

## Writing about the BIG IDEAS in 'Macbeth': Appearance vs Reality

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.

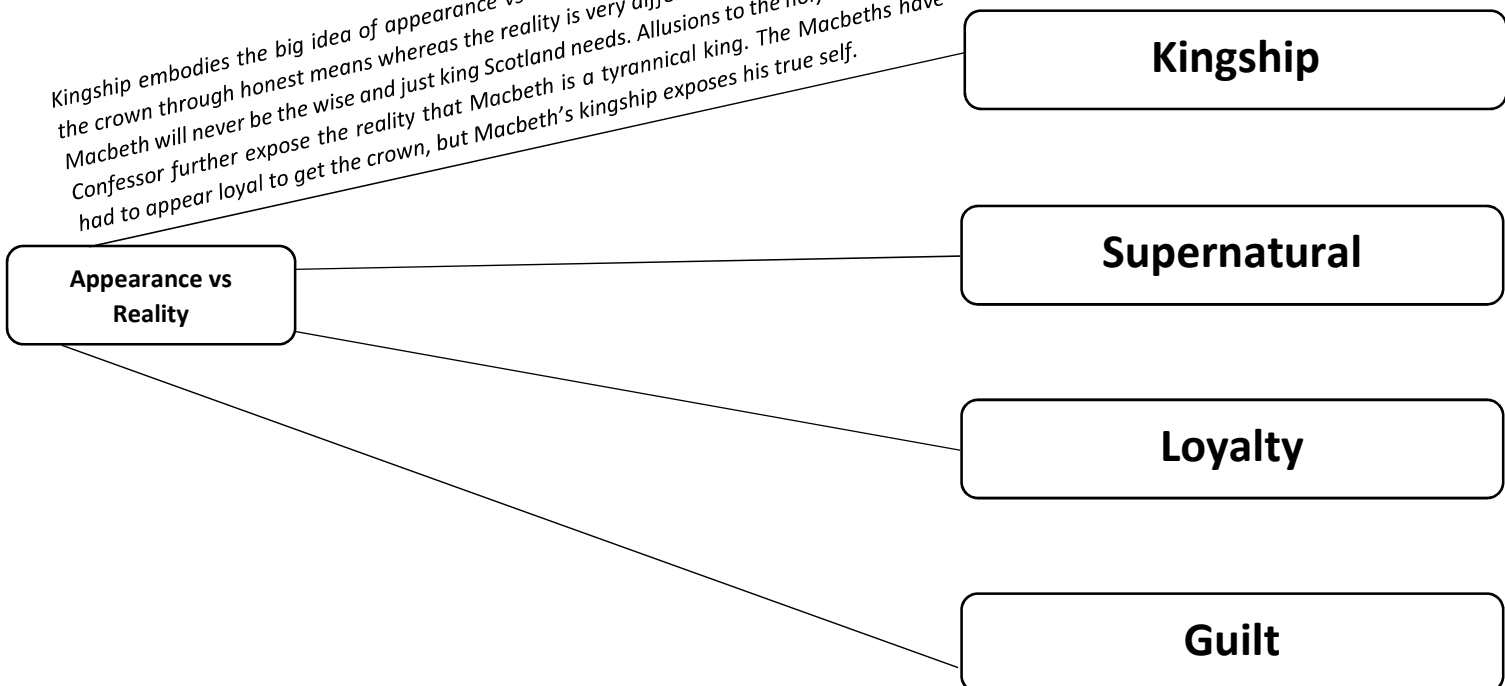
**ACTIVITY 1:** Explain where the theme (Big Idea) of appearance vs reality appears in the play as annotations around the image. Link your answers to events and characters as well as Shakespeare's authorial intent. If you can, include examples from across the play.

# Appearance vs Reality



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

Kingship embodies the big idea of appearance vs reality. Macbeth appears to have gained the crown through honest means whereas the reality is very different. It soon becomes clear Macbeth will never be the wise and just king Scotland needs. Allusions to the holy Edward the Confessor further expose the reality that Macbeth is a tyrannical king. The Macbeths have had to appear loyal to get the crown, but Macbeth's kingship exposes his true self.



**ACTIVITY 3:** Complete the sentence stems that help you answer the following question: **How is appearance vs reality explored throughout the play?** Try and turn each sentence stem into a full paragraph by exploring your own interpretations of appearance and reality. 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.

*Audiences are told from the beginning of the play that not everything will be as it first appears. The fact Shakespeare has the witches speak in paradoxical couplets and utter the words 'fair is foul and foul is fair' insinuates that appearance and reality will be an important theme because...*

*The ideas of appearance and reality manifest themselves in the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth most of all. They strive to appear the loyal and humble hosts upon King Duncan's arrival to Dunsinane and yet continue to plan and deceive together. This is seen when...*

*The Macbeths appear to be loyal to gain the crown but once the crown is one, their appearance is about protecting themselves from suspicion. Lady Macbeth knows Duncan is murdered and yet pretends to faint upon hearing the news. She is well aware of how society would expect her to act and so collapses to appear the weak and vulnerable woman. In reality, however...*

*By the end of the play, realities are exposed and Scotland learns who Macbeth really is. Perhaps Shakespeare decides to expose this reality because...*