

What is ambition?

aggressive

enthusiastic

earnest

energetic

striving

resourceful



determined

industrious

inspired

Which of these words would you use to describe Lady Macbeth?

aggressive

determined



industrious

striving

inspired

energetic

enthusiastic

resourceful

Lady Macbeth is even more **ambitious** and ruthless than her husband. As soon as an opportunity to gain power presents itself, she has a plan in mind. She uses her influence to persuade **Macbeth** that they are taking the right course of action and even takes part in the crime herself.

Why, what has Lady Macbeth to gain?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to write their answer to the question above.

Which of these words would you use to describe Macbeth?

aggressive

determined

energetic

enthusiastic



striving

inspired

Macbeth is basically a good man who goes wrong. ... **Macbeth** has been thinking about whether or not he should murder Duncan. He reaches the conclusion that the only thing that is motivating him (his 'spur') is **ambition** which he compares to a horse leaping over an obstacle ('vaulting **ambition**').

Why, what has Macbeth to gain?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student's answer to the question above.

Lady Macbeth reads a letter from her husband about his encounter with the witches. She fears that her husband is 'too full o'th' milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way' of achieving the throne. She wants him to come home quickly so that she can 'pour' her words of ambition into his ears. She is interrupted by news that the king is coming to the castle that evening and that Macbeth is already on his way. She celebrates the 'fatal entrance' of Duncan into their home. She calls on the spirits to 'unsex' her and make her capable of murder. Macbeth arrives home and Lady Macbeth immediately plants the seed of her murderous intentions. She advises him to hide their plans with innocence, but be a 'serpent' underneath.



Ambition is an important theme in Macbeth and is the driving force of the play because Shakespeare allows ambition to overpower Macbeth's morals when he kills Duncan. Eventhough the witches and Lady Macbeth had been allowed to influence Macbeth, he may not have killed Duncan if his ambition wasn't so strong. This essay will discuss the ways in which Shakespeare presents ambition in the extract and the play as a whole, and how he does this.

Shakespeare shows that ambition changes even the most noble people in this speech. He allows Lady Macbeth to describe Macbeth's nature as being 'too full o'th' milk of human kindness' in her soliloquy (allowing the audience to hear her thoughts). The noun 'milk' has connotations of purity and innocence, implying that macbeth isn't evil enough to act on his ambitions. However, during macbeth's reign after becoming king, he is described as a 'butcher', a powerful adjective that emphasises Macbeth's cruelty and the amount of people he has killed without reason. This change in character from being too kind and innocent to becoming a tyrant surprises the audience and conveys the dangers of having ambitions that leads to bad deeds.

Furthermore, Shakespeare also presents ambition as being able to take over one's morals and reasons. In Lady Macbeth's speech, Shakespeare allows her to say 'Art not without ambition, but without the illness should attend it'. The noun 'illness' creates an impression to the readers of ambition being different from acting on it, and describing it as an 'illness' emphasises the amount of destruction it can cause to the audience. 'Illness' could also suggest that acting on ambition can cause someone to become without morals and kindness. Macbeth also acknowledges his own 'vaulting ambition' after listing all the reasons not to kill Duncan. The metaphor suggests that macbeth's ambition is stronger than his moral conscience and is the only reason left for him to murder Duncan

Macbeth's ambition is also contrasted with Banquo's, who was also present when the witches gave the prophecies. Macbeth immediatly believes the witches, and when he becomes Thane, proving that the first prediction had come true, he begins to believe them more and acts on his ambitions to become king. Banquo, however, is the opposite of Macbeth. Although he does believe the witches, he does not act on his ambitions and even suspects that Macbeth has "play'dst most foully for't". This contrast in attitudes towards ambition and the suspenseful two-fold structure of 'Macbeth' that sees his rise to power and his downfall further emphasises the destructive nature of ambition, but also conveys to the audience that being able to control your ambitions can prevent a tragedy like Macbeth's to occur.

In conclusion, Shakespeare presents ambition as being able to change people, take over morals and reasons and can lead to one's downfall if it isn't controlled. This allows Shakespeare to also convey to the audience the destruction that someone would experience if they attempted to assassinate King James I of England at the time.

[MARK] 29/40

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 5 of Macbeth and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is speaking. She has just read Macbeth's letter telling her about his meeting with the three witches.

LADY MACBETH

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised; yet do I fear thy nature,
It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'Thus thou must do' if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

Starting with this speech, explore how **Shakespeare presents ambition in Macbeth.**

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents ambition in this speech-Lady Macbeth's
- how Shakespeare presents ambition in the play as a whole.Macbeth's

[Macbeth Act 1 Scene 5 | Key Scene | Royal Shakespeare Company](#)

Shakespeare presents ambition in Macbeth. At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is speaking. She has just read Macbeth's letter telling her about his meeting with the three witches.

Macbeth's ambition	'It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness'	Metaphor-connotations of noun 'milk'?	PETAL
	'Thou wouldst be great, Art not without ambition, but without The illness should attend it.'	Metaphor-connotations of noun 'illness'?	PETAL
Lady Macbeth's ambition	'Hie thee hither, That I may pour my spirits in thine ear'	Metaphor-connotations of spirits?	PETAL
Banquo's ambition	'your sons shall be Kings thereafter'	What does Banquo do about his ambition?	PETAL

Write a description of a mysterious place:



Third person omniscient narrator

Past tense

Alliteration

Smell

List of 3

Heard

Climax

Metaphor

Taste

Rising action

Falling action

personification

Exposition

Denouement

Sight

Feel

Simile

Sight-simile	<p>Hesitantly, the young woman stepped on the blanket of leaves at the entrance of the forest. The forest had been in her family for generation but she had always been forbidden from entering it. The gate had always been locked...then it wasn't. She looked at the gate which had once been patiently painted black, but now the rust had overtaken the hard work and swallowed all shine from the gate's ancient metal. Through the gate she saw a tunnel of fog swirling around the naked branches of the trees.</p>
Sound- list of three	<p>Quietly, she stepped beyond the boundary of the gate into the forbidden forest. Her footsteps squelched sound as she stepped on the damp debris of winter. She heard the scratching of the branches; the crashing of the river rushing through the heart of the forest and the squawking of the only live thing there, a crow circling its prey.</p>
Smell- alliteration	<p>With trepidation she continued into the dark depths of the forbidden forest. Constantly, she looked around taking in each forbidden sight. The stench of wild garlic cloyed her clothes and ambushed her nostrils. It reminded her of the fresh garlic her auntie would hang above the back door to ward off the vampires of the village.</p>
Taste-simile	<p>Without realising it, Victoria had been chewing on her tongue. Her mouth filled with a taste like metal. It was fresh blood. Her blood. The blood so hungrily desired by the vampire's who took over their village over a hundred years ago.</p>