

# MACBETH

## – THE BIG QUESTION

A Key Stage 3 and 4 PSHE and Citizenship Resource



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## theBigGive.org.uk

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## Curriculum Links

This KS3/KS4 Citizenship, English and Personal Wellbeing teaching sequence provides a scheme of work to help pupils learn about forming and talking through their opinions. It uses Shakespeare's plays to explore a range of topics including:

- Personal growth and maturity
- Responsibility at different stages of life
- The importance of the rule of law
- Young people and mental health
- The power of political rhetoric
- Forgiveness and retribution
- Religious and other forms of extremism
- Cyberbullying and the pressures of social media
- The importance of diversity and of respecting difference

## From the National Curriculum – Citizenship

### Purpose of study

A high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education should foster pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. It should also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

### Aims

The national curriculum for citizenship aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government.



- Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced.
- Develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood.
- Are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs.

## Subject content

### Key stage 3

Teaching should develop pupils' understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding while developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action.

Pupils should be taught about:

- The development of the political system of democratic government in the United Kingdom, including the roles of citizens, Parliament and the monarch.
- The operation of Parliament, including voting and elections, and the role of political parties.
- The functions and uses of money, including the importance and practice of budgeting, and managing risk.

### Key stage 4

Pupils should be taught about:

- Parliamentary democracy and the key elements of the constitution of the United Kingdom, including the power of government, the role of citizens and Parliament in holding those in power to account, and the different roles of the executive, legislature and judiciary and a free press.
- The different electoral systems used in and beyond the United Kingdom and actions citizens can take in democratic and electoral processes to influence decisions locally, nationally and beyond.



- Other systems and forms of government, both democratic and non-democratic, beyond the United Kingdom.
- Local, regional and international governance and the United Kingdom's relations with the rest of Europe, the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the wider world.
- Human rights and international law.
- The legal system in the UK, different sources of law and how the law helps society deal with complex problems
- Diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding.
- The different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity
- Income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

## **The Personal Wellbeing Programme of Study – non statutory**

### **The range and content includes:**

#### **Key Stage 3**

- Examples of diverse values encountered in society and the clarification of personal values.
- The knowledge and skills needed for setting realistic targets and personal goals.
- Physical and emotional change and puberty.
- Sexual activity, human reproduction, contraception, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections and HIV and how high-risk behaviours affect the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- Facts and laws about drug, alcohol and tobacco use and misuse, and the personal and social consequences of misuse for themselves and others.
- How a balanced diet and making choices for being healthy contribute to personal wellbeing, and the importance of balance between work, leisure and exercise.
- Ways of recognising and reducing risk, minimising harm and getting help in emergency and risky situations.
- A knowledge of basic first aid.



- i. The features of positive and stable relationships, how to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of loss and bereavement.
- j. Different types of relationships, including those within families and between older and young people, boys and girls, and people of the same sex, including civil partnerships.
- k. The nature and importance of marriage and of stable relationships for family life and bringing up children.
- l. The roles and responsibilities of parents, carers and children in families.
- m. The similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation and the impact of prejudice, bullying, discrimination and racism on individuals and communities.

#### **Key Stage 4**

- a. The effect of diverse and conflicting values on individuals, families and communities and ways of responding to them
- b. How the media portrays young people, body image and health issues.
- c. The characteristics of emotional and mental health, and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders.
- d. The benefits and risks of health and lifestyle choices, including choices relating to sexual activity and substance use and misuse, and the short and long-term consequences for the health and mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
- e. where and how to obtain health information, how to recognise and follow health and safety procedures, ways of reducing risk and minimising harm in risky situations, how to find sources of emergency help and how to use basic and emergency first aid.
- f. Characteristics of positive relationships, and awareness of exploitation in relationships and of statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships in crisis.
- g. The roles and responsibilities of parents, carers, children and other family members.
- h. Parenting skills and qualities and their central importance to family life.
- i. The impact of separation, divorce and bereavement on families and the need to adapt to changing circumstances.
- j. The diversity of ethnic and cultural groups, the power of prejudice, bullying, discrimination and racism, and the need to take the initiative in challenging this and other offensive behaviours and in giving support to victims of abuse.



## The Big Question – Macbeth

<p><b>Learning Objective</b> Pupils use a range of balanced and persuasive argument techniques across a range of activities to formulate a viewpoint and argument related to the Big Question for this lesson.</p> <p>Pupils analyse the themes of ambition and whether or not this can make you view the world differently.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria (including differentiation)</b></p> <p><b>All</b> can express an initial opinion on the 'Big Question' and justify their viewpoint.</p> <p><b>Most</b> can develop their opinion over the course of the lesson sequence by listening and responding to others.</p> <p><b>Some</b> can articulate a clear balanced argument on the 'Big Question', using sophisticated argument techniques.</p>	<p><b>Big Question: How can ambition be someone's downfall?</b></p> <p>Vocabulary: relationships, perspective, expectations, appearance, false connections, false security, distort looks through filters, time consuming, inescapable, habit, unimaginable power.</p> <p><i>To begin: Discover the events of Macbeth using the SSF 10 Events and the instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix.</i></p> <p><b>Lesson Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hangman the word 'ambition' to discuss and introduce the main theme of the lesson. Pupils pair and share giving examples of positive and negative ambition in today's society.</li> <li>Post it note activity to discuss 'What affects a person's ambition in the 21st century?'</li> <li>Introduction of the protagonist Macbeth and explore the 10 point summary of the play, and brainstorm what impacts Macbeth's ambition.</li> <li>Use the 'Is this a dagger which I see before me' monologue to make a connection to a modern day context.</li> <li>Discuss the impact of social media on a person's view of success and personal ambition in the 21st century.</li> <li>Discuss advice that students would give Macbeth in the 21st century so that he avoids the mistakes he makes in the play due to his ambition</li> </ul> <p>Written outcome: Students write a balanced argument outlining Macbeth's struggle with his own ambition and the reality he finds himself in now as King.</p> <p><b>See Teaching and Learning Activities for full details</b></p> <div> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Macbeth – 10 events</li> <li>Instructions for exploring the story in the Appendix</li> <li>Extract from Macbeth's 'dagger' speech</li> </ul> <p><b>National Curriculum Links</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The features of positive and stable relationships, how to deal with a breakdown in a relationship and the effects of loss and bereavement.</li> <li>How the media portrays young people, body image and health issues.</li> <li>Characteristics of positive relationships, and awareness of exploitation in relationships and of statutory and voluntary organisations that support relationships in crisis.</li> <li>Ways of recognising and reducing risk, minimising harm and getting help in emergency and risky situations.</li> </ul> </div>
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# Macbeth – The Big Question

## Teaching and Learning Activities

### Starter – Exploring Ambition

- Hangman the word 'ambition' to introduce the focus of the lesson,
- Share the definition: a strong desire to do or achieve something. Prompt a discussion of the positive and negative connotations of the word. For example:
  - Positive - target, objective, dream, purpose, hope, wish, a sense of achievement, to better your life, driven,
  - Negative - greed, desperation, jealousy, selfishness, comparison to others.
- Steer the discussion towards the conflict between our own internal ambition and the external influences around us – such as other's ambition for us or an idea of what is deemed 'successful'.
- Introduce the Big Question '**How can ambition be someone's downfall?**' and take initial thoughts.
- Display the following question, 'What affects a person's ambition?' and give students post it notes to jot down their ideas. Display them in a central point in the classroom for all to see.
  - E.g. Family, historical reputation or expectations, respect, friends, social status, peer pressure, what is deemed 'successful'?
- Introduce the protagonist Macbeth and explain that this character's ambition is a central theme of the play.
- Explain that as a class they are going to become detectives to understand the source of his ambition.

### Teaching and Learning Task One

- Class are asked to sort the **Macbeth – 10 events** plot summary into chronological order. Once the teacher is happy that they are in the correct order, ask the class to identify moments when:
  - Macbeth's ambition is clear.
  - Macbeth has been influenced by someone's own ambition for him.
  - Macbeth's ambitions make him do wrong.
  - Macbeth doubts his decisions.





- Class can now complete the same post it note activity from Task One but this time from Macbeth's perspective; what affects Macbeth's ambition?
  - E.g. The Witches' predict Macbeth will be King; Lady Macbeth persuades him to kill Duncan; he's gone too far and his actions are very severe; he sees visions of ghosts; believes what others say around him; he is led astray; perhaps he found himself in a situation that he wouldn't have desired for himself; he has lost his friends.
- Pause at this point to ask pupils to look at the similarities between the sets of responses to the question from this task and from task one.
- Discuss the influences in the 21st century, which affect a person's ambition or idea of success. Lead the discussion, (if it doesn't come up anyway) towards Social Media and the positive and/or negative impact this can have on an individual's idea of 'success'.

## Teaching and Learning Task Two

- Focus on the part in the play where Macbeth's ambition has driven him to question everything (point 6 in the **Macbeth – 10 events** plot summary) and Banquo's ghost has visited him.
- Using the **extract from Macbeth's 'dagger' speech** do a quick comprehension check and chat the extract through. Identify similar words, words that contrast and ideas or themes that are starting to develop already.
- Draw students' attention to the words that suggest conflict or a potential downfall.

## Teaching and Learning Task Three

- Using the **extract from Macbeth's 'dagger' speech**, students work in groups to stage this moment in a creative way showing how the people around him have driven Macbeth's ambition.
- After working on this for five minutes, ask them to now think about how they might bring this into a modern day context and show Macbeth's ambition being driven by the people around him on social media. Explain that pupils can be as creative as they like; they can use sound effects, creative staging, parts of the monologue, whiteboards, a phone in Macbeth's hand etc.
- Ask them to imagine what the 'key players' in Macbeth's life might be saying, and what posts might be taking place on social media platforms.
  - E.g. Lady Macbeth might 'like' Macbeth's new job post on Facebook as King, Duncan has unfriended Macbeth, Banquo sends Macbeth threatening messages.



- Students rehearse and then show back their scenes to the rest of the group.
- Select one group to hold a still image from their performance and switch the mobile phone from Macbeth's hand to a dagger.
- Discuss the impact of the replacement.
- E.g. Despite a different social context and time period, we can easily be misled; manipulation, controlling relationships and peer pressure still exist, all humans strive to achieve.
- Pupils discuss the relationship between ambition and social media in the 21st century. Is this a positive or negative influence on young people?
  - E.g. ambition is the desire to achieve success. On social media 'success' can be misrepresented, as all of the best bits of a person's life is on Instagram but it's rarely the reality.
  - Ambition can also lead to comparing yourself to others, attempting to look and dress like influencers and individuality is lost - your ambition becomes someone else's.
  - Is social media a way to inspire or trigger other's ambition and when does this overlap with jealousy?

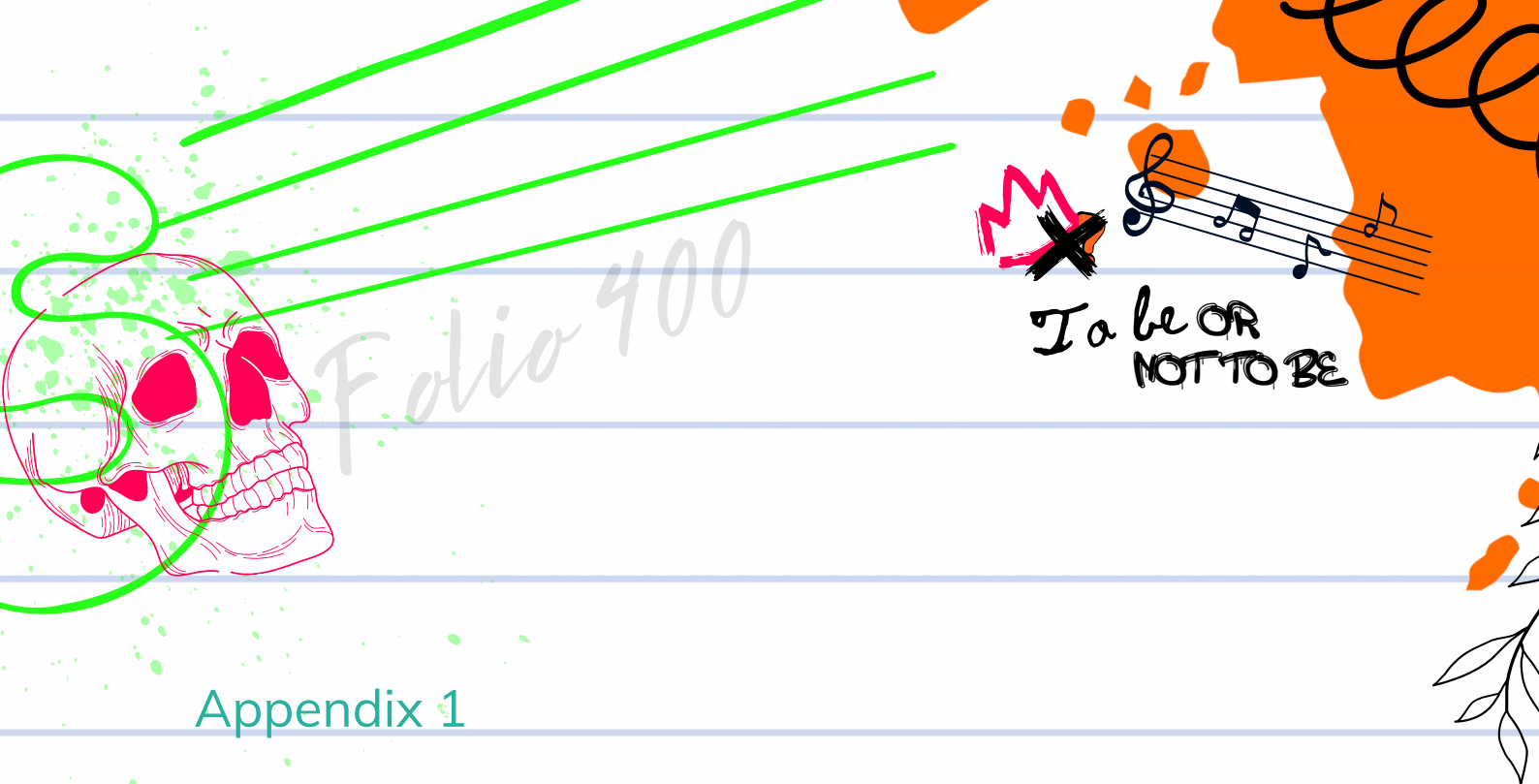
## Plenary

- Discuss the possible advice you could give to Macbeth to help him avoid the mistakes he makes in the play. This is an opportunity to return to the Big Question: **'How can ambition be someone's downfall?'**
- Now compare this to the advice you might give Macbeth in the 21st Century so that his 'ambition' and the ambition of others doesn't result in his downfall.
  - E.g. know yourself; be confident; be a strong individual; accept advice but don't be directed by it; have confidence in your own opinions and ideas; don't assume that posts on social media are real; the idea of influencers being paid to promote a certain idea or product.

## Possible follow up

Students write a balanced argument outlining Macbeth's struggle with his own ambition and the reality he finds himself in as King. Use the activities and discussions from the lessons to form viewpoints of his ambition, verses his guilt and compromised moral compass. Share those statistics from the [BBC](#) to support their argument.





Appendix 1

# MACBETH

## THE BIG QUESTION

Resources Pack



## Extract from Macbeth's dagger speech

**MACBETH**

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going,  
And such an instrument I was to use!  
I see thee still;  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes.



# MACBETH

## 10 Events

1. In the realm of King Duncan of Scotland two royal Thanes – Macbeth and Banquo - are returning from war. They meet three Witches who predict that Macbeth will become King and Banquo's heirs will be Kings.
2. Macbeth writes to his wife telling her of the prediction, which she takes to mean they must kill Duncan, the current King.
3. Duncan and his train arrive at Macbeth's Castle as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth wrangle over whether to kill him or not.
4. Macbeth kills Duncan as he sleeps.
5. Duncan's sons are initially blamed for his murder and flee in fear, leaving Macbeth to be crowned King.
6. Macbeth has Banquo killed. He fears he is haunted by Banquo's ghost and returns to the witches. They reassure him with more predictions of his power.
7. His friend Macduff flees to England to ask Duncan's son – Malcolm – to return and fight Macbeth as Scotland is collapsing under his rule. Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children killed for this disloyalty.
8. Lady Macbeth dies.
9. Macbeth comes under attack as the witch's predictions come true one by one.
10. Macbeth is slain by Macduff and Malcolm is crowned King.



## Exploring the Story

**Before you start this lesson and delve into the Big Question in the play, you might want to familiarise yourself with the story first.**

- There are lots of different approaches you could take, including using the 10 point summary.
- If you and/or your students don't know the play, then the following process is a great way to introduce them to the story and some of the main characters.
- As with any lesson, do adapt this to suit the needs of your students.
- This is a great way to get the story on its feet quickly and help your students to understand the story arc.

**Firstly, divide your students into groups and give them copies of the 10 point summary to explore the story order.**

- Cut up and remove the numbers from the 10 point summary.
- Give each group a few minutes to rearrange them into the correct order.
  - You could print a large copy of the 10 point summary so that each one is on an A3 page and when you go through the order with the whole class you can stick them up in the correct order around the room.
  - Ensure that you correct misconceptions as you go through the points and ask your students to justify and clarify the decisions they made.
  - This will support with comprehension work across English as there are some key indicators of the story structure (E.g. Romeo and Juliet can only get married once they have met, Macbeth can only become King once he has killed the King).



**Once the correct order has been established, give each group two consecutive story points and ask them to create freeze frames to show this moment. Provide them with two rules**

1. Everyone must be involved.
  2. Someone/some people must read out the story point.
- Give them a strict time limit to create the freeze frame, before moving onto their second one.
    - Ask them to consider what else they could be if there are only a small amount of named characters in the scene - could they create the architecture or double up on characters?
  - After the time limit is up, give them a further two minutes to consider how they would adjust their positions so that the rest of the class can see the whole image – ask them to consider their audience.
  - With the rest of the class watching, move from one group to another, seeing each freeze frame in order and hearing the story point. Then jump into the image to ‘Thought tap’ some (or all ideally) of the characters.
    - It is really encouraging for students if they get to share their ideas, whether they are Juliet or Juliet’s wardrobe, Macbeth or one of his soldiers.
  - Ask them open questions about who they are, what they are doing and how they feel about it. Facilitate this in a light-hearted way to avoid the students feeling under pressure.
  - If they struggle with an answer, throw the question out to the rest of the group and the audience.
    - This is a great opportunity to get some interpretations of characters’ thoughts and actions but do use it to clarify facts about the story and the characters too.
    - It is also a great time to show that you don’t have all of the answers either and that you will all find out more as you delve further into the play and rehearsals.
    - You could do this ‘Thought Tapping’ as a ‘Roving Reporter’, using a prop as a microphone to interview the characters as if live in that moment.



**Once you have done this for each of the 10 images, bring the class back together for a plenary.**

This is a good time to recap on what they have learnt about the characters and/or the story and you could do this in a number of ways. E.g

1. **Tell the story in a circle.** Everyone sits in a circle and adds a bit more information on the previous person's ideas. This means that those that have a good grasp will be able to share their knowledge and those who are still working towards it, will be able to add whatever they can – such as a character name or a setting for the play.
2. **Provide them with Plenary cards.** Use the following examples and ask them to share their response with someone else.
  - Something they have learnt today; a new word or phrase that they have used today; something that they would like to know more about; something that they are looking forward to in the play; a question that they now have about the play.
3. **Learnt and enjoyed.** Simply ask for them to tell a partner something that they have learnt and something that they have enjoyed in this lesson.

