

# GCSE English Literature

## Controlled Assessment (GEL31) Clarification Document



## Rationale

Teachers may use this resource alongside the CCEA Assessment Criteria (Appendix 4 of the *CCEA GCSE Specification in English Literature*). However, this *Clarification Document* is intended to supplement, not replace the CCEA Assessment Criteria.

The hope is that the *Clarification Document* will be useful in enhancing teachers' understanding of the CCEA Assessment Criteria resulting in the fair, consistent and accurate application of CCEA standards within and across all centres. We have illustrated standards by offering examples of responses across the full range of performance. These responses are presented in ascending order, and in such a way that teachers and students may appreciate the standard of work associated with each Band. Performance is demonstrated via extracts based on a single task title.

Teachers have the scope to select any play by Shakespeare for the Unit 3 Controlled Assessment task, and student responses should engage with the entire play. CCEA set the themes for each moderation series.

For the purposes of this document:

- the play Macbeth has been selected;
- the alternative theme of *Deceit* (i.e., a theme that is not listed for Unit 3 Controlled Assessment 2019 – 2024) has been the focus; and
- the extracts relate primarily to the Porter Scene (Act 2, scene 3).

The task title selected for these extracts is:

**Examine the way Shakespeare presents the theme of deceit in your chosen play.**

**You should:**

- **communicate a response to and understanding of meanings identified in the play;**
- **identify dramatic methods, show understanding of them and comment on them; and**
- **provide contextual information to enhance understanding of the play.**

In this way, the *Clarification Document* can be used by teachers and students regardless of the play they intend to focus on.

Through the series of graduated examples contained in this document, teachers and students can note the characteristics associated with each Band.

**Band 1 response: 6 marks**

*This scene begins with a porter who is drunk. He makes long speeches and compares himself to some sort of hell guard when Macduff calls to the castle. He thinks he's very funny and Macduff laughs along with him. But he has to speak with the king so eventually gets into the castle.*

*Macduff goes to wake the king, he finds that the king has been murdered. He is very shocked and upset by this. He tells Macbeth who rushes into the king's room and kills the guards. Everyone in the castle is shocked and annoyed and Lady Macbeth faints and is carried out.*

*Macbeth wanted to be king after he met three witches on a stormy day after being a brave soldier in many bloody battles. So, we know he killed Duncan when he was staying at his house. He says that he killed the guards because he loved Duncan and killed the guards because they hadn't protected Duncan like they should have. But he is really making sure that no one suspects him. The King's sons then run away in case they are blamed for killing their dad. One goes to England and the other goes to Ireland. Macbeth, Macduff and Lennox agree to get revenge for the king's murder.*

*When Macduff raises the alarm he uses repetition when he says "Awake, awake!" and an image of how sleep looks like death. He says that the king is an anointed temple which is a metaphor. Macbeth was written in 1606 when King James I was on the throne. The play shows some of the beliefs of the Jacobean time, such as the characters of the Witches. James believed in witches and wrote a book about it.*

**AO1: Communicates a basic understanding of and response to meanings identified in the play.**

**AO2: Identifies dramatic methods with basic understanding.**

**AO4: Provides contextual information with some basic comment.**

**Band 2 response: 14 marks**

*The play begins with Macbeth believing what the Witches told him but by the end of the play, he realises he has been deceived. When Macduff challenges Macbeth about killing the guards, Macbeth tries to explain his actions by pretending to be shocked. I think that Macbeth is trying to portray himself as being shocked by Duncan's death. "The expedition my violent love/ Outrun the pauser, reason." This is saying that he loved Duncan so much that he lost his reason and killed the guards but he is also covering up the real facts of the murder.*

*Lennox describes the terrible journey to get to Macbeth's castle. He describes strange screams and confused events. He says it was a woeful time. Macbeth replies simply "'Twas a rough night". Here he is hiding what he knows about what has happened. I think he is afraid to say too much in case he gives away what really happened.*

*Macduff uses repetition when he says: "O horror, horror, horror!" and this shows how terrible the murder of a king was to him. In Macduff's time, kings were believed to be almost like a god. The murder takes place off stage and characters go out to see for themselves which I think helps Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to put on an act about how shocked they really are.*

*When Macbeth comes back he gives a speech about Duncan. This is a eulogy. He uses images like "The wine of life is drawn" and "All is but toys" because Duncan is dead. Macbeth seems to be sorry for what he has done because he says "Had I but died an hour before this". This shows that what looked like a great achievement for him is in fact "the mere lees". This foreshadows that it was not worth it. A metaphor is used by Donalbain when he says - "There's daggers in men's smiles." He means that people are deceiving them by pretending to be loyal to the king and that they could be next.*

*At the start of the scene, the porter jokes about an equivocator who committed treason and in Jacobean England the audience would know that plotting against the life of the king was treason. The play was written during the reign of James I when people believed that the king was sacred. They believed in hell and in witchcraft.*

**AO1: Communicates a general response to and understanding of meanings identified in the play.**

**AO2: Identifies a few dramatic methods with a general understanding of their relevance.**

**AO4: Provides contextual information with straightforward comment.**

**Band 3 response: 21 marks**

*The play begins with Macbeth believing what the Witches told him but by the end of the play, he realises he has been deceived. The Witches have played with both Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's ambitions resulting in the destruction of them both.*

*From the moment Macbeth enters in Act 2 Scene 3 the predominant theme is deceit. Macbeth enters pretending that he has just woken up when we, the audience, know that Macbeth has murdered sleep. When Lennox asks: "Goes the king hence today?" Macbeth's deceit is again obvious as he lies directly to Lennox: "He does." While Macduff goes to wake the king, Lennox remarks upon the extraordinary weather of the previous night. He describes high winds, strange screams and wailing voices, the calling of birds and tremors in the earth. The killing of the king has caused havoc in nature. However, Macbeth replies simply "'Twas a rough night". Macbeth is aware of the cause of these strange events but is afraid to say too much in case he gives away what really happened. 'Macbeth' was written during the reign of James I when people, including Shakespeare believed in a Divine Order or Great Chain of Being. The Divine Order was the belief that everything in the universe had a specific place. Macbeth has disturbed the natural order of things by murdering the King and stealing the throne. This belief would have made the murder all the more shocking for Shakespeare's audience. The Gunpowder Plot, the aim of which was to murder the English King, which happened only a few weeks before 'Macbeth' was performed at court would also have been very much in the minds of the audience. This would have made the killing of Duncan even more horrific to them.*

*When Macduff challenges Macbeth about killing the guards, Macbeth pretends that he was so furious that he could not prevent himself from killing them. "The expedition my violent love/ Outrun the pauser, reason." We know that Macbeth killed the guards to keep them quiet.*

*Macduff uses repetition "O horror, horror, horror!" to express his shock at what he has just seen. Both Lennox and Macbeth respond by asking "What's the matter" Shakespeare uses the method of contrast here. Lennox is genuinely unaware but Macbeth knows exactly what the matter is. A further contrast is drawn between Lennox's truthfulness and Macbeth's deceit in their responses to Macduff's announcement of the king's murder. Macbeth, pretending to be confused, asks "What is 't you say? the life?" while Lennox innocently asks "Mean you his majesty?"*

*Macbeth's eulogy on the death of Duncan contains a number of images which would indicate that he is already regretting the murder. What looked like a great achievement for him is in fact "the mere lees". This foreshadows that it was not worth it.*

*In an aside, which only Malcolm can hear, Donalbain voices his suspicions that that all may not be what it seems. While Macbeth and the other thanes swear to meet in "manly readiness" to avenge the killing of the king Malcolm and Donalbain are left alone on stage. Donalbain uses the metaphor "There's daggers in men's smiles" to express his concerns that any of the thanes could be responsible for their father's murder and that they could also be in danger.*

**AO1: Communicates a competent response to and understanding of meanings identified in the play.**

**AO2: Identifies quite a few dramatic methods with clear understanding and a more deliberate attempt to comment on them.**

**AO4: Provides competent contextual information and begins to apply it to texts.**

**Band 4 response: 30 marks**

*The theme of deceit runs throughout the play 'Macbeth' beginning with the Witches' prophecies which act as a catalysis to the events, lies and deceptions which follow. In Act 2 Scene 3 both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth lie or act in a deceptive manner to conceal their involvement in the murder of Duncan. When Lennox and Macduff arrive to wake the king Macbeth behaves as though he has been awakened by their knocking although the audience is aware that this is not so. He replies to Lennox's question "Goes the king hence today?" with a firm "He does: he did appoint so." Lennox's description of the disorder of the night suggests chaos in the order of nature itself. "The night has been unruly" and he describes "screams of death" and "the earth/ Was feverous and did shake."*

*Jacobean society was superstitious with a firm belief in the supernatural and the audience would have believed that these events were a consequence of Duncan's murder or even a portent of Macbeth's future reign of Scotland. Indeed, since the Divine Right of Kings decreed that monarchs were appointed directly by God the audience may have interpreted these distortions of nature as a manifestation of the wrath of God himself. Macbeth's dismissive response "'Twas a rough night" may have been an attempt to deflect Lennox's attention from these events or even an attempt to suppress his own feelings of disquiet and guilt. The murder of Duncan and Macduff's discovery of his body take place off stage as does Macbeth's frenzied attack on the guards.*

*Macduff's repetition: "O horror, horror, horror!" emphasises the depth of his shock. Macbeth pretends not to understand while in contrast Lennox asks a straightforward question – "Mean you his majesty?"*

*Macduff describes Duncan as "The Lord's anointed temple" and the murder as "sacrilegious", thus emphasising the enormity of the event to an audience living with treason and religious unrest since the Gunpowder Plot and many executions for the sin of heresy were contemporary to Shakespeare's time.*

*Macbeth's killing of the guards seems to be a strong emotional response to his grief and despair but in fact it served to silence any way in which they could cast suspicion on Macbeth or Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's justification of his action is both eloquent and poetic with the imagery of Duncan's "silver skin" and "golden blood" and attributes his reason as having a heart filled with "Courage to make 's love known".*

*Lady Macbeth's reaction to Macbeth's hyperbole is to pretend to faint, another deception to deflect attention from her husband. This dramatic action focuses the attention of the other characters on Lady Macbeth: "Look to the lady."*

*Only Malcolm and Donalbain suspect that all is not as it appears to be. They can see that "There's daggers in men's smiles." Shakespeare uses the dramatic device of the aside to highlight their suspicion and need for secrecy. Their departure from Macbeth's castle foreshadows their later opposition to his rule.*

**AO1: Communicates a good, detailed and informed response to and understanding of meanings identified in the play.**

**AO2: Identifies a range of dramatic methods and offers analysis of them.**

**AO4: Provides good contextual information to illuminate understanding of the play.**

**Band 5 response: 36 marks**

*When Shakespeare wrote 'Macbeth' he was not only appealing to his patron, James I's fascination with witchcraft, the arts and scripture, he was also ensuring that the new king knew where Shakespeare's own sympathies lay in regard to the English throne. The theme of deceit runs throughout the play with the Witches' prophesies acting as a catalyst to the deceptions which follow. Nowhere is Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's deception more prevalent than in Act 2, Scene 3, where they act like innocent bystanders, openly lie to the other characters and Macbeth actually commits two further murders to try to convey their innocence.*

*The scene opens with the Porter ironically comparing his role to that of the gatekeeper of hell, little realising that the audience is aware that hellish deeds had actually occurred on his watch. His comments about the "equivocator" and "the farmer" are contemporary references by Shakespeare to one of the Gunpowder Plot participants who had been executed. Macbeth pretends he has been awakened by the knocking of Lennox and Macduff, although the audience is yet again aware that Macbeth is being deceitful due to their knowledge of the king's murder. Shakespeare again uses dramatic irony when he replies to the question regarding the king's plans for the day: "He does: he did appoint so." Lennox's description of the disorder of the night suggests chaos in the order of nature itself – "The night has been unruly" and he describes "screams of death" and "the earth/ Was feverous and did shake." Jacobean society firmly believed in the supernatural. The audience would have interpreted these events as a consequence of Duncan's murder or even a portent of Macbeth's future reign of Scotland. Since the Divine Right of Kings decreed that monarchs were appointed directly by God the audience would have seen these distortions of nature as a manifestation of the wrath of God. James I's belief in scripture would have allowed him to align the storm following the murder of Duncan, one of his ancestors as king of Scotland, with the storm that raged the night of the crucifixion of Christ, thus reinforcing the role of king as the Lord's Anointed. Macbeth's dismissive response - "'Twas a rough night" - would have been regarded as disloyal, if not treacherous, by both King James I and the audience.*

*All of the murders and their discoveries take place off stage, allowing for both the king and the audience to be spared the grisly sight of regicide and murder. This also allows the Macbeths to continue with their deceitful words and looks, as well as giving Macbeth an ideal opportunity to frame the two guards as they sleep. Macbeth's justification of his action is both eloquent and poetic with the imagery of Duncan's "silver skin" and "golden blood" He attributes his reason as having a heart filled with "Courage to make love known". The audience, however, are fully aware of the deceit behind the words. Macduff, in contrast, had been genuine when he spoke of: "Most sacrilegious murder" having "broke ope/ The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence/ The life o' the building!" Shakespeare has successfully emphasised the Macbeths' deceit by the honesty and openness of the other characters in this scene.*

*Only Malcolm and Donalbain suspect that all is not as it appears to be. They can see that "There's daggers in men's smiles." They decide to trust no-one, shown by Shakespeare's use of asides or conversation when alone on stage. Their departure from Macbeth's castle foreshadows their later opposition to his rule. This conclusion to the scene would have pleased King James I, who was a descendent of Malcolm and who would have applauded his sense of honesty and loyalty to the Scottish throne.*

**AO1: Communicates a very good, critical response to and understanding of meanings identified in the play.**

**AO2: Identifies a very good range of dramatic methods and offers very good analysis of them.**

**AO4: Provides very good contextual information to illuminate understanding of the play.**