

Macbeth Key Quotations

I have prepared a list of key quotations that you should learn as part of your revision. Focus your time on quotations that can be applied to a range of potential exam topics and have interesting details to analyse. Experiment with different ways of memorising them in order to work out which works best for you personally: flashcards; repetition; quizzes; peer teaching; look, say, cover, check; song lyrics etc.

Quotation	Scene Reference and Summary	Which potential exam topics (especially characters and/or themes) could it be related to?	How would you analyse it? Which keywords would you explore? What is the precise effect on the audience? Techniques?
‘Fair is foul, and foul is fair’	From the opening scene with the Witches (1.1)		
‘smoked with bloody execution’	Captain introduces Macbeth’s bravery and violence in battle (1.2)		
‘Let not light see my black and deep desires’	Macbeth has just recognised in an aside that he will need to kill Malcolm as well as Duncan. (1.4)		
‘unsex me here’ ‘fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty’	Lady Macbeth reads a letter from Macbeth. She realises that she will need to be forceful in their relationship for the plan to work (1.5).		
‘look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under’t’	When Macbeth arrives, Lady Macbeth advises him on how to behave publically (1.5).		
‘Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself’	With Duncan now in his castle, Macbeth reflects on why it is a bad idea to kill him. (1.7)		
‘A dagger of the mind, a false creation’	Macbeth hallucinates a dagger just before he goes to kill Duncan. (2.1)		
‘Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?’	Immediately after the murder, Macbeth feels fearful and guilty. (2.2)		

‘O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!’	Macbeth feels concerned while Banquo and Fleance are still alive. (3.2)		
‘for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth.’	Macbeth finds the witches again and demands more information. He hears another three prophecies. (4.1)		
‘your wife and babes / Savagely slaughter’d’	Ross has to inform Macduff that his family have been killed by Macbeth’s men. (4.3)		
‘Dispute it like a man.’	Malcolm encourages Macduff to violently avenge their death. (4.3)		
‘Out, damned spot!’	Lady Macbeth sleepwalks and talks aloud about her haunting memories. (5.1)		
‘like a giant's robe / Upon a dwarfish thief’	Four Scottish lords join forces with Malcolm and the English army. Angus reflects on how Macbeth must feel about his problematic kingship. (5.2)		
‘I have supp'd full with horrors’	Macbeth, upon hearing a woman’s cry, admits he no longer feels fear. (5.5)		
‘Life's but a walking shadow’	After hearing of his wife’s suicide, Macbeth gives a pessimistic soliloquy on life and death. (5.5)		
‘this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen’	Macduff has killed Macbeth. Malcolm becomes the new king and criticises the previous monarchs. (5.8)		