

Write about The Witches and how they are presented in 'Macbeth'.

You have **40 minutes** to write this essay

You need to show the examiner that you can:

- ☒ Analyse how Shakespeare presents the characters across the play
- ☒ Explain how Shakespeare uses literary techniques (e.g. symbolism, metaphor, imagery clusters etc) to present the characters
- ☒ Use a range of quotations to justify your ideas
- ☒ Evaluate how the audience would react to the characters

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION.

Although they don't appear as often as other characters, the witches play a major part in the play's events. Without them, none of the things that happen would happen! Shakespeare creates them not only to create tension, as they would scare the audience, but mainly to explore greed and selfish traits and the danger of indulging them.

SECTION 2 – THE WITCHES' INTRODUCTION - ACT 1, SCENE 1

You will need to write about how strange and mysterious the witches seem here, because they appear to be planning something to do with Macbeth. Think about why Shakespeare wanted to open the play with them and not the main character, who the play is named after! Think about how this would make the audience intrigued. Remember that the audience would be perturbed by witches, or anything to do with the supernatural. This scene, and most that the witches appear in, take place under thunder and lightning.

SECTION 3 – THE WITCHES MEET MACBETH AND BANQUO- ACT 1, SCENE 3

You will need to write about the power the witches have over Macbeth. Comment on the way he demands to know more because he is so excited by their predictions of him one day becoming King. Consider how Shakespeare stages this scene – look at the setting and think about who else is on stage. You could comment on how dangerous Banquo finds them to be and how this suggests to the audience that Macbeth is going to be pulled into an immoral and treacherous world. Macbeth does not wait to find out if these predictions will come true: he makes them. The witches stir Macbeth's greed and selfish desires.

SECTION 4 – THE WITCHES MEET WITH MACBETH AGAIN – ACT 4, SCENE 1

Since murdering Duncan and then Banquo, Macbeth hasn't seen the witches until now! His whole life, and many other people's, has changed because of that meeting in Act 1, Scene 3. Here, Macbeth demands to know more from the witches. They present him with three warnings: he should beware of Macduff, no man born of a woman should be able to harm him and he will remain King until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane. The witches then show Macbeth a procession of eight kings, with Banquo's at the end of the line. Although confused, Macbeth feels reassured as surely these things cannot come true...?

SECTION 5 – YOUR CONCLUSIONS.

Write about the way the witches spark Macbeth's greed and selfishness. Upon hearing about the witches' predictions, they also have the same effect on Lady Macbeth. The witches are able to draw out their worst traits and neither of them waits to see if the predictions will come true. Shakespeare does so to explore the worst aspects of the human condition.

KEY WORDS: supernatural, greed, selfishness, predictions, warnings, rhyme, setting, pathetic fallacy.