

To celebrate the birthday of William Shakespeare, we will be looking at a part of one of his most famous plays, 'Macbeth'.

Macbeth is a play set in 11th century Scotland full of murder and witchcraft. A brave Scottish general called Macbeth is returning from battle with his best friend Banquo. The friends meet three witches and Macbeth receives a prophecy that he will become king. Macbeth and his wife are so desperate for this to happen they kill King Duncan and Macbeth takes the throne. Macbeth is filled with guilt and shame but he has to keep killing to stop the evil deeds being discovered.

[These BBC clips](#) give a good summary of the story.

This week we will look at the opening scenes and the three witches.

Act 1 Scene 1

A deserted place. Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

FIRST WITCH

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

SECOND WITCH

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch

Paddock calls.

Third Witch

Anon!

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

[Exeunt]

Word Match

Can you match the word to its definition? (Try using the context).

<p>hurly-burly ere heath Graymalkin/Paddock anon</p>	<p>soon an area of open land before a commotion, noise and strife the name of the witch's pet (or 'familiar')</p>
--	---

Questions

1. Who are the witches saying that they will meet?
2. What do you think might happen when they meet him?
3. Are they planning good or trouble?
4. How can you tell?

Drama Activity

Macbeth is a play and was written to be performed, not just read. The witches often speak at the same time as a **chorus**. Can you look through this next extract and try to perform it? Use the chorus techniques to help you. If you have anyone else at home who could act it out with you, it could be a real chorus!

Witches Song – Part 1

Act 4 Scene 1

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches

First Witch

Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Second Witch

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Choral Speaking Techniques

Different **numbers of voices** speaking at different times

Echo key words or sounds

Add **sound effects**

Emphasise the **rhythm** of the words

Emphasise **long vowels** and **hard consonants**

Make the most of **onomatopoeic** words

Add **expressions** and **gestures**