

MACBETH
READING COMPREHENSION
ACT 2
YEAR 3 AND 4

It was the very deepest point of night and the castle was almost still; servants and masters lay sound asleep, stomachs full from the feast. A heavy blanket of darkness covered everything: no star shone, and the moon was several hours gone. One dim light, though, shone outside Banquo's bedroom

Who was this loyal watchman who held this lantern? He looked very young for a soldier. It was Banquo's son, Fleance, standing watch in front of his father's door, protecting his sleep.

But Banquo could not sleep – strange thoughts visited him again and again. At last, he gave up and came to sit beside his child.

1. What time of day is it when the story starts?

Middle of the night

Early evening

Middle of the day

Late afternoon

2. Where is there still a light on?

Macbeth's bedroom

The kitchen

Outside Banquo's bedroom

The cellar

3. Why couldn't Banquo sleep?

He was hungry

He kept having strange thoughts

He was thirsty

He kept thinking about the battle

Banquo and Fleance stared up into the dark sky together when, suddenly, Banquo snatched up his sword.

“Who’s there?”

A voice came from the darkness.

“A friend”

Macbeth stepped into the light and Banquo wondered to himself: why was his friend awake? Could the same thoughts that troubled his own mind have also visited Macbeth? Whilst thinking about this question he remembered - he had a gift to pass on, from Duncan himself! So much had the King enjoyed that evening that, in gratitude, he had decided to give Lady Macbeth a diamond!

4. ‘suddenly, Banquo snatched up his sword’...

Underline the two words that show Banquo was fast to act

5. Why does Banquo think that Macbeth may still be awake too?

6. What gift, from King Duncan, does Banquo give to Macbeth?

7. Tick the two synonyms for ‘gratitude’

Thankfulness

Resentment

Anger

Appreciation

It seemed to Banquo that Macbeth stared most unhappily at the jewel that sparkled in the lamplight and that he was somehow reluctant to take it. Gently, Banquo took his friend by the arm, and drew him to one side, just out of Fleance's hearing.

"I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth."

Macbeth shook his head – he spent no time thinking of such things, he replied. But Banquo noticed that, as he did so, Macbeth would not meet his eye. They agreed to talk later, and wished each other a good night's sleep. Banquo and Fleance retreated to their quarters, and Macbeth made as if to leave.

8. What does Banquo tell Macbeth he dreamt of last night?

9. Macbeth tells Banquo he hadn't spent any time thinking about the witches.

Do you believe him?

Yes No

Justify your answer with evidence from the text

Who went to bed?

Alone, Macbeth stared into the blackness, unmoving, desperate for the thoughts that now came thick and fast to leave him. He could just go back to bed, he thought: sleep, be good, be the Thane of Cawdor, be content. But other images came crowding quickly: crowns, thrones, power, riches. And what stood in his way? A killing. Something he'd done a hundred times before in battle with a sword, or dagger in his hand. A jolt of shock and fear ran through him. His thought – it was in front of him! A dagger was floating – actually floating in the air before him. Was it real? He reached out to grab it, but it moved away, leading him towards Duncan's bedroom! He followed; and now it seemed as if there was no way back. He was going to do it. The watchtower rang the hour and, to Macbeth's ears, it was the tolling of Duncan's funeral bell.

10. If Macbeth went back to bed what could he be? Write down two things.

1. _____

2. _____

11. What did Macbeth think was in front of him and follow to King Duncan's bedroom? Tick one answer

A cat

A star

A dagger

Banquo

12. Number these in order of when they happened

Macbeth saw a dagger

Banquo asked Macbeth if he had been dreaming of the witches

Banquo couldn't sleep

Macbeth killed King Duncan

ANSWERS
READING COMPREHENSION
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1. What time of day is it when the story starts?

- Middle of the night Early evening
Middle of the day Late afternoon

2. Where is there still a light on?

- Macbeth's bedroom The kitchen
Outside Banquo's bedroom The cellar

3. Why couldn't Banquo sleep?

- He was hungry He kept having strange thoughts
He was thirsty He kept thinking about the battle

4. 'suddenly, Banquo snatched up his sword'...

Underline the two words that show Banquo was fast to act

5. Why does Banquo think that Macbeth may still be awake too?

Because Macbeth might also be having strange thoughts and thinking about the witches.

6. What gift, from King Duncan, does Banquo give to Macbeth?

A diamond

7. Tick the two synonyms for 'gratitude'

Thankfulness

Resentment

Anger

Appreciation

8. What does Banquo tell Macbeth he dreamt of last night?

The three weird sisters/witches

9. Macbeth tells Banquo he hadn't spent any time thinking about the witches.

Do you believe him?

Yes

No

Justify your answer with evidence from the text

Because it says "Macbeth would not meet his eye" and this normally means someone isn't telling the truth

Who went to bed?

Banquo and Fleance

10. If Macbeth went back to bed what could he be? Write down two things.

Be good

Be Thane of Cawdor

11. What did Macbeth think was in front of him and follow to King Duncan's bedroom? Tick one answer

A cat

A star

A dagger

Banquo

12. Number these in order of when they happened

Macbeth saw a dagger 4

Banquo asked Macbeth if he had been dreaming of the witches 3

Banquo couldn't sleep 2

Macbeth killed King Duncan 1