



APPEARANCE VERSUS REALITY

! YOUR ESSAY MUST MEET ALL THE CRITERIA FOR THE INTRODUCTION, BODY PARAGRAPHS, AS WELL AS CONCLUSION; OTHERWISE, YOUR ESSAY WILL NOT BE MARKED! !



! COMPLETE THE COVER LIST BELOW TO ENSURE YOU HAVE MET ALL THE CRITERIA !

Cover Checklist- ✓ Tick Each Section When Complete.

- ☒ PREP STEP - Make a copy of this document.
- ☒ PREP STEP - Share your essay outline template with your tutor.
- ☒ PREP STEP - Copy and paste the link for your essay outline into your study system.
- ☒ STEP 1 - Outline your 100% essay - **START WITH THE CONCLUSION & WORK BACKWARDS**
- ☒ STEP 2 - Use the TTECEA checklist for details
- ☒ STEP 3 - Revise your essay - check for coherence & cohesion, redundant repetition, clarity, vocabulary, etc.
- ☒ STEP 4 - Edit your essay.
- ☒ STEP 5 - Put your essay together as one complete piece.

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MORE KEY IDEAS

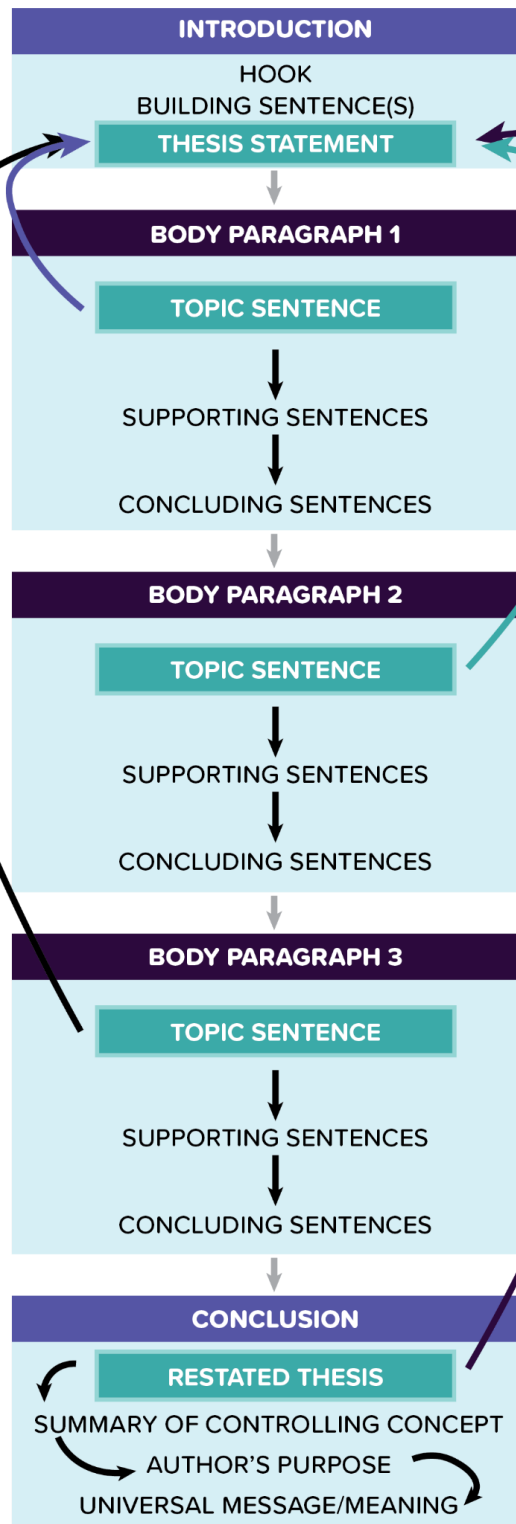
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100% ESSAY STRUCTURE OVERVIEW





SECTION 1: QUESTION



Read the following extract from act 1, scene 1, then answer the question that follows.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch

Paddock calls.

Third Witch

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Exeunt

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of appearances versus reality.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of appearances versus reality in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of appearances versus reality in the play as a whole.





SECTION 2: ESSAY PLAN

I. Introduction

- Discuss the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood.
- Introduce Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' and the theme of appearance vs. reality.
- Highlight the essay's focus on exploring this theme, with an emphasis on the dichotomy of 'fair' and 'foul,' and how it ultimately leads to Macbeth's downfall and its far-reaching social implications.

II. Scene Analysis: The Prologue

- Analyse the opening scene, its tone, and how it introduces the theme of appearance versus reality.
- Examine the phrase 'fair is foul and foul is fair,' its symbolic value, and its implications for the narrative.

III. Character Analysis: Lady Macbeth

- Discuss Lady Macbeth's manipulation of appearances and how it epitomises the theme.
- Analyse her instructions to Macbeth to 'look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't' and what this reveals about the play's exploration of deceptive strategies.
- Link events and symbols in the play to the historical context, particularly the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.
- Explore how the play resonated with contemporary audiences and incited societal apprehension.

IV. Scene Analysis: Act 5

- Focus on the consequences of unchecked ambition as revealed in Act 5.
- Discuss Lady Macbeth's mental breakdown and contrast her earlier portrayal with her current state.
- Analyse Macbeth's final soliloquy, its symbolism, and how it emphasises his realisation of his misguided ambition.

V. Conclusion

- Summarise the exploration of appearances vs. reality and moral ambiguity.
- Discuss the tragic consequences of the protagonists' inability to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, 'fair' and 'foul'.
- Touch upon different literary and philosophical interpretations of tragedy and their relevance to 'Macbeth.'
- Refer to Niccolo Machiavelli's ideas and the play's critique of these ideas.
- End with a reflection on the cautionary aspect of the play.





ESSAY TABLE

Topic	Quote	Author's Technique	Effect on Audience	Author's Purpose	Historical Context
Appearance vs Reality	'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'	Rhyming couplet, alliteration	Provokes contemplation on the theme of appearance vs reality, conveys a sense of unease	To highlight the theme of moral ambiguity and deceptive strategies	The influence of Niccolo Machiavelli's political philosophy and his ideas on morality and power during the Early Modern Period
Manipulation and Deception	'Look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't'	Metaphor, symbolism	Evokes feelings of tension and unease due to the foreshadowed tragedy	To underscore the theme of manipulation and deceptive strategies	Reflection of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, showcasing societal fears of hidden treachery





The Consequences of Unchecked Ambition	'She should have died hereafter'	Brevity, repetition, polysyndeton	Allows reflection on Macbeth's downfall, provokes a sense of pity and despair	To underscore the tragic consequences of misguided ambition	The concept of 'hereafter' as a promising future upended by unchecked ambition in this context
Tragedy and Regicide	'Act like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't'	Simile	Encourages the audience to scorn transient earthly pleasures and glories, symbolised by the ambition that Macbeth and his wife chase	To expose the corruption and deceptive methods used to acquire power	Connection to Sir Phillip Sidney's ideas of tragedy, exploring the corruption that rulers attempt to conceal





STEP 1: OUTLINING - Complete Your 100% Essay Outline

Criteria	Status	INTRODUCTION - Do not make this too detailed.
Hook AO1 <div>fact/statistic ▾</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In a world where distinguishing truth from falsehood is increasingly difficult, the pursuit of truth is, in fact, a timeless struggle that has endured through the ages.
Building sentence(s) AO3 <div><input type="checkbox"/> counter-argument</div> <div>OR</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> some contextual info</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	For example, during the Early Modern Period, when Shakespeare wrote his plays, the debate about appearance and reality was raging, with political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli a controversial figure at the centre of this debate. He believed that honour and glory were the most important goals for a ruler, even if achieving them required committing immoral acts. In the Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', appearance versus reality is arguably the central theme, serving as a lens through which Shakespeare invites us to view all events.
Thesis statement AO1 <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 1</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 2</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> key idea 3</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Consequently, in this essay, we will explore the multifaceted theme of appearance versus reality in the play, examining how the dichotomy of 'fair' and 'foul' sets the stage for a complex narrative of deceptive strategies and unchecked ambition, leading ultimately to the protagonist's tragic downfall as well as its far-reaching social consequences.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 1 - only focus on KEY IDEA #1
WHAT? Topic sentence AO1 <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 1</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	The play commences with a scene that, although merely ten lines in length, acts as a powerful prologue, establishing the story's foreboding tone, while also providing the audience with a glimpse of the story's world of war, ambition and violence; however, most importantly, perhaps, it highlights the underlying theme of appearance versus reality.
HOW? Supporting sentences AO2 <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis</div> <div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*</div>	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	As Shakespeare often does, he concludes the opening scene with a rhyming couplet - 'fair is foul and foul is fair / Hover through the fog and filthy air' - that not just enhances the poetic quality of the language, but may also compels the audience to contemplate the ideas contained within the words themselves. For example, the repetition of the fricative /f/ sound in 'fair... foul... foul... fair' creates a sense of friction and harshness that complements the foreboding tone of the play, while also highlighting the importance of the words 'fair' and 'foul'. In





		particular, the adjective 'fair' can convey several different meanings, such as 'good', 'just' and 'beautiful', while, conversely, the adjective 'foul' can mean 'wicked', 'immoral', or 'bad'; additionally, by employing the verb 'is', Shakespeare equates 'good' and 'bad', thus setting up a paradox by suggesting the two antithetical concepts are effectively equivalents or even mirror images of each other.
WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Consequently, the audience may come to understand that the play explores the blurring of moral boundaries, a key aspect of Machiavellian thought, thus encouraging the audience not to take anything at face value.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 2 - only focus on KEY IDEA #2
WHAT? Topic sentence AO1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 2	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	This motif of appearances versus reality continues with Lady Macbeth's manipulation of appearances, epitomised in her metaphorical instructions to Macbeth to 'look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't' in Act 1, Scene 5.
HOW? Supporting sentences AO2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*	<div>Complete ▾</div> (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Firstly, Shakespeare uses the 'flower' and the 'serpent' as symbols, the former denoting innocence and beauty, and the latter embodying treachery and cunning; in the context of the narrative, the 'flower' becomes the 'false face' that Macbeth must adopt, concealing the dangerous 'serpent' beneath, which itself may be a symbol for his malicious ambition. Similar to the Witches' line 'fair is foul and foul is fair', the duality of the 'flower' and the 'serpent' captures the dichotomy of appearance versus reality, engaging the audience in an intricate web of deception that evokes feelings of tension and unease as it foreshadows the tragic trajectory of the narrative. Additionally, these events may reflect some concepts about the tragic plot structure, which, according to Sir Phillip Sidney, can be seen as a method for uncovering the deceptive methods by which statesmen gain power and rule. Consequently, the plot of the narrative may have resonated with contemporary audiences who lived through the tumultuous Gunpowder Plot of 1605.





<p><u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>For example, the image of the 'serpent under't', suggestive of hidden treachery, would have likely evoked the memory as well as the societal apprehension and fear of deception of the Plot, a failed attempt by a group of provincial English Catholics, led by Robert Catesby, to kill King James I of England and VI of Scotland and most of the Protestant aristocracy by blowing up the Houses of Parliament during the State Opening on 5 November 1605.</p>
<p>Criteria</p>	<p>Status</p>	<p>BODY PARAGRAPH 3 - only focus on KEY IDEA #3</p>
<p><u>WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key-idea-3</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Finally, Act 5 appears to focus on the ultimate reality of unchecked ambition; while Lady Macbeth's guilt-ridden sleepwalking scene in Act 5, Scene 1 underscores her mental breakdown due to guilt, contrasting sharply with her earlier portrayal as a manipulative and resolute character, Macbeth's final soliloquy, in Act 5 Scene 5, showcases a profound realisation that upends his initial ambition to 'dare do all that may become a man' in pursuit of power.</p>
<p><u>HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>For instance, upon receiving the news of his wife's death from Seyton, who states, 'The queen, my lord, is dead,' Macbeth responds with, 'She should have died hereafter.' The brevity of this line, perhaps designed to incorporate a pause afterwards, allows the audience to reflect on the stark contrast between the Macbeth's earlier ambition and their current downfall. In particular, the term 'hereafter,' which recurs throughout the play in the dialogues of the Witches, Duncan, and Lady Macbeth, takes on a poignant connotation in this context. Previously, 'hereafter' signified a promising future, something to aspire toward. Here, however, it epitomises a bleak, meaningless future—evidence of Macbeth's realisation that his ambition has led to an irrecoverable loss. This sentiment is further encapsulated in the polysyndeton, 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,' which ends on a feminine note, thus underscoring Macbeth's fatalistic view of the future. In particular, the slowed rhythm of this line mimics the agonising pace of time for Macbeth, emphasising his sense of despair and hopelessness.</p>
<p><u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>Consequently, from the onset of the play, the audience has experienced a range of emotions in response to Shakespeare's initial portrayal of Macbeth, from admiration for his heroic feats in battle, to anger at his propensity for murder, to pity in his final soliloquy, which, perhaps, prompts them to confront the grim</p>





<input type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)		reality of misguided ambition and the unsettling prospect of a meaningless future.
Criteria	Status	CONCLUSION - <u>CRUCIAL!</u>
<u>Restated thesis AO1</u> (Re-write your thesis statement in different words.)	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In conclusion, having delved into the intricate layers of appearances versus reality and moral ambiguity, we have seen how Shakespeare presents these themes through the poetic language, potent metaphors, and the dramatic evolution of characters, provoking a profound contemplation on the nature of power, ambition, and the chilling consequences of their misuse.
<u>Summary of controlling concept AO1</u> How does your thesis link to the central theme of the text?	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	The play explores the idea that things are not always what they seem, and the tragedy is that the protagonists frequently struggle to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, what is 'fair' and what is 'foul', therefore fooling themselves into chasing what is ultimately 'foul' - power and status via the regicide of Duncan. Interestingly, literary theorist Terry Eagleton suggests that tragedy is 'a refuse dump for socially undesirable emotions, or at least a retraining programme', that gives the audience an avenue to express or release pent-up frustration at the political status quo, without resorting to social aberrations such as assassinations of the king. Another perspective is a medieval definition of tragedy that suggests a Christian moral; the audience is encouraged to scorn transient, earthly pleasures and glories, as symbolised by the ambition and status that Macbeth and his wife erroneously chase. Additionally, in his book Defence of Poetry, Sir Phillip Sidney (1578) suggests that tragedy lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal.
<u>Summary of author's central purpose AO1/AO3</u> How does the controlling concept reflect the MAIN reason that the author wrote the text?	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	If we take this perspective, we can actually see the play of Macbeth as an internal exploration of the methods, such as murder and deception, that rulers and statesmen use to acquire power and status, as epitomised by Lady Macbeth's simile, 'Act like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't'. In particular, the deceptive strategies Macbeth employs appear to reflect Niccolo Machiavelli's ideas from his infamous treatise, The Prince, where he states that, for a ruler, the most important good to aim for was honour and glory.
<u>Universal message AO1</u> (What is the MAIN message of the text? Focus on the end.)	Complete ▾ (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Ultimately, however, the play can be seen as a cautionary tale that not only criticises Machiavelli's ideas, but also explores the concept that we should be careful about what we wish for, because what we think is 'foul' may actually be 'fair' and what we





		think is 'fair' may actually be 'foul' as the Macbeths realise when it is too late.
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KEY VOCABULARY

Distinguishing - Telling the difference between things.

Endured - Lasted for a long time.

Controversial - Causes a lot of disagreement or arguments.

Arguably - Something you can make a good case for or defend.

Multifaceted - Has many different parts or aspects.

Dichotomy - A division into two parts that are usually opposites.

Compel - Make someone feel they must do something.

Fricative - A sound produced by forcing air out of your mouth through a narrow opening between two of your teeth or between your lip and your teeth.

Antithetical - Completely opposite to something.

Equivalents - Things that are equal in value, amount, function, etc.

Epitomised - Is a perfect example of something.

Denoting - Indicates or represents something.

Intricate - Has many small parts or details.

Resonated - Created a strong, deep, clear sound that lasts for a long time.

Apprehension - A feeling of fear that something bad may happen.

Soliloquy - A speech in a play in which a character speaks their thoughts aloud, usually when they are alone.

Brevity - The quality of expressing something in very few words.

Poignant - Creates a strong feeling of sadness.

Polysyndeton - The repeated use of conjunctions in close succession for stylistic effect.

Fatalistic - Believing that you cannot control things or prevent them from happening.

Portrayal - The way that someone or something is described or represented in a book, film, etc.

Aberrations - A change from what is normal or usual, typically one that is unwelcome or undesirable.

Erroneously - In a way that is incorrect or mistaken.

Infamous - Well-known for something bad.

Treatise - A formal piece of writing on a particular subject.

Cautionary tale - A story with a message warning of the consequences of certain behavior or character flaw.

Regicide - The act of killing a king.

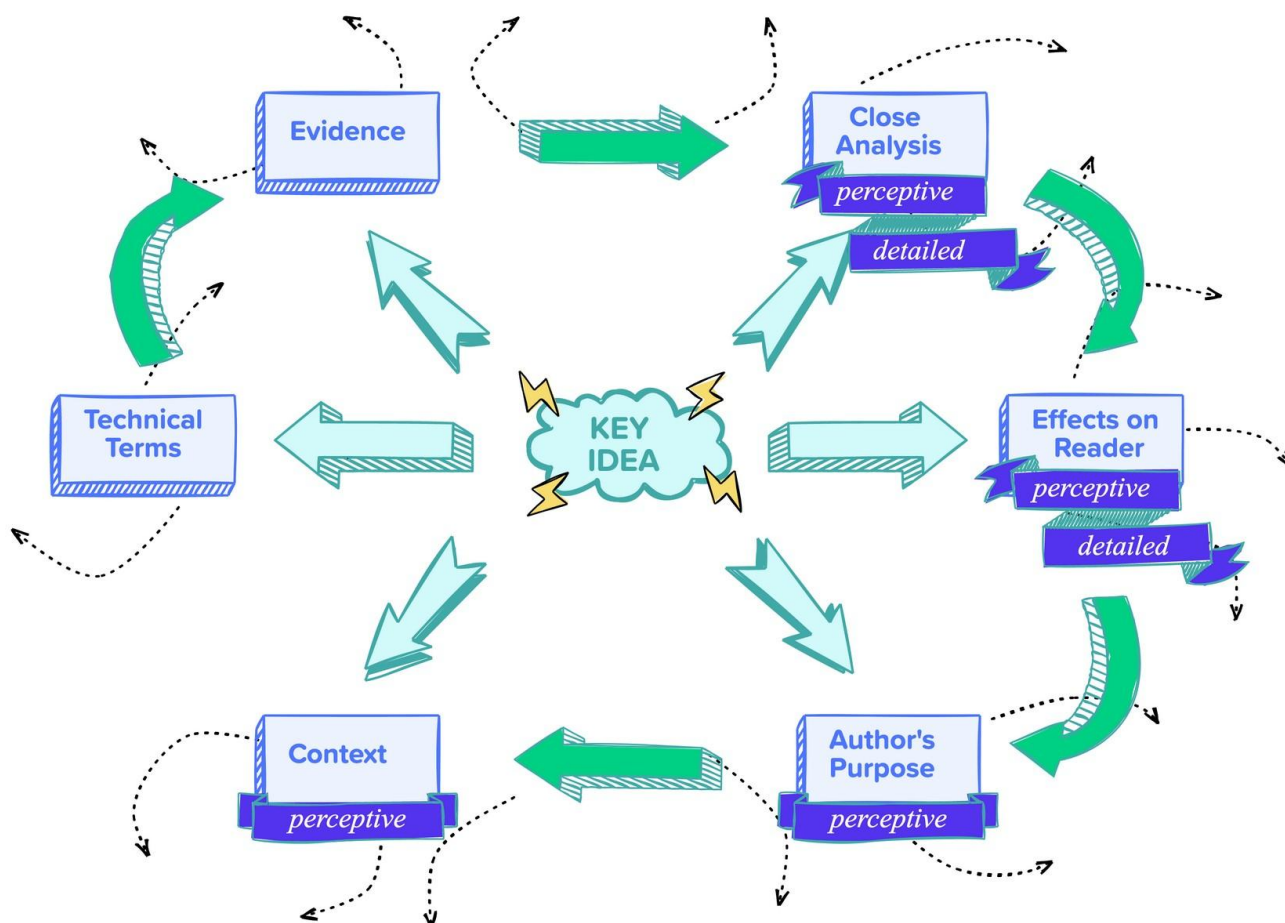




STEP 2: ADDING DETAIL-Complete the TTECEA Checklist for Detail

1. To achieve a grade 9 level of detail, ensure that you link your key idea in each of your body paragraphs to as many of the elements of the TTECEA mnemonic as possible (aim to write about 650-950 words maximum for the entire essay)
2. You do not need to have each of the TTECEA elements in each paragraph, but make sure you have all of them in the entirety of your essay.
3. Each item on the checklist should only have 2 main purposes:
 - a. **to link to your key idea in each paragraph**
 - b. **and support your argument.**

- ✓ **TOPIC SENTENCE**: Introduce the key idea of your body paragraph.
- ✓ **TECHNIQUE**: Select a key technique the author uses (one you can explore in detail, eg, metaphor, simile, etc).
- ✓ **EVIDENCE**: EMBED a quote to back up your ideas.
- ✓ **CLOSE ANALYSIS**: Break the technique into smaller pieces, zoom in and analyse them PERCEPTIVELY.
- ✓ **EFFECTS ON THE READER**: Explore what the author's method makes us focus on, feel (emotionally) or think.
- ✓ **AUTHOR'S PURPOSE**: Explore why the might want to make us feel a certain way about certain ideas.





STEP 3: REVISING - Revise Your Essay

Ensure you have revised the following aspects of your essay:





- ☒ Removed/replaced ALL redundant repetition.
- ☒ Replaced ALL instances of the word 'shows' with more accurate and specific verbs for inferring effects of the author's methods (check toolkit).
- ☒ Revised essay for coherence: are the ideas in each of the paragraphs clearly connected to each other?
- ☒ Revised essay for cohesion: check the toolkit for help.
- ☒ Removed all instances of the following words and replace them with specific details of the topics you are exploring:
 - How
 - Shows
 - Some
 - Something
 - Thing
 - This
 - Way
 - What
- ☒ Your vocabulary is academic – no informal language unless quoting directly.
- ☒ Revised essay for clarity – is your essay easy to read? Ask a peer to read it and give you feedback.





STEP 4: EDITING - Edit Your Essay

Ensure you have edited the following aspects of spelling, punctuation, and grammar:

- ☒ All words are spelt correctly.
- ☒ All sentences and names begin with a capital see guidelines below 
- ☒ All sentences end with a full stop.
- ☒  No sentences are separated with a comma  
- ☒ I used a comma before and after the following words or phrases:
 - for example,
 - however
- ☒ I have used ellipses to indicate missing words in quotes.
- ☒ I have used at least one semi-colon to separate or join closely related sentences.
 - The language paper focuses on various forms of writing; the literature paper focuses primarily on academic essay writing.
 - There are five keys to a grade 9 essay: structure, conceptualisation, context, detail, and convincing evidence.
- ☒ I have used a colon to introduce a quote, phrase, word, etc.

HOW TO REMEMBER CAPITALS - **ABLE PRINTS**:

- **Abbreviations: U.K., USA, UAE**
- **Beginnings of sentences: Nobody** saw it coming.
- **Languages: French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic,**
- **Emphasis - I LOVE CHEESE!** (avoid this)

- **Places: Africa, Mecca, London, Zimbabwe**
- **Religions and words related to them: Islam/Muslim, Christianity/Christian, Judaism/Jewish, Hinduism/Hindu**
- **I, as in me**
- **Names (specific) of people, places, businesses, e.g., Shakespeare, Apple, London.**
- **Titles of books, movies, or programmes, e.g., The Lion King, Macbeth,**
- **Special days: Eid, Christmas, Diwali**

SPAG RULES

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/category/handbook/>





STEP 5: COMPLETE - Put Your Essay Together as One Complete Piece

In a world where distinguishing truth from falsehood is increasingly difficult, the pursuit of truth is, in fact, a timeless struggle that has endured through the ages. For example, during the Early Modern Period, when Shakespeare wrote his plays, the debate about appearance and reality was raging, with political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli a controversial figure at the centre of this debate. He believed that honour and glory were the most important goals for a ruler, even if achieving them required committing immoral acts. In Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', appearance versus reality is arguably the central theme, serving as a lens through which Shakespeare invites us to view all events. Consequently, in this essay, we will explore the multifaceted theme of appearance versus reality in the play, examining how the dichotomy of 'fair' and 'foul' sets the stage for a complex narrative of deceptive strategies and unchecked ambition, leading ultimately to the protagonist's tragic downfall as well as its far-reaching social consequences.

The play commences with a scene that, although merely ten lines in length, acts as a powerful prologue, establishing the story's foreboding tone, while also providing the audience with a glimpse of the story's world of war, ambition and violence; however, most importantly, perhaps, it highlights the underlying theme of appearance versus reality. As Shakespeare often does, he concludes the opening scene with a rhyming couplet - 'fair is foul and foul is fair / Hover through the fog and filthy air' - that not just enhances the poetic quality of the language, but may also compel the audience to contemplate the ideas contained within the words themselves. For example, the repetition of the fricative /f/ sound in 'fair... foul... foul... fair' creates a sense of friction and harshness that complements the foreboding tone of the play, while also highlighting the importance of the words 'fair' and 'foul'. In particular, the adjective 'fair' can convey several different meanings, such as 'good', 'just' and 'beautiful', while, conversely, the adjective 'foul' can mean 'wicked', 'immoral', or 'bad'; additionally, by employing the verb 'is', Shakespeare equates 'good' and 'bad', thus setting up a paradox by suggesting the two antithetical concepts are effectively equivalents or even mirror images of each other. Consequently, the audience may come to understand that the play explores the blurring of moral boundaries, a key aspect of Machiavellian thought, thus encouraging the audience not to take anything at face value.

This motif of appearances versus reality continues with Lady Macbeth's manipulation of appearances, epitomised in her metaphorical instructions to Macbeth to 'look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't' in Act 1, Scene 5. Firstly, Shakespeare uses the 'flower' and the 'serpent' as symbols, the former denoting innocence and beauty, and the latter embodying treachery and cunning; in the context of the narrative, the 'flower' becomes the 'false face' that Macbeth must adopt, concealing the dangerous 'serpent' beneath, which itself may be a symbol for his malicious ambition. Similar to the Witches' line 'fair is foul and foul is fair', the duality of the 'flower' and the 'serpent' captures the dichotomy of appearance versus reality, engaging the audience in an intricate web of deception that evokes feelings of tension and unease as it foreshadows the tragic trajectory of the narrative. Additionally, these events may reflect some concepts about the tragic plot structure, which, according to Sir Phillip Sidney, can be seen as a method for uncovering the deceptive methods by which statesmen gain power and rule. Consequently, the plot of the narrative may have resonated with contemporary audiences who lived through the tumultuous Gunpowder Plot of 1605. For example, the image of the 'serpent under't', suggestive of hidden treachery, would have likely evoked the memory as well as the societal apprehension and fear of deception of the Plot, a failed attempt by a group of provincial English Catholics, led by Robert Catesby, to kill King James I of England and VI of Scotland and most of the Protestant aristocracy by blowing up the Houses of Parliament during the State Opening on 5 November 1605.

Finally, Act 5 appears to focus on the ultimate reality of unchecked ambition; while Lady Macbeth's guilt-ridden sleepwalking scene in Act 5, Scene 1 underscores her mental breakdown due to guilt, contrasting sharply with her





earlier portrayal as a manipulative and resolute character, Macbeth's final soliloquy, in Act 5 Scene 5, showcases a profound realisation that upends his initial ambition to 'dare do all that may become a man' in pursuit of power. For instance, upon receiving the news of his wife's death from Seyton, who states, 'The queen, my lord, is dead,' Macbeth responds with, 'She should have died hereafter.' The brevity of this line, perhaps designed to incorporate a pause afterwards, allows the audience to reflect on the stark contrast between the Macbeths' earlier ambition and their current downfall. In particular, the term 'hereafter,' which recurs throughout the play in the dialogues of the Witches, Duncan, and Lady Macbeth, takes on a poignant connotation in this context. Previously, 'hereafter' signified a promising future, something to aspire toward. Here, however, it epitomises a bleak, meaningless future—evidence of Macbeth's realisation that his ambition has led to an irrecoverable loss. This sentiment is further encapsulated in the polysyndeton, 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,' which ends on a feminine note, thus underscoring Macbeth's fatalistic view of the future. In particular, the slowed rhythm of this line mimics the agonising pace of time for Macbeth, emphasising his sense of despair and hopelessness. Consequently, from the onset of the play, the audience has experienced a range of emotions in response to Shakespeare's initial portrayal of Macbeth, from admiration for his heroic feats in battle, to anger at his propensity for murder, to pity in his final soliloquy, which, perhaps, prompts them to confront the grim reality of misguided ambition and the unsettling prospect of a meaningless future.

In conclusion, having delved into the intricate layers of appearances versus reality and moral ambiguity, we have seen how Shakespeare presents these themes through the poetic language, potent metaphors, and the dramatic evolution of characters, provoking a profound contemplation on the nature of power, ambition, and the chilling consequences of their misuse. The play explores the idea that things are not always what they seem, and the tragedy is that the protagonists frequently struggle to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, what is 'fair' and what is 'foul', therefore fooling themselves into chasing what is ultimately 'foul' - power and status via the regicide of Duncan. Interestingly, literary theorist Terry Eagleton suggests that tragedy is 'a refuse dump for socially undesirable emotions, or at least a retraining programme', that gives the audience an avenue to express or release pent-up frustration at the political status quo, without resorting to social aberrations such as assassinations of the king. Another perspective is a medieval definition of tragedy that suggests a Christian moral; the audience is encouraged to scorn transient, earthly pleasures and glories, as symbolised by the ambition and status that Macbeth and his wife erroneously chase. Additionally, in his book *Defence of Poetry*, Sir Phillip Sidney (1578) suggests that tragedy lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal. If we take this perspective, we can actually see the play of Macbeth as an internal exploration of the methods, such as murder and deception, that rulers and statesmen use to acquire power and status, as epitomised by Lady Macbeth's simile, 'Act like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't'. In particular, the deceptive strategies Macbeth employs appear to reflect Niccolo Machiavelli's ideas from his infamous treatise, *The Prince*, where he states that, for a ruler, the most important good to aim for was honour and glory. Ultimately, however, the play can be seen as a cautionary tale that not only criticises Machiavelli's ideas, but also explores the concept that we should be careful about what we wish for, because what we think is 'foul' may actually be 'fair' and what we think is 'fair' may actually be 'foul' as the Macbeths realise when it is too late.





MORE KEY IDEAS

The polysyndeton 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,' with its feminine ending, encapsulates Macbeth's disillusioned perspective of the future. The slowed rhythm of this line mimics the agonising pace of time for Macbeth, augmenting his sense of despair and hopelessness. This may arouse a profound emotional response in the audience, prompting them to confront the grim reality of misguided ambition and the unsettling prospect of a meaningless future.

In sum, through this dexterous weaving of character transformation and emotional resonance, the audience is left to confront the devastating consequences of ambition and deceit, profoundly influencing their thoughts and possibly their actions.

Additionally, the repetitive use of 'tomorrow' effectively reduces the term to a meaningless word, mirroring Macbeth's own existential crisis. To summarise, Macbeth's soliloquy paints a picture of utter desolation and the futility of life—a far cry from his earlier, vibrant ambition. Shakespeare may not be suggesting that life is inherently meaningless, but rather he is demonstrating the profound sense of disillusionment that can ensue when one betrays their own moral compass, as Macbeth did. This representation embodies the theme of appearance versus reality, contrasting the protagonist's early vision of a glorious future with the grim reality that unfolds.

In conclusion, through the deft integration of form, language, and historical context, Shakespeare's 'look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't' presents a rich exploration of appearance versus reality, demonstrating his profound understanding of human nature and his remarkable ability to create an emotionally engaging, thought-provoking play.

The Machiavellian leader, as per Machiavelli's advice, needs to appear 'fair' (good, just, and virtuous) to maintain the trust and loyalty of his subjects, while simultaneously being ready to act 'foul' (commit morally dubious actions) if it serves his interests in maintaining power and control. Shakespeare's paradox of 'fair is foul and foul is fair' can be seen as an encapsulation of this principle, setting up a thematic parallel to Machiavellian theories.

The audience is being introduced to a world where, nothing is quite what it seems; morality is inverted, and the line between 'good' and 'bad' is almost completely blurred. Therefore, because Shakespeare introduces these concepts so early in the play, he could be compelling the audience to view all the events that follow in the play through this same lens: in other words, not to take anything that happens at face value.

In the immediately following scene, Shakespeare gives the audience their first opportunity to consider the theme of appearance versus reality in the context of war, heroism and kingship. Act one, scene two begins with the stage direction 'alarum within', which signifies an alarm, sounded by drums and/or trumpets off-stage that was often used to indicate the start of a battle. In this case, it serves to reinforce another central theme - the violent struggle for power and the consequences of unchecked ambition, further emphasised by the introduction to the play's leitmotif, blood. It is in this scene that we are first introduced to Macbeth; however, via the testimony of the 'bleeding Captain', rather than directly. One possible reason why Shakespeare chooses this method to introduce Macbeth may be to emphasise Macbeth's heroics in battle as well as the standing that gives him in his society; Shakespeare would not have been able to achieve both these goals so efficiently had he chosen, instead, to show the audience Macbeth defeating Macdonwald in battle. The audience learns that the battle was 'doubtful', until Macbeth 'faced the slave', thus we learn that it was Macbeth who made the difference in the battle and defeated the enemy for Scotland. What follows is an almost hyperbolic description of Macbeth's heroics; Duncan calls him 'valiant cousin, worthy gentleman';





the Captain compares Macbeth to an eagle versus sparrows or a lion versus a hare, while Ross makes a mythological comparison to 'Bellona's bridegroom', almost deifying his achievements and abilities. The result is that the audience is left with no doubt as to the reputation Macbeth has acquired within his community as well as the respect and esteem he has earned from his peers. However, because Shakespeare has already compelled the audience to question the events we see, it appears as though he wants us to question whether or not the qualities we see Macbeth being praised for are truly worth being 'lauded'; Shakespeare essentially presents Macbeth as a man capable of extreme violence and his society as one that validates and praises such violence. However, the irony here is that the qualities Duncan praises him for are the very same qualities that create a 'vaulting ambition' in Macbeth, leading the Duncan's own assassination.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the theme of appearance versus reality is arguably the play's central theme, that Shakespeare introduces in the very first scene, but which also pervades the entire play, right up to its conclusion. Macbeth explores the idea that things are not always what they seem, and the tragedy of the play is that the protagonists frequently struggle to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, what is 'fair' and what is 'foul', therefore fooling themselves into chasing what is ultimately 'foul'. However, Terry Eagleton suggests that tragedy is also 'a refuse dump for socially undesirable emotions, or at least a retraining programme', that gives the audience an avenue to express or release pent-up frustration at the political status quo, without resorting violence, such as assassinations of the king. Another perspective is a medieval definition of tragedy that suggests a Christian moral; the audience is encouraged to scorn transient, earthly pleasures and glories, such as ambition and status that Macbeth and his wife erroneously chase. However, in his book *Defence of Poetry*, Sir Phillip Sidney (1578) suggests that tragedy is a didactic form, meaning it teaches morals just as the medieval notion does; Sidney also suggests that tragedy lays bare the corruption that rulers and statesmen may attempt to conceal. If we take this perspective, we can actually see the play of Macbeth as an internal exploration of the methods, such as murder and deception, that rulers and statesmen use to acquire power and status, as epitomised by Lady Macbeth's simile, 'Act like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under't'. In particular, the deceptive strategies Macbeth employs appear to reflect Niccolo Machiavelli's ideas from his infamous treatise, *The Prince*, where he states that, for a ruler, the most important good to aim for was honour and glory. Machiavelli also stated that the ruler in question should be prepared to adapt to the situation at hand, even if this involved immoral acts; to rule wisely, according to Machiavelli, there was no necessity to be virtuous. Ultimately, however, the play can be seen as a cautionary tale that not only criticises Machiavelli's ideas, but also explores the idea that we should be careful about what we wish for, because what we think is 'fair' may actually be 'foul' and what we think is 'foul' may actually be 'fair'.

