2018 IB DP: Macbeth Essay topics

From our first introduction to Lady Macbeth’s character, it does not seem likely that

she has any moral compass. Yet, by the end of the play, she is apparently driven mad by guilt. What

accounts for this sudden change of heart? Could something else explain her madness other than guilt?

Or does she show this conscience throughout the play? What comment does Shakespeare make on femininity through Lady Macbeth’s character?

How do Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s parallel ambitions doom them? After the

initial murder, what drives Macbeth to further acts of cruelty? Are Macbeth and Lady Macbeth

prideful to a fault, or are they doomed by their confidence in prophecy rather than reliance on their

abilities?

What role do the witches play in Macbeth’s downfall? How are they set apart from

other characters in the play—societally, linguistically, spiritually? How does their dress and

atmosphere in the first scene set the tone for the rest of the place? Discuss in realtion to King James’ thoughts on witches and witchcraft.

Is Macbeth’s downfall caused by the witches or is it the result of his own

wrongdoing? How does fate shape the outcome of the story? How does choice play a role in

Macbeth’s tragic end? Discuss in realtion to Elizabethan religious beliefs.

Discuss the recurring image of blood and Violence and how it is used to convey theme(s).