

Level 4 Options

Elevates all 4 learning targets for this module

View the murder scene from the 1983 BBC version of *Macbeth* (director, Jack Gold; starring Nicol Williamson) and the same scene from Polanski's 1971 film, starring Jon Finch. This scene is the cinematic version of Shakespeare's Act II, Scene ii. Note the decisions made by the directors in their interpretations of the scene. Compare the two versions. Include details such as choice of actors, setting, musical score, filming techniques and costume. Which version did you prefer and why?

Research one of several topics concerning psychology. For example, the attitude of a person who kills for ambition. *Macbeth* is the first play to stress what the murderer is undergoing psychologically, rather than the action of the murder itself. Or, research the effects of guilt and contrast them to Shakespeare's approach to the topic by examining changes in Lady Macbeth resulting in her death, as well as Macbeth's attempts to protect himself and finally accepting the consequences of his deed. What would modern psychology say about Shakespeare's characterizations of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth? Or, research why a blindly ambitious person ignores society's laws and values to fulfill an ambition. Why does this person believe he/she is above all laws? Why does this person appear to lack remorse?

With a partner, create your own modern murder story or play using characters based on those in *Macbeth*. Your story should have the following ingredients:

- a supernatural or spooky scene
- an ambitious male character who wants advancement in his career and commits a violent murder
- a wife who dominates him
- at least three quotes from Shakespeare's play (you can modernise the wording).

Firstly, make decisions about the setting, the time and the names of the characters and their roles. Decide whether you want to write a play or a story. Then organise the stages in the story—the beginning, the middle and the end. If it is a play, this will mean three main scenes. After you have made these decisions, brainstorm the ideas and events in the story. The most important part of the story is the beginning. Practise a few different openings before you choose the best. Try to balance description with dialogue and remember to begin each new exchange of speech on a new line. If you are writing a play, remember to include stage directions.