Teacher’s Toolkit: *Macbeth*

Using *Discovering Literature* in the classroom

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[bl.uk/works/macbeth](bl.uk/works/macbeth)
A toolkit for teaching *Macbeth*

This free pack was created by the English and Media Centre, with the Learning team at the British Library. It offers a wealth of new ideas for using *Discovering Literature* to refresh your teaching of *Macbeth*, witchcraft and kingship. You’ll find innovative ways of using vivid primary sources and illustrated articles to explore key contexts, engage with critics’ ideas, inspire creativity and promote independent research.

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Before reading

1. Icebreakers using British Library collection items

- Talk about the seven images that you have been given – anything that interests, surprises or puzzles you.
- Focus in on the words, fonts and pictures.
- What connections do you notice? Are there any striking differences?
- Use post-it notes to record your ideas.
- Don’t read the information on the back yet!
- Put the images and your notes to one side. You’ll have chance to explore them in a bit more detail later.
A Rehearsall both straung
and true, of hainous and horrible ac-
tes committed by Elizabeth Stile,
Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mo-
ther Deuell, Mother Margaret, Fower noto-
vious Witches, apprehended at winsore in the
Countie of Barkl, and at Abbings-
ton arraigned, condemned, and
executed, on the 26. daye
of Februarie laste
Anno.1579.

Imprinted at London for Edward White at the
little North-doore of Paules, at the signe
of the Gun, and are there to be sold.

Roberti Have
Witchcraft pamphlet: *A Rehearsal both Strange and True*, 1579

This 16th-century pamphlet describes ‘horrible’ acts of witchcraft. These include keeping animals such as cats and toads that were thought to be spirits or devils, and were fed with the witch’s own blood.

The pamphlet describes the harm witches caused (ranging from making people sick to murder) and how they used their animal spirits or familiars to do this.

The stories in the pamphlet are taken from the testimony of 65-year old Elizabeth Stile, who made a confession at Reading gaol before facing execution.

The illustration shows two old women, holding a devilish figure.


A Rehearsal both strange

and true, of heinous and horrible ac-

ts committed by Elizabeth Stile,

Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mo-

ther Margaret, Four noto-

rious Witches, apprehended at Windsor in the

County of Berkshire, and at Abbing-

ton arraigned, condemned, and

executed, on the 26 day

of February last

Anno .1579.

Imprinted at London for Edward White at the

little North-door of Pauls, at the sign

of the Gun, and are there to be sold.

Robert Hare
The discoueriese of witchcraft,

Wherein the lewd dealing of witches
and witchmongers is notablly detected, the
knauerie of conjurers, the impietie of inchan-
tors, the sollic of soothsayers, the impudent fals-
hood of coulenors, the insideltie of atheisists,
the pestilent practises of Pythonists, the
curiositie of figurecasters, the va-
nitic of dreamers, the begger-
lie art of Alcu-
mystric,
The abhominacion of idolatrie, the hor-
rible art of poisoning, the vertue and power of
natural magike, and all the conuencianes
of Legierdemaine and suggling are deciphered:
and many other things opened, which
have long been hidden, and be
verie necessarie to
be knowne.

Hereunto is added a treatise vpon the
nature and substance of spirits and duxels,
&c: all latelie written
by Reginald Scot
Esquire.
I. John 4, 1.

Beleeue not euery spirit, but trie the spirits, whether they are
of God; for manye false prophets are gone
out into the world, &c.
1584
The Discovery of Witchcraft by Reginald Scot, 1584

This book from 1584 was written by Reginald Scot – a country gentleman and MP from Kent. Scot didn’t believe in witchcraft, magic or superstitions. He said that the people accused of and executed for witchcraft were innocent, and blamed the Catholic Church for encouraging superstitions. He argued that there were non-magical reasons for the things other people blamed on witches. For example, Scot argued that people who felt guilty about denying charity to poor women sometimes accused those women of witchcraft.

Lots of people read Scot’s book. It was a key text in debates about witchcraft. His argument was challenged by people who believed in witches, including King James VI and I.

bl.uk/collection-items/the-discovery-of-witchcraft-by-reginald-scot-1584

© Public Domain

The discovery
of witchcraft,
Wherein the lewd dealing of witches
and witch-mongers is notably detected, the
knavery of conjurors, the impiety of enchanters,
the folly of soothsayers, the impudent falsehood of cozeners,
the pestilent practices of Pythonists, the
curiosity of figure-casters, the vanity of dreamers, the beggarly art of Alcu
mystery,
The abomination of idolatry, the horrid art of poisoning, the virtue and power of
natural magic, and all the conveyances
of Legerdemaine and juggling are deciphered:
and many other things opened, which have long been hidden, howbeit very necessary to be known.

Hereunto is added a treatise upon the nature and substance of spirits and devils,
etc: all lately written by Reginald Scot Esquire.
1 John 4, 1.
Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world, etc.

1584
Newes from Scotland.

Declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Januarie last.

1591.

Which Doctor was registre to the devill,
that fundrie times preached at North Baricke Kirke, to a number of notorious Witches.

With the true examinations of the said Doctor and witches, as they vittered them in the presence of the Scottishe king.

Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drown his Maiestie in the seacoming from Denmarke, with such other wonderfull matters as the like hath not bin heard at anie time.

Published according to the Scottish copie.

Printed for William Wright.
This witchcraft pamphlet, *News from Scotland*, was originally printed in London in 1591 (but this is a later reprint from 1816).

It contains accounts of three women accused of witchcraft and tried before King James VI of Scotland, one of whom was said to be using her witchcraft against the King himself.

James caused the pamphlet to be printed as part of his attack on witchcraft.

The pamphlet includes woodcut illustrations depicting scenes from the alleged acts, including the casting of spells over a cauldron. To see these, visit our website:

[bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-news-from-scotland-1591](http://bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-news-from-scotland-1591)

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**News from Scotland.**

Declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edinburgh in January last.

1591.

Which doctor was register to the devil, that sundry times preached at North Barrick Kirk, to a number of notorious Witches.

With the true examinations of the said Doctor and witches, as they uttered them in the presence of the Scottish king.

Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and drown his Majesty in the sea coming from Denmark, with such other wonderful matters as the like hath not been heard at any time.

Published according to the Scottish copy.

Printed for William Wright.
DAEMONOLOGIE, IN FORME of a Dialogue, Divided into three Bookes.

EDINBURGH

Printed by Robert Waldegrave, Printer to the Kings Majestie. An. 1597.

Cum Privilegio Regio.
King James VI and I's *Demonology*, 1597

In 1597, King James VI of Scotland published *Demonology* – a book which reveals his full belief in magic and witchcraft. It sets out to prove the existence of such magical forces and explain what sort of punishment the practices deserve – death, in James’s opinion.

*Demonology and Macbeth*

Many elements of the witchcraft scenes in *Macbeth* conform to James’s beliefs about witchcraft. These include the witches vanishing, raising storms, dancing and chanting, engaging in sexual acts, collecting gruesome potion ingredients and keeping animal spirits or familiars.

Scholars are divided about whether Shakespeare’s portrayal of witchcraft panders to the King’s interests, or whether it is a more critical comment on his involvement with witch-hunting, or perhaps a mixture of the two.

[bl.uk/collection-items/king-james-vi-and-is-demonology-1597](bl.uk/collection-items/king-james-vi-and-is-demonology-1597)  
© Public Domain

Demonology, in form of a Dialogue,  
Divided into three Books.

Edinburgh  
Printed by Robert Walde-grave  
Printer to the King’s Majesty. Anno 1597.  
Cum Privilegio Regio.
Engraving of *Macbeth* from the first illustrated works of Shakespeare edited by Nicholas Rowe, 1709

The [first illustrated edition](https://bl.uk/collection-items/the-first-illustrated-works-of-shakespeare-edited-by-nicholas-rowe-1709) of the works of Shakespeare was printed in 1709, 86 years after the [First Folio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Folio) was printed in 1623.

The engraved illustrations were designed by the French-born artist, François Boitard. They portray Shakespeare’s characters in the distinctive costumes and wigs of the 18th century.
Engraving of *Macbeth* from Boydell’s collection of prints illustrating Shakespeare’s works, 1803

This engraving shows Act 4, Scene 1 of *Macbeth* – ‘a dark cave, a cauldron boiling, Macbeth, three witches, Hecate’. The image is based on Sir Joshua Reynolds’s unfinished painting of the scene, commissioned by John Boydell.

**What was Boydell’s Shakespeare gallery?**

In 1789, the publisher John Boydell opened the Shakespeare Gallery, an exhibition space in London’s Pall Mall showcasing paintings that represented scenes from Shakespeare’s plays. Once the exhibition was mounted, the in-house team of printmakers produced a set of engravings to reproduce the paintings. The engravings were available to buy as a large set of 90 prints or as a luxurious illustrated edition of the plays.

[bl.uk/collection-items/boydells-collection-of-prints-illustrating-shakespeares-works](bl.uk/collection-items/boydells-collection-of-prints-illustrating-shakespeares-works)
© Public Domain
Photograph of the witches in Barry Kyle’s production of *Macbeth*, 1983

This photograph shows the Royal Shakespeare Company’s production of *Macbeth* directed by Barry Kyle and performed at the Barbican Theatre, London, in 1983. The witches were played by (from left to right) Katy Behean, Josette Simon and Lesley Sharp. Kneeling in front of the witches is Bob Peck as Macbeth.


© Donald Cooper/Photostage, [www.photostage.co.uk](http://www.photostage.co.uk)
2. A first introduction to *Macbeth*

Here are 12 short extracts from *Macbeth*, a play by William Shakespeare first written and performed in 1606.

- In pairs, read the extracts aloud and share your first response to them, for example:
  - What they are about
  - The mood
  - Patterns you notice in the language
  - Connections between the quotations.

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

    Now o'er the one half world
    Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
    The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
    Pale Hecate's offerings

Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace, the charm's wound up.

    What are these
    So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
    That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth,
    And yet are on't?

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?

Fair is foul, and foul is fair,
Hover through the fog and filthy air.
How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call’d to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?

For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Glamis!
All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Caw-dor!
All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!

Say, if thou’dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

I’ll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round:
That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

The extracts are all spoken by or about the witches in Macbeth.

- Does knowing this add to or change your response to the quotations? Share your thoughts in class discussion.
- What would you expect from a play with witches in it? (Think about the possible plot, the atmosphere, other characters, the type of language used.)
- Who do you think the audience for a play like this might be?
3. Opening the play

Here are some of the ‘ingredients’ included in Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth*:

- A ghost.
- Madness.
- A guest.
- Riddles.
- Ambition.
- A promise.
- Murder.
- Revenge.
- A King.
- An heroic soldier.
- The soldier’s wife.
- A loyal friend.
- Witches.
- A mysterious meeting.
- A vision.

- In pairs, talk about these ingredients and the expectations they prompt in you. If you had to make up a story with these ingredients, what would you write? Jot down a few notes. Then share your ideas with a partner.

- On your own, write the start of your play (about 10 to 15 lines). In small groups, take it turns to read your scenes out loud and talk about the similarities and differences in the way you have used the ingredients.

- As a class, share key points about the different ways you each chose to open your play. If you have time, listen to three or four examples, to illustrate these differences (and any similarities).

- Now read Shakespeare’s opening scene out loud and share your response to it. Talk about any connections between those you wrote and Shakespeare’s scene. (Even if they are very different, you might be able to recognise similar aims, for example to set up a mystery or to frighten the audience.)

- After reading the play, look back at this opening and think again about why Shakespeare chose to open *Macbeth* with the witches. How does it prepare the audience for what follows? What connections can you make with the rest of the play?
4. Opening with the witches

Shakespeare chooses to open his play not with the title character Macbeth, but with three of the witches in the play (sometimes referred to as the weird or ‘Weyward Sisters’).

- Why might any dramatist do this? Why might a playwright writing at the beginning of the 17th century have chosen to do this? Why did Shakespeare in particular choose to do this?

To help you think about these questions, you are going to explore in more detail the title pages from two of the books you looked at earlier. Both books were published at the end of the 16th century and deal with the subject of witchcraft.

**Text 1:** *A Rehearsal both Strange and True*, 1579

**Text 2:** *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584

Working in groups of four, decide which pair will look at *A Rehearsal both Strange and True* and which pair will focus on *The Discovery of Witchcraft*.

- Begin by looking again at the images of the title pages. Talk about anything that interests you or grabs your attention. You should think about:
  - The picture.
  - The typeface.
  - Any words which you can read or make a guess at.

- Look more closely at the text – both what it says and the language it uses. To help you, the text has been reproduced in a modern spelling and typeface on the back of the images.

- What is your text saying about witchcraft? Do you think the author believes in witches or not? Why?

- Finally read the information about your text. Talk about anything this adds to your understanding.

- Join up with the rest of your group. Take it in turns to feed back what you have discovered. Work together to see if you can tease out the similarities and differences in what they are suggesting about witchcraft.

- Think again about Shakespeare’s decision to open the play with the witches. Now that you know about the beliefs and fears surrounding witchcraft – and the challenges to these beliefs – what sort of role do you think the witches might take in this play? You could think about this question in the following terms:
  - The plot (what happens).
  - The themes (what the play is about).
  - Drama – the creation of atmosphere and tension; the way the play develops
  - The context: other plays with witches; how an audience (then and now) might respond to seeing witches on stage.

- After reading the play, think again about the function of the witches.
After reading

Using Discovering Literature to support your understanding and extend your thinking

Kingship and witchcraft – King James and Macbeth

The ten statements below give you some information about the play and the period in which it was written and first performed.

- Read the statements and, as a class, share observations and questions prompted by this information.

1. King James VI of Scotland was crowned King James I of England and Wales in 1603, after the death of Queen Elizabeth.

2. Macbeth, a play set in Scotland, shows the killing of the Scottish King.

3. Just ten days after his coronation, James declared himself the sponsor of Shakespeare’s theatre company, which was were re-named The King’s Men.

4. King James was very concerned about witches. He passed laws to allow for the punishment by death of people convicted of witchcraft.

5. King James and his court were avid theatregoers and Shakespeare was forced to write new plays, more quickly than ever to satisfy their demands. Macbeth is one of those plays.

6. In Shakespeare’s play, Macbeth encounters three witches before he decides to kill the King.

7. The historical figure of Banquo was an ancestor of King James.

8. In Shakespeare’s play Banquo is also murdered by Macbeth, but Banquo’s son Fleance survives.

9. Shakespeare found the story of King Duncan, Macbeth and the three ‘weird sisters’ in Holinshed’s Chronicles – a source he used for many of his plays.

10. Unlike Shakespeare’s play, Holinshed’s account suggests that Banquo was implicated in the conspiracy to kill King Duncan.
Exploring *Macbeth* in the context of the new King, his background and his interests prompts lots of questions about the play and what Shakespeare was doing. Some argue that Shakespeare wrote the play to flatter the king, by pandering to his interest in witches. Others suggest it might be a critique of the King, or a warning to him. Perhaps Macbeth’s downfall is due to his belief in the witch’s prophesies? Or a result of his ambition and tyranny as a king?

- In groups of two or three, consider each of the statements above and arrange them on the table nearer or further away from the words ‘flatter’, ‘criticise’ or ‘warn’. Some statements might go in the middle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flatter</th>
<th>Criticise</th>
<th>Warn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Look back at four of the primary sources from the Icebreaker activity. Read the information on the back and add each one to the table, near ‘flatter’, ‘criticise’ or ‘warn’.

**Text 1:** James VI and I’s *Demonology*, 1597.

**Text 2:** *News from Scotland*, 1591.

**Text 3:** *A Rehearsal both Strange and True*, 1579.

**Text 4:** *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584.
Debating games!

Bring all your thinking together by looking at these controversial statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s <em>Macbeth</em> was written to flatter his new King and sponsor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s presentation of the witches suggests that he was critical of the King’s belief in his witchcraft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This play is a warning to the King!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not the witches or sorcery or magic that makes Macbeth murder the King. It’s his own ambition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These questions are irrelevant! Shakespeare includes witches to scare his audience and create a gripping play.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the debating games below to help you respond to the statements.

- **Just a minute:** take it turns to speak for a minute. You can range as widely as you want, putting forward ideas to support and challenge the reading.

- **Tag team:** work together to build an argument, with each of you contributing an idea in turn. Your argument can still consider both sides.

- **Boxing match:** whatever your partner says, you have to disagree!

What do you think? Going back to the play

Do a short piece of writing to record your personal views on whether Shakespeare was flattering, criticising or warning the King, or a subtle combination of these.

Look back into the play to find evidence to support your ideas. As you look for evidence, you might find yourself revising or changing your perspective.
After reading

Using *Discovering Literature* articles to support your understanding and extend your thinking

The following snippets of criticism are taken from articles about *Macbeth* on *Discovering Literature*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snippet</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘earnest seriousness, cleverly flatters’</td>
<td>Andrew Dickson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more ambiguous, fair as well as foul’</td>
<td>Andrew Dickson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘combines the normal with the weird’</td>
<td>Diane Purkiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘funny with a dark and edgy element of fear running through it’</td>
<td>Diane Purkiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘marked out as mysterious and other-worldly’</td>
<td>Carol Atherton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘powerfully merges literal and metaphorical darkness’</td>
<td>John Mullan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the play’s steady ratcheting up of tension’</td>
<td>Michael Donkor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the puppet master who pulls – often mercilessly yanks – at Macbeth’s strings’</td>
<td>Michael Donkor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘balance after excess, kingship after tyranny, and calm after conflict’</td>
<td>Andrea Varney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘whose crime was to assassinate the king, but whose tragedy was that he killed one of his own’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a figure of “almost peerless malevolence”. Monstrous and murderous’</td>
<td>Sandra M Gilbert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘things are not necessarily what they seem’</td>
<td>Carol Atherton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘foretells his future in deceitful language’</td>
<td>Kiernan Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Shakespeare’s own conjuring of the strange and supernatural’</td>
<td>Carole Levine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘an incarnation of gender trouble’</td>
<td>Sandra M Gilbert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speed dating

Circulate around the room, discussing your critical snippets. When your teacher tells you do so, move on to a new person.

• Read them to each other.
• Talk about any points of connection.
• What angles/ideas do they give you on the play?
• What might they refer to?
• Can you challenge the critics’ ideas? Or find evidence/quotes from the play to support them?

Exploring the language of Macbeth

In their articles for Discovering Literature, John Mullan and Carol Atherton write about Shakespeare’s use of language in Macbeth. Extracts from each of their articles are reproduced below.

• Working in pairs, you should each take responsibility for looking at one of the extracts. As you read it, highlight anything that gives you a new insight into Shakespeare’s use of language in Macbeth.

• Use the ideas below to help you decide what your critic is highlighting about the language of this play.
  • Create atmosphere.
  • Transform an outdoor stage in daylight into a castle at night.
  • Draw the audience’s attention to the fact this is a play they are watching. Highlight the role of the imagination in the play.
  • Make links between the everyday world of the audience and the frightening world of the tragedy.
  • Show how strange and disturbed the world has become.
  • Make the audience aware of what something is and is not at the same time.
  • Show that there are no words to describe the unnatural deeds dramatized on stage.
  • Reflect key themes (for example, evil or madness).
  • Highlight the difference between the witches and the other characters.

• Choose one of the phrases you have highlighted and find a scene or exchange that illustrates the point the critic is making.

• Take it in turns to introduce your extract to your partner.
Extract 1: John Mullan on Darkness

It is strange to think that *Macbeth* was almost certainly written for, and first performed at, the open-air Globe Theatre, where plays were staged in daylight. […]

Shakespeare conceived it as a play where darkness had to be theatrically conjured rather than literally provided.

In modern times, productions of the play have given directors opportunities for many a special theatrical effect that has depended on alternations of darkness and concentrated light. Yet the original play, by having to create these alternations in the imagination, powerfully merges literal and metaphorical darkness. […] For the most part, in the bright daylight of a Thameside afternoon, the darkness that seems to envelop the play had to be created by words and gestures.

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Extract 2: Carol Atherton on the language of the witches in *Macbeth*

Throughout the play, the language used by the Witches helps to mark them out as mysterious and other-worldly. They speak in verse, but it is a form of verse that is very different from that which is used by most of Shakespeare’s characters. Many of the lines in this passage are in rhyming couplets, in contrast to the unrhymed verse used elsewhere in the play. Rather than speaking in an iambic metre, with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables, the Witches speak in a trochaic metre, with stressed syllables followed by unstressed. In addition, where most of Shakespeare’s verse lines have five stresses, the Witches’ lines typically only have four. In this scene, compare Macbeth’s first line with the First Witch’s description of how she will torture the sailor.

MACBETH   So foul and fair a day I have not seen. (1.3.38)

FIRST WITCH   Sleep shall neither night nor day

                Hang upon his penthouse lid;

                He shall live a man forbid (1.3.19–21)

These heavy stresses give the Witches’ speech a sense of foreboding that emphasises their malevolence and unearthliness. In the First Witch’s lines, they make her vendetta against the sailor seem relentless. At the end of this passage, when the Witches chant in unison, they bring a sense of eeriness.
Your own investigations into Shakespeare’s language

- You are going to use a computer program called a concordance to do some explorations into how Shakespeare does this. For this activity you will investigate Shakespeare’s use of words associated with darkness and night.

- Working in pairs, use the advanced search on Open Source Shakespeare to investigate the following words in Macbeth:
  - Dark
  - Night
  - Black
  - Moon

- As you investigate, pay attention to:
  - Who uses the word
  - When it is used
  - The words that appear on either side (are they similar, belonging to the same group, or very different?)
  - What its function in the play is (think about what difference it would make if Shakespeare had used a different word).

- Review your notes and choose one discovery to share in class discussion. This example from Carol Atherton's article shows you how to use what you’ve spotted to explore the meaning of the play:

  These heavy stresses give the Witches’ speech a sense of foreboding that emphasises their malevolence and unearthliness. In the First Witch’s lines, they make her vendetta against the sailor seem relentless. At the end of this passage, when the Witches chant in unison, they bring a sense of eeriness.
Independent student explorations
Planning a Discovering Literature exhibition

Imagine the British Library is putting on an exhibition about Macbeth for young people. The aim is to engage students and give them an insight into the play.

- The exhibition curator has asked you to take responsibility for planning what will go into one of the following rooms:
  - ‘Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble’: Exploring the witches in Macbeth
  - Creating darkness in daylight: Exploring the language of Macbeth
- Whichever room you choose, you will need to include the following in your plans:
  - Something from the collection (books, images, introductions)
  - A short extract from a critical article
  - Quotations from the play which are linked to your chosen collection items or critical article
  - A short introduction to the room explaining how these items help you to understand the play.

Apart from that, it’s up to you! You could suggest the use of audio, video, infographics, posters, models to engage and educate your visitors.
Discovering Literature: *Macbeth*
Resources from the British Library

This list has been compiled to give you a flavour of what *Discovering Literature* has to offer. To discover a whole hub of resources on the play visit:

[bl.uk/works/macbeth](bl.uk/works/macbeth)

Or to explore Shakespeare’s life and work, visit:

[bl.uk/people/william-shakespeare](bl.uk/people/william-shakespeare)

‘Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble’ – exploring the witches in *Macbeth*...

**Articles**
- Character analysis: the witches in *Macbeth*
- More on the witches in *Macbeth*

**Collection items**
- Witchcraft pamphlet: *News from Scotland, 1591*
- King James VI and I’s *Demonology, 1597*

… and exploring the supernatural more widely

**Article**
- *Ghosts in Shakespeare*

**Exploring the language of *Macbeth***

**Articles**
- Conjuring darkness in *Macbeth*

**Macbeth and Shakespeare's linguistic innovation***

**Macbeth, gender and identity**

**Articles**
- Character analysis: Lady Macbeth
- ‘Unsex me here’: Lady Macbeth's hell broth
- Manhood and the milk of human kindness in *Macbeth*

… and exploring more widely – gender in the history of performance of Shakespeare’s plays

**Article**
- Shakespeare and gender: the ‘woman’s part’

**Shakespeare, *Macbeth* and the King**

**Articles**
- Royal Shakespeare: a playwright and his king
- Character analysis: Malcolm in *Macbeth*

**Collection item**
- Holinshed’s *Chronicles, 1577*

**Further teaching resources**

- Lady Macbeth