

Looking back at Act 3

Activities for groups or individuals

1 Silent witnesses

Act 3 opens shortly after Macbeth has been crowned at Scone as High King of Scotland, and it includes the dramatic invasion of a stately banquet by the Ghost of Banquo. Step into role as a thane at either event. Invent your thane's title and write *either* an account of the unstaged coronation as seen by a participant *or* an account of the banquet as the thanes are abruptly dismissed in Scene 4. You might like to write this account in your journal or in a letter to a trusted friend.

2 Thematic focus

Look back at the Themes boxes on the left-hand pages, then create a mind map of the themes that have been developed in Act 3. Draw a chart to show how they relate to each other, and support your chart with quotations from the play. Remember that the following themes are interrelated in the play: the relationship between appearance and reality; the manifestation of evil, and honour and loyalty; how selfishness and ambition sit with kingship and honour.

Now present a case to the rest of the class: which are the most important combinations of themes? Why? How have the events of this act contributed to your understanding of them?

3 'Good things of day begin to droop and drowse'

One critic thought that line 52 in Scene 2 was 'the motto of the entire tragedy'. Look through this act in pairs to find other lines that might similarly capture the essence of *Macbeth*, or lines that might work as a subtitle to the play. Write out the lines and explain to other pairs why you think they are significant.

4 Changing relationships

Act 3 is the last time the Macbeths appear together, and we see how their relationship has changed since the

beginning of the play. The following activity will help you compare their relationship at the end of Act 1 with their relationship at the end of Act 3.

Create a line diagram to show the changing relationship between this couple. Along the horizontal axis, mark out Act 1, Act 2 and Act 3. Along the vertical axis, mark out the level of power and control the character has, both personally and within the relationship. The highest level shows them to be controlling and manipulative, while the lowest level shows them to be out of control and unsure of what is happening in the relationship. Your line graph should reveal at a glance how the Macbeths' relationship has changed throughout the play so far.

5 The Macbeths psychoanalysed

In role as a psychoanalyst, use your line graph to report on the differences in the Macbeths' states of mind and relationship. You may also want to consider:

- how they speak to each other
- how they talk about the future
- the language and imagery they use
- their ideas of 'manhood' and 'womanhood'
- their mental suffering and anxiety.

Write at least two paragraphs, and remember to identify quotations from the play that would give your report more detail. Finish with an additional paragraph predicting what will happen to the Macbeths in the final two acts of the play.

