the witches make to Macbeth? Which seems the most immediately dangerous? What effects do the witches' enhancements have upon Macbeth's morals?

What further moral degeneration does Macbeth show at the end of scene ii?

How does the murder of Macduff's family differ from that of Banquo?

## **Act V**

What lines foreshadow Lady Macbeth's death? How does Macbeth react to his wife's death?

How is each of the witches' prophecies revealed?

In what ways does Macbeth show his better qualities in scene viii? (i.e., bravery and humaneness).

## **After the play**

What do you feel towards Macbeth? Pity? Compassion? A sense of identification?

Find four examples of bird imagery, two of personification, and three of dramatic irony.