

Costume Design

This resource covers the following Assessment Objectives:

- **GCSE English Literature: AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.**
- **A Level English Literature: AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.**
- **A Level Drama and Theatre: AO1: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatre making process, making connections between dramatic theory and practice**

Costume Design is an important part of creating meaning in a theatrical show. A costume can tell the audience a lot about a character, such as their job, social status, and personality. Furthermore, costumes normally comment on the social, historical, and cultural context of the production.

A good costume can highlight themes in the play, as well as add layers of meaning to the production/text.

The creation of costume in this production of Macbeth has used symbolism. Symbolist costumes are more interested in communicating an idea to the audience than in representing real life. Symbolism allows the designer to create costumes that they think represents the key themes of the play or key ideas about the characters.

In this year's production, the witches go through three costume changes throughout the play - we will explore the concept behind these costumes and discuss how they create meaning in regard to the themes and characters within the play.

Costume One:



Star Carr is a Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) archaeological site, dating to around 9000 BC, just centuries after the end of the last Ice Age. The site is in North Yorkshire.

red deer skulls, thought to be used by shamans in ritual practices, barbed points (harpoons) used in hunting and fishing, the "oldest house in Britain", and the earliest evidence of carpentry that we have in Europe. You can find out more about it here: <http://www.starcarr.com>

1. Using a headdress from 9000 BC suggests what about the witches and their age?
 - Remember Macbeth is set in the 11th Century.
 - The audience watching this play is in the 21st Century

2. Explain how the costumes refer to the idea of nature and power? Witches are usually seen as beings against nature, how do these costumes suggest the opposite?
 - Think about the colour?
 - The headdress?
 - The half human and animal look?

Costume Two



1. How has the witches' costume changed?
2. At this point in the play, the witches are part of the Macbeth's household.
 - What role in the household does the costume suggest they play?
 - Who does it suggest has power at this moment, the witches or Macbeth?
 - Do you agree with this suggestion? Explain your answer.

Costume Three



1. How have the cloaks changed since costume one? What does this suggest?
 - Think about the seasons
 - Think about who is in power on the throne at this point.

2. Do you agree that the witches are the mastermind of the action of the play, and hold the destinies of the characters in their hands? Explain your answer.

ESSAY STYLE QUESTION

How are costumes in the Playing Shakespeare 2022 with Deutsche Bank production of Macbeth used to create meaning in regard to character and theme?

Fill in the following table to help you answer the essay question. The first section has been completed for you. Use this as a guide to complete the other sections. You must use PEE(L) paragraphs.

Costume	Similarity	Difference	Explanation
Dresses	The witches wear their long brown dresses from the beginning of the play to the end.	Not applicable	<p>Throughout the whole play the witches, the base layer of the witches' costume is the long have brown dress.</p> <p>The brown dress is a constant reminder to the audience that despite costume changes to their headdress or additional layers, the witches are always creatures of the earth, related to mother nature. They are subtly ruling events, just as nature is, even when mankind thinks they dominion over all things.</p> <p>The costume implies the witches are very much part of the natural world order, that their magic and power is not to be feared, even if it seems so, as nature will always restore the balance and correct it.</p> <p>The violent and bloody battle between Macbeth and Macduff, can be seen as nature restoring the balance and placing Malcolm back on the throne, a throne that never belonged to Macbeth.</p> <p>Furthermore, this idea of nature and equilibrium, can make the audience reflect on the current challenges of climate change, and how one could view the current chaotic and violent disruptions to the natural season as nature's battle with man; a battle to restore the natural balance, where mankind work within the seasons and not against her.</p>
Cloaks			
Head dress			

COSTUMES OF LADY MACBETH AND MACBETH



1. Look at the two images of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth. Image A is prior to the Macbeths becoming King and Queen. What do the clothing suggest about their personality and their status?
2. What has happened to the shade of blue in the images? How is the idea of 'blue- blood' explored in these images?
3. Compare image A with image B, how has the clothing suggested a change in their status and power?

YOU'RE THE COSTUME DESIGNER

Imagine you're a costume designer. The director wants you to design costumes for the witches and Macbeth's the play will be set in a future dystopian society. You must explain the design choices you made.

Or

Design a costume for the witches and the Macbeths. You must explain your design choices, noting the following:

- The era of your costume
- How they relate to the themes in the play
- What you would like the audience reaction to be when they see the costumes