

Writing about the BIG IDEAS in 'Macbeth': Guilt

This resource has been designed to help you consider the BIG IDEAS explored by Shakespeare in 'Macbeth'. For Assessment Objective 1, you are required to:

Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: • maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response • use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

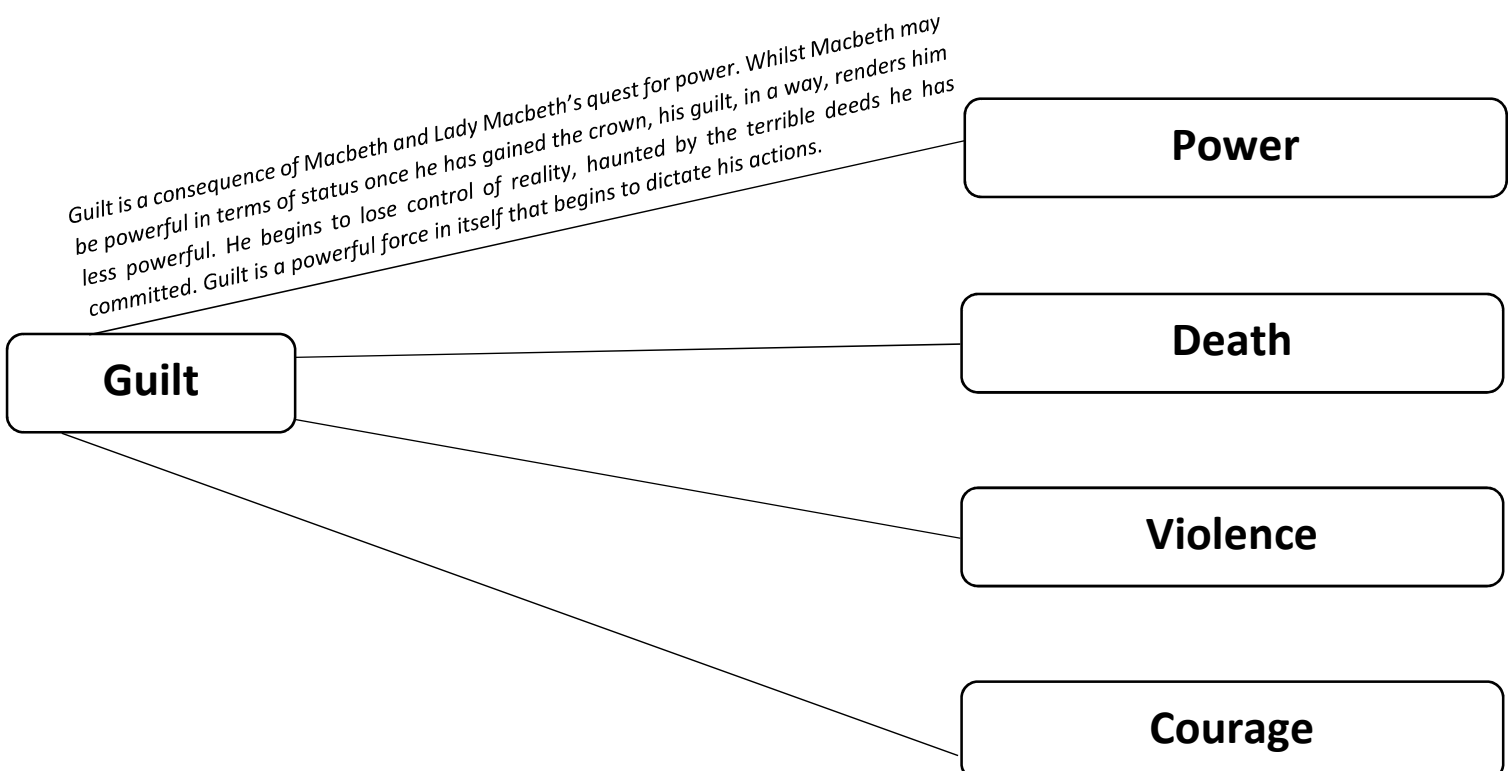
Exploring the BIG IDEAS will help you meet the requirements of this assessment objective. Complete the activities below in as much detail as possible to help you begin to consider how to discuss them in an exam answer.

ACTIVITY 1: Explain where the theme (Big Idea) of guilt appears in the play as annotations around the image. Link your answers to events and characters as well as Shakespeare's authorial intent. If you can, include examples from across the play.

Guilt



ACTIVITY 2: Consider how Shakespeare connects guilt to other 'Big Ideas'/themes explored in the play. Explain in as much detail as possible. One has been done for you.



ACTIVITY 3: Complete the sentence stems that help you answer the following question: **How is guilt explored throughout the play?** Try and turn each sentence stem into a full paragraph by exploring your own interpretations of guilt. What do certain events, characters and motifs suggest to you? What does Shakespeare want his audiences to understand? Include quotations if you need to, but remember, you do not need to analyse language for AO1.

Once Macbeth has killed King Duncan, guilt becomes an overwhelming and dominant force in his life. He is haunted by what he has done whereas Lady Macbeth is not, stating 'A little water clears us of this deed'. Perhaps the different reactions between the two characters are indicative of how guilt can affect us in different ways. For example...

Banquo's ghost is a striking manifestation of Macbeth's guilt. Macbeth, by sending murderers to kill his former ally, had hoped to distance himself from the murder, perhaps as a way of feigning innocence. However, his confrontation with the ghost suggests guilt...

Even Lady Macbeth cannot escape the forces of guilt. By the end of the play she has completely broken down, destroyed by what she has done. Her action of obsessively washing her hands suggests guilt...