



## **VIOLENCE**

**! 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 !**

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### **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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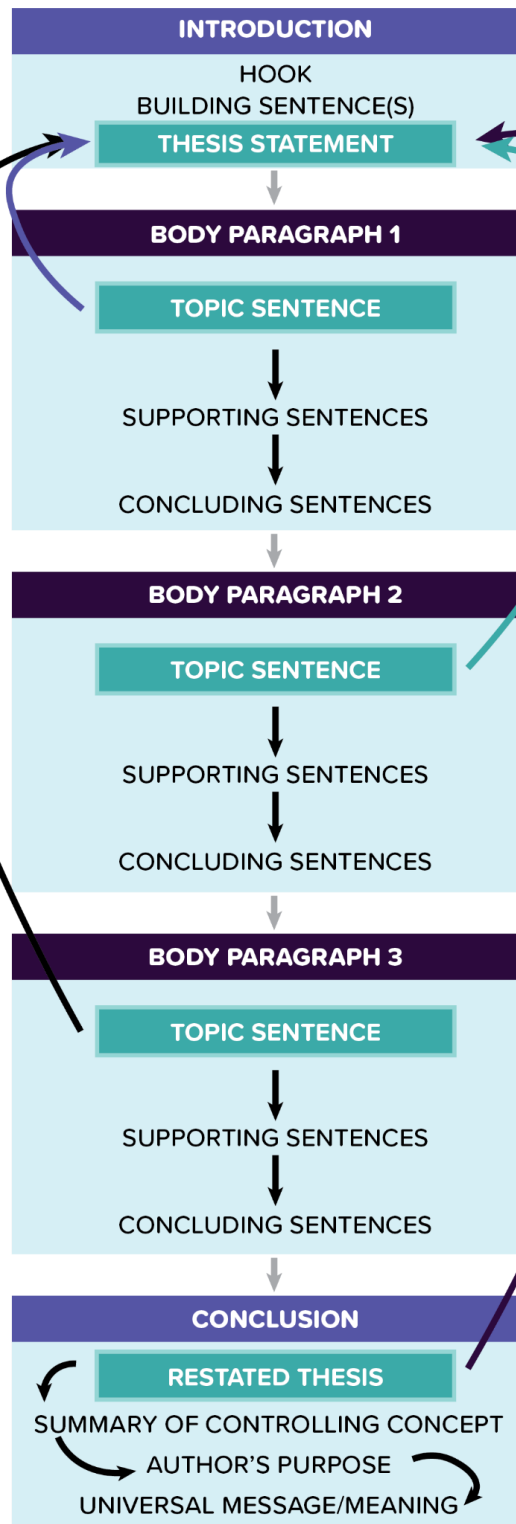
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## **100% ESSAY STRUCTURE OVERVIEW**





## SECTION 1: QUESTION



Read the following extract from act 1, scene 2, then answer the question that follows.

**Sergeant**

Doubtful it stood;  
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together  
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald--  
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
The multiplying villanies of nature  
Do swarm upon him--from the western isles  
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;  
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,  
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:  
For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--  
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion carved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave;  
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,  
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,  
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

**DUNCAN**

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of violence.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents the theme of violence in this extract
- how Shakespeare presents the theme of violence in the play as a whole.





## **SECTION 2: ESSAY PLAN**

### **\*\*Introduction\*\***

- Brief overview of historical context with respect to the sources in Holinshed.
- Statement of thesis: the multifaceted portrayal of violence in "Macbeth," with its evolution from a tool of courage to a trigger for psychological torment and a symbol of societal moral decay.

### **\*\*Paragraph 1: Violence as a Tool of Courage, Bravery and Power\*\***

- Analysis of Act 1, Scene 2, where the Sergeant recounts Macbeth's violent victory over Macdonwald.
- Exploration of the 'blood' motif and its association with violence throughout the play.
- Discussion on how Duncan's approval of violence depicts society's valourisation of violence.

### **\*\*Paragraph 2: Violence as a Trigger for Psychological Torment\*\***

- Analysis of the Banquet scene in Act 3, Scene 4 and the manifestation of Banquo's ghost.
- Discussion on the psychological impact of Macbeth's violent actions and its unnatural effects on the world order.
- Contemplation on the audience's disgust and possible pity towards Macbeth.

### **\*\*Paragraph 3: Violence as an Agent of Societal Moral Decay\*\***

- Analysis of Act 4, Scene 2 featuring Lady Macduff and her reflections on impending death.
- Investigation of the inversion of moral values resulting from violence, particularly the murder of King Duncan.
- Examination of Lady Macduff's internal struggle and its implications for societal moral decay.

### **\*\*Conclusion\*\***

- Restatement of the essay's argument about the portrayal of violence in "Macbeth".
- Analysis of the theme of appearance versus reality and its influence on characters' tragic pursuits.
- Discussion of the tragic plot structure as a critique of societies that valourise violence, with a reference to Duncan's admiration of Macbeth's valour in Act 1, Scene 2.
- Final reflections on the message the play may be conveying about the futility and destructiveness of violence.





## ESSAY TABLE

Topic	Quote	Author's Technique	Effect on Audience	Author's Purpose	Historical Context
<b>Violence in Macbeth</b>	"Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world"	Draws comparison between historical sources and Macbeth	Creates understanding of the violent world of the play	To present the idea of violence as pervasive	Reflects the violent society during the times of Holinshed Chronicles
<b>Blood Motif</b>	"The 'blood' motif...appears more than 40 times in Macbeth"	Use of repetition of a theme	Emphasizes the prevalence of violence	To illustrate the theme of violence consistently	Alludes to the historical violence of the era
<b>Power Dynamics and Violence</b>	"Duncan's power, as well as Macbeth's, relies on violence"	Describes power in terms of violence	Makes the audience reassess justice and legitimacy	To critique the violent power dynamics	Reflects the struggle for power during the times of Holinshed Chronicles





<b>Psychological Consequences of Violence</b>	"The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die"	Use of metaphor and contrast	Highlights unnaturalness and chaos caused by violence	To showcase the psychological aftermath of violence	Represents the period's views on death and consequences of actions
<b>Impact of Violence on Innocents</b>	"Whither should I fly?"	Use of rhetorical question	Evokes sympathy and highlights vulnerability	To emphasize the detrimental impact of violence on innocents	Demonstrates the peril innocent people faced during times of political upheaval
<b>Inversion of Moral Values</b>	"I am in this earthly world, where to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good sometime / Accounted dangerous folly"	Use of inversion and contrast	Creates unease and tension	To underline the perversion of moral values	Reflects the moral confusion during times of political turmoil
<b>Violence as a Dominant Motif</b>	"Violence as a dominant motif in "Macbeth," charting its evolution"	Use of a recurring motif	Presents a thorough understanding of violence's evolution	To demonstrate the detrimental effects of violence	Corresponds to the violent history covered by the Holinshed Chronicles







<b>Critique of Societies That Valorize Violence</b>	"Critique of societies... that valorise violence"	Use of tragedy as a plot structure	Encourages critique of societal values	To critique societies that perpetuate violence	Possibly a commentary on societies of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Early Modern period
<b>Rejection of Violence</b>	"Renounce violence as a means for realizing ambition"	Uses the character of Macbeth to show consequences of violence	Encourages rejection of violence	To show the futility and devastation of violence	Likely a response to the violence witnessed during the Gunpowder Plot of 1605





## STEP 1: OUTLINING - Complete Your 100% Essay Outline

Criteria	Status	INTRODUCTION - Do not make this too detailed.
<a href="#">Hook AO1</a> <input type="checkbox"/> fact/statistic	Complete (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	In the historical sources in Holinshed, Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world of different thanes jockeying for position and power; Duncan has done this in his time but has now grown weak.
<a href="#">Building sentence(s) AO3</a> <input type="checkbox"/> counter-argument OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> some contextual info	Complete (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	The historical Scotland depicted in the sources is a land where the mightiest is the best, and the strongest is the best. Shakespeare's play Macbeth can be seen as having remnants and reminders of the politically unstable, violent world of the sources, which was highly relevant to the audience watching the play in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.
<a href="#">Thesis statement AO1</a> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 2 <input type="checkbox"/> key idea 3	Complete (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Consequently, this essay will explore how Shakespeare portrays the pervasive and multifaceted theme of violence, showcasing its progression from a tool of courage, bravery, and power to a trigger for psychological torment and, ultimately, its role in the degradation of societal moral values.
Criteria	Status	BODY PARAGRAPH 1 - only focus on KEY IDEA #1
<a href="#">WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</a> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 1	Complete (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	Act 1, Scene 2, where the Sergeant recounts Macbeth's violent victory over Macdonwald, not only builds on the foreboding tone of the opening scene but also condenses the essence of the entire play's pervasive theme of violence into a microcosm while giving the audience a foretaste of the bloody path that Macbeth will tread.
<a href="#">HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</a> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> terminology <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> evidence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> close analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> effects*	Complete (only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)	It is here that the audience sees for the first time the emergence of the 'blood' motif, as indicated by the 'bleeding sergeant's' description of Macbeth's sword that 'smoked with bloody execution'. In fact, the word "blood" and its cognates appear more than 40 times in Macbeth, more frequently than in any of Shakespeare's other plays, thus threading the theme of violence from start to finish. Additionally, despite the common view that Duncan's murder is the act that sets everything in the kingdom at odds, the appearance of the 'blood' motif so early in the play indicates to the audience that violence is strongly associated with the world before Macbeth kills the King. Furthermore, Duncan's approval, 'O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!' to the 'bleeding sergeant's' gruesome description of Macbeth





		'unseaming' Macdonwald 'from the nave to the chops' suggests that the play is set in a world that is built on the valourisation of violence: a world in which Duncan's power, as well as Macbeth's, relies on violence and not on some sense of right.
<p><a href="#">WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</a></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>	Consequently, Shakespeare may have intended this grim portrayal of power dynamics to invoke feelings of disillusionment and unease in the audience, prompting them to reassess their perceptions of justice and legitimacy.
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>BODY PARAGRAPH 2 - only focus on KEY IDEA #2</b>
<p><a href="#">WHAT? Topic sentence AO1</a></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> key idea 2</p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	Expanding on the theme of violence, the Banquet scene in Act 3, Scene 4, takes on a deep psychological twist via Banquo's ghost's dramatic manifestation, which makes the disintegration of Macbeth's sanity clearly visible to the audience.
<p><a href="#">HOW? Supporting sentences AO2</a></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<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	For example, Macbeth's line, 'The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die' is a lament, incorporating metaphor (the 'brains were out') that vividly and violently represents death, while the juxtaposition of the past ('The time has been') with Macbeth's present state of affairs creates a stark contrast, emphasising the unnaturalness and chaos brought about by his violent actions. In particular, the phrase 'The time has been' can be seen as a nostalgic reflection on a past order, a simpler time when things made sense, when death was final and predictable, and where cause and effect were predictable. Thus, the dead Banquo appears to have come back to life, haunting Macbeth with his ghostly presence as a consequence of his actions. However, although this can be interpreted as a supernatural event, a more likely viewpoint is that Macbeth is grappling with the 'scorpions' of his 'mind', the psychological consequences of his violent actions, which have shattered the natural order, rendering his world unpredictable and terrifying. Nevertheless, the terrifying guilt Macbeth feels is not unnatural at all; rather, Shakespeare may be pointing out that terrifying guilt is, in fact, the natural consequence of committing murder.





<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>Therefore, although Macbeth's violence may be intended by Shakespeare to disgust the audience—perhaps as a warning against regicide—it is also possible that Shakespeare wants us to pity him here as he begins to grapple with the consequences of his actions.</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>Another poignant example of the repercussions of violence is Act 4, Scene 2, when Lady Macduff ponders her impending death and questions the moral values of the world she inhabits.</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>This passage is significant concerning the theme of violence, as it reflects both the violent world of the Holinshed Chronicles, as symbolised by the 'fair is foul and foul is fair' dichotomy laid out by the Witches in Act 1, Scene 1, and the consequences of Macbeth's crimes on the broader social and moral fabric of the kingdom. Indeed, Lady Macduff's rhetorical question, "Whither should I fly?", showcases her vulnerability and confusion in the face of danger, evoking sympathy from the audience as it highlights violence's impact on innocent individuals caught in the crossfire of political ambition. Moreover, the phrase "I am in this earthly world, where to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good sometime / Accounted dangerous folly" may create unease and tension in the audience as it emphasises the inversion of moral values that resulted from King Duncan's murder. Additionally, Shakespeare's use of the adjective "laudable" to describe harmful actions and the phrase "dangerous folly" to describe good deeds underscores the perversion of morality that has taken hold in the aftermath of the regicide, a stark reminder to the audience of the societal decay and chaos that ensued after Macbeth usurped the throne. Furthermore, Lady Macduff's self-reflection, "Why then, alas, / Do I put up that womanly defense / To say I have done no harm?" demonstrates the internal struggle she faces as a result of the corrupt world around her.</p>
<p><u>WHY? Concluding sentence(s) AO2/AO3</u></p>	<p>Complete ▾</p> <p>(only mark complete when steps 1-5 are ALL complete)</p>	<p>The phrase "womanly defense" implies that she feels her innocence and adherence to traditional moral values are futile in the face of the pervasive corruption and violence that have taken root in the kingdom. Ultimately, this internal conflict highlights the</p>





<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> author's purpose <input type="checkbox"/> (final thought / context about the key idea)	complete)	devastating toll that regicide has taken on those indirectly affected by the crime.
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, this essay has demonstrated how Shakespeare employs violence as a dominant motif in "Macbeth," charting its evolution from an instrument of courage, bravery, and power, through a catalyst for psychological distress, to its ultimate manifestation as an agent of societal moral decay.
<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 core theme arguably orbits around the dichotomy of appearance and reality, encapsulating the notion that perceptions can often deceive us. The tragedy thus lies in the characters' failure to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, the 'fair' from the 'foul', which tragically ensnares them in the pursuit of ultimately 'foul' ambitions, namely power and status through the regicide of Duncan.
<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)	Additionally, Shakespeare's portrayal of violence in "Macbeth" seemingly draws considerable influence from its historical sources, namely the turbulent and politically charged world of the Holinshed Chronicles, where the only rule of law was 'survival-of-the-fittest'. This concept also ties into Shakespeare's choice of the tragic plot structure, which has often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, suggesting, therefore, that the audience can look at the play as a critique of societies (perhaps mediaeval, Renaissance, and early modern societies) that valorise violence. Consequently, although the narrative is focused on Macbeth, the protagonist can be seen as simply a product of a society that was already steeped in a culture of violence.
<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)	Therefore, particularly in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the play may have been designed to encourage the audience to renounce violence as a means for realising ambition due to its fleeting nature, its futility, and the irreversible personal and societal devastation it leaves in its wake.





## KEY VOCABULARY

1. **Historical Sources**: Old documents, books, or artifacts that help us learn about the past.
2. **Holinshed**: A person who wrote about the history of England, Scotland, and Ireland. In this context, it refers to his writings.
3. **Thanes**: In old times in Scotland, a thane was like a lord or a nobleman.
4. **Jockeying**: When you're jockeying for something, you're trying hard to get it.
5. **Inevitable**: If something is inevitable, it's certain to happen and can't be prevented.
6. **Pervasive**: Something that's pervasive is present or noticeable in every part of a thing or place.
7. **Multifaceted**: Something multifaceted has many different parts or aspects.
8. **Degradation**: When something gets worse over time, that's degradation.
9. **Foreboding**: A feeling that something bad will happen.
10. **Microcosm**: A small version of something much larger.
11. **Motif**: A repeated idea or theme in a book, movie, or play.
12. **Cognates**: Words that look alike and have similar meanings in two different languages.
13. **Valourisation**: To give value or great importance to something.
14. **Disillusionment**: When you're disillusioned, you're disappointed because you've discovered that something isn't as good as you believed it to be.
15. **Legitimacy**: When something is legitimate, it's correct or acceptable according to laws or rules.
16. **Manifestation**: The act of showing or making something clear.
17. **Disintegration**: Breaking into small pieces or parts; falling apart.
18. **Juxtaposition**: Placing two things side by side, usually to highlight their differences.
19. **Scorpions**: In this context, it's a metaphor for painful thoughts or feelings.
20. **Regicide**: The act of killing a king.
21. **Repercussions**: The negative effects or consequences that happen after an event or decision.
22. **Impending**: If something is impending, it's going to happen soon.
23. **Dichotomy**: A division or contrast between two things that are completely different.
24. **Rhetorical question**: A question you ask without expecting an answer, usually to make a point.
25. **Evoking**: Bringing thoughts, feelings, or memories into the mind.
26. **Inversion**: Reversal of the normal order of words or phrases.
27. **Perversion**: A change that makes something different from what it should be, usually in a way that is considered bad.
28. **Usurped**: To take a position of power or importance from someone else.
29. **Adherence**: Sticking to or following something, like rules or beliefs.
30. **Futility**: Uselessness; the quality of having no useful result or effect.
31. **Dichotomy**: A division into two parts, usually that are completely opposite or very different.
32. **Ensnare**: To catch or trap someone, often by using a plan or trick.
33. **Valourise**: To give value or great respect to something.
34. **Renounce**: To say formally that you will no longer have or accept something; to reject.
35. **Irreversible**: Something that can't be changed back to how it was before.

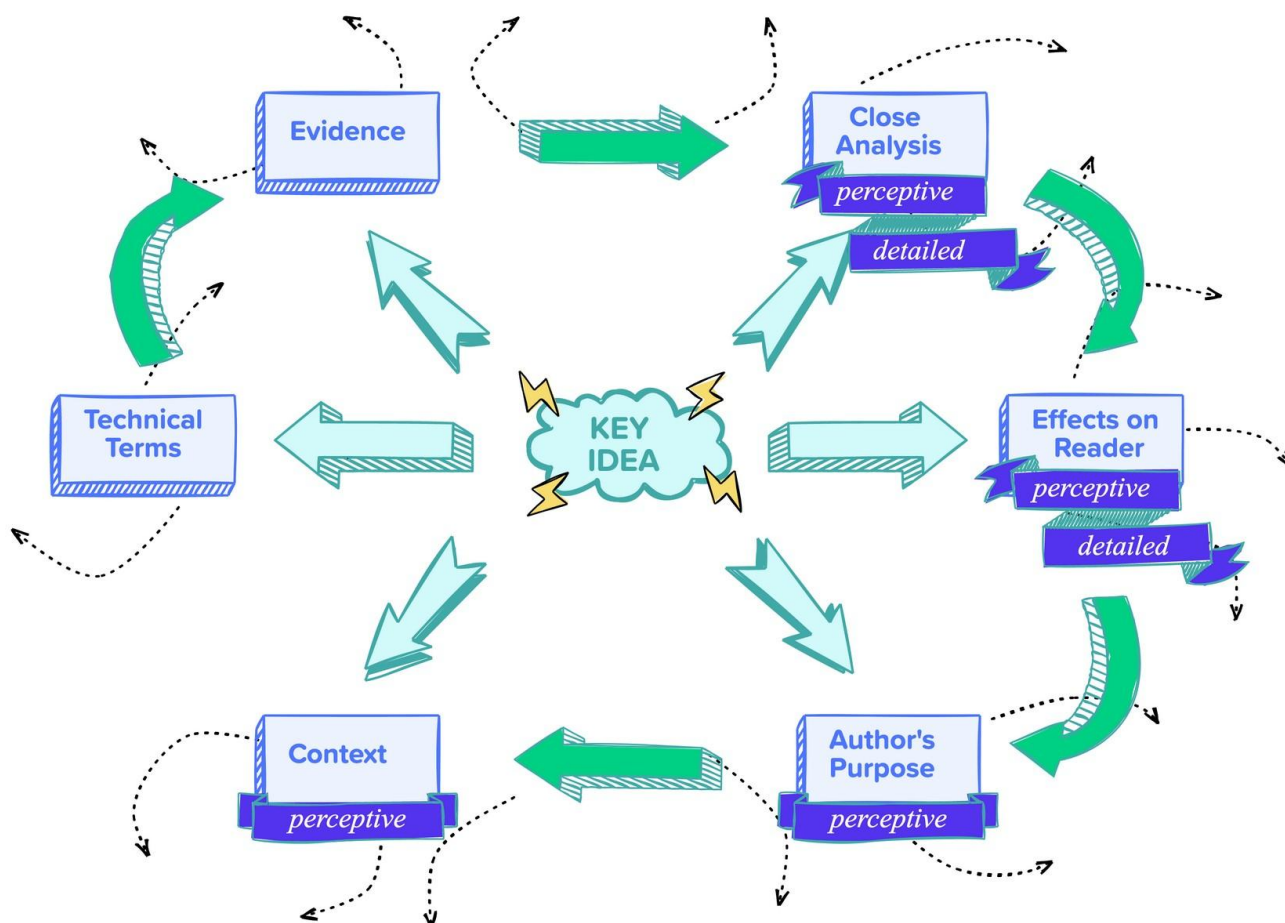




## STEP 2: ADDING DETAIL-Complete the *TTECEA* Checklist for Detail

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 the historical sources in Holinshed, Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world of different thanes jockeying for position and power; Duncan has done this in his time but has now grown weak. The historical Scotland depicted in the sources is a land where the mightiest and the strongest are the best. Shakespeare's play Macbeth can be seen as having remnants and reminders of the politically unstable, violent world of the sources, which was highly relevant to the audience watching the play in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Consequently, this essay will explore how Shakespeare portrays the pervasive and multifaceted theme of violence, showcasing its progression from a tool of courage, bravery, and power to a trigger for psychological torment and, ultimately, its role in the degradation of societal moral values.

Act 1, Scene 2, where the Sergeant recounts Macbeth's violent victory over Macdonwald, not only builds on the foreboding tone of the opening scene but also condenses the essence of the entire play's pervasive theme of violence into a microcosm while giving the audience a foretaste of the bloody path that Macbeth will tread. It is here that the audience sees for the first time the emergence of the 'blood' motif, as indicated by the 'bleeding sergeant's' description of Macbeth's sword that 'smoked with bloody execution'. In fact, the word "blood" and its cognates appear more than 40 times in Macbeth, more frequently than in any of Shakespeare's other plays, thus threading the theme of violence from start to finish. Additionally, despite the common view that Duncan's murder is the act that sets everything in the kingdom at odds, the appearance of the 'blood' motif so early in the play indicates to the audience that violence is strongly associated with the world before Macbeth kills the King. Furthermore, Duncan's approval, 'O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!' to the 'bleeding sergeant's' gruesome description of Macbeth 'unseaming' Macdonwald 'from the navel to the chops' suggests that the play is set in a world that is built on the valorisation of violence: a world in which Duncan's power, as well as Macbeth's, relies on violence and not on some sense of right. Consequently, Shakespeare may have intended this grim portrayal of power dynamics to invoke feelings of disillusionment and unease in the audience, prompting them to reassess their perceptions of justice and legitimacy.

Expanding on the theme of violence, the Banquet scene in Act 3, Scene 4, takes on a deep psychological twist via Banquo's ghost's dramatic manifestation, which makes the disintegration of Macbeth's sanity clearly visible to the audience. For example, Macbeth's line, 'The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die' is a lament, incorporating metaphor (the 'brains were out') that vividly and violently represents death, while the juxtaposition of the past ('The time has been') with Macbeth's present state of affairs creates a stark contrast, emphasising the unnaturalness and chaos brought about by his violent actions. In particular, the phrase 'The time has been' can be seen as a nostalgic reflection on a past order, a simpler time when things made sense, when death was final and predictable, and where cause and effect were predictable. Thus, the dead Banquo appears to have come back to life, haunting Macbeth with his ghostly presence as a consequence of his actions. However, although this can be interpreted as a supernatural event, a more likely viewpoint is that Macbeth is grappling with the 'scorpions' of his 'mind', the psychological consequences of his violent actions, which have shattered the natural order, rendering his world unpredictable and terrifying. Nevertheless, the terrifying guilt Macbeth feels is not unnatural at all; rather, Shakespeare may be pointing out that terrifying guilt is, in fact, the natural consequence of committing murder. Therefore, although Macbeth's violence may be intended by Shakespeare to disgust the audience—perhaps as a warning against regicide—it is also possible that Shakespeare wants us to pity him here as he begins to grapple with the consequences of his actions.

Another poignant example of the repercussions of violence is Act 4, Scene 2, when Lady Macduff ponders her impending death and questions the moral values of the world she inhabits. This passage is significant concerning the





theme of violence, as it reflects both the violent world of the Holinshed Chronicles, as symbolised by the 'fair is foul and foul is fair' dichotomy laid out by the Witches in Act 1, Scene 1, and the consequences of Macbeth's crimes on the broader social and moral fabric of the kingdom. Indeed, Lady Macduff's rhetorical question, "Whither should I fly?", showcases her vulnerability and confusion in the face of danger, evoking sympathy from the audience as it highlights violence's impact on innocent individuals caught in the crossfire of political ambition. Moreover, the phrase "I am in this earthly world, where to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good sometime / Accounted dangerous folly" may create unease and tension in the audience as it emphasises the inversion of moral values that resulted from King Duncan's murder. Additionally, Shakespeare's use of the adjective "laudable" to describe harmful actions and the phrase "dangerous folly" to describe good deeds underscores the perversion of morality that has taken hold in the aftermath of the regicide, a stark reminder to the audience of the societal decay and chaos that ensued after Macbeth usurped the throne. Furthermore, Lady Macduff's self-reflection, "Why then, alas, / Do I put up that womanly defense / To say I have done no harm?" demonstrates the internal struggle she faces as a result of the corrupt world around her. The phrase "womanly defense" implies that she feels her innocence and adherence to traditional moral values are futile in the face of the pervasive corruption and violence that have taken root in the kingdom. Ultimately, this internal conflict highlights the devastating toll that regicide has taken on those indirectly affected by the crime.

In conclusion, this essay has demonstrated how Shakespeare employs violence as a dominant motif in "Macbeth," charting its evolution from an instrument of courage, bravery, and power, through a catalyst for psychological distress, to its ultimate manifestation as an agent of societal moral decay. The core theme arguably orbits around the dichotomy of appearance and reality, encapsulating the notion that perceptions can often deceive us. The tragedy thus lies in the characters' failure to distinguish between what is real and what is an illusion, the 'fair' from the 'foul', which tragically ensnares them in the pursuit of ultimately 'foul' ambitions, namely power and status through the regicide of Duncan. Additionally, Shakespeare's portrayal of violence in "Macbeth" seemingly draws considerable influence from its historical sources, namely the turbulent and politically charged world of the Holinshed Chronicles, where the only rule of law was 'survival-of-the-fittest'. This concept also ties into Shakespeare's choice of the tragic plot structure, which has often been used to criticise the values of the societies in which the protagonists live, suggesting, therefore, that the audience can look at the play as a critique of societies (perhaps mediaeval, Renaissance, and early modern societies) that valorise violence. Consequently, although the narrative is focused on Macbeth, the protagonist can be seen as simply a product of a society that was already steeped in a culture of violence. Therefore, particularly in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, the play may have been designed to encourage the audience to renounce violence as a means for realising ambition due to its fleeting nature, its futility, and the irreversible personal and societal devastation it leaves in its wake.





## MORE KEY IDEAS

Expanding on the theme of violence, the Banquet scene in Act 3, Scene 4 takes on a deep psychological twist via Banquo's ghost's dramatic manifestation which makes the disintegration of Macbeth's sanity clearly visible for the audience. Although Shakespeare creates an association between violence and mental instability in numerous instances, such as the 'dagger' scene, Shakespeare makes the psychological torture that results from violence much more explicit here. For example, Macbeth's soliloquy, "Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time," references past acts of violence, eliciting a sense of fear and trepidation from the audience. Once again, the repeated use of "blood" imagery symbolizes guilt and death, a reminder of Macbeth's violent actions, while the vivid imagery of 'The time has been / That, when the brains were out, the man would die' highlights the gruesome nature of murder, prompting the audience to contemplate the horrific ramifications of violence and unchecked ambition. Additionally, the abrupt disappearance of Banquo's ghost and Lady Macbeth's response, "What, quite unmanned in folly?" poignantly exhibit Macbeth's psychological decline, thus foreshadowing the rapid psychological deterioration of the two protagonists that eventually culminates in Lady Macbeth's haunting sleepwalking scene and Macbeth's bleak 'tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy. The tension mounts further as Lady Macbeth admonishes her husband, "Fie, for shame!" and strives to maintain a facade of normalcy before their guests, a futile attempt that only serves to amplify the audience's feelings of apprehension and dread. The clever manipulation of dramatic structure in this scene provokes feelings of intense anxiety and tension in the audience, pushing them to reconsider their notions of power and its potential to corrupt. Thus, the audience is provided with a glimpse into a world where even the most noble of warriors, such as Macbeth, can be ensnared in a vicious cycle of ambition and violence. Shakespeare's purpose here, then, may have been to expose the harsh realities of power and ambition, encouraging his audience to contemplate the moral complexities of their own society.

Additionally, taking a page from Sir Phillip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* (1578), which posits that tragedies lay 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'. Ultimately, the play may be designed to incite the audience to renounce violence as a means for realizing ambition due to its fleeting nature, its futility, and the irreversible personal and societal devastation it leaves in its wake.

Arguably, the central theme is appearance versus reality, 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. While Shakespeare's depiction of violence in "*Macbeth*" appears to take much inspiration from the violent, politically unstable world of the sources—the *Holinshed Chronicles*—, it also seems to be a commentary on the cyclical nature of violence; it begets more violence, leads to destructive guilt, paranoia, and fear and ensnares those innocently caught in the crossfires. 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'. Ultimately, while it is debatable whether Shakespeare supported King James' methods of rule, the tragic plot structure appears to criticise societies that valorise violence, thus encouraging the audience to scorn violence as a method for achieving ambition because it is ultimately transitory, futile and causes irreversible personal and societal destruction.





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.

To exemplify, Shakespeare's simile, "As two spent swimmers, that do cling together," paints a vivid picture of two combatants locked in a mortal struggle. In particular, the sibilant phrase "spent swimmers" implies not only physical exhaustion but also an emotional and spiritual drain, indicating the futility of their struggle, an image that, tragically, foreshadows Macbeth and his wife's futile quest for power.

In the historical sources in *Holinshed*, Macbeth emerges as King of Scotland out of a violent, dog-eat-dog world of different thanes jockeying for position and power. Duncan has done this in his time but has now grown weak. Macbeth's rise, supported in the sources by Banquo, is the inevitable change of ruler in a society that has no principle of rule other than strength. In the historical Scotland depicted in the sources, the mightiest is the best, and the strongest is the best.

However, It's important to note that this line contributes significantly to the overall mood and theme of the play. It illustrates the unnatural events occurring due to Macbeth's ambition and the horrifying acts he has committed to achieve power. The violation of natural laws by Macbeth's murderous actions have led to a chaotic state where even death is not final, contributing to Macbeth's growing paranoia and fear.

