EXAM STASH

CHARACTER REVISION SHEET

BANQUO

MACBETH

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE



LOYALTY | AMBITION | PROPHECY

WHO ARE THEY?

A Scottish noble and Macbeth's friend, who meets the Witches and hears a prophecy about his descendants.

THE BIG IDEA

Banquo offers an alternative response to temptation. His caution exposes Macbeth's choices, while his own interest in the prophecy prevents an entirely simple contrast.

PAIRED KEY QUOTATIONS

TEMPTATION AND CAUTION

'instruments of darkness'	Banquo, 1.3
'May they not be my oracles as well'	Banquo, 3.1

Method: The musical metaphor imagines supernatural agents serving evil; the later question admits attraction to the promise about his descendants.

Reveals: He recognises danger but is not untouched by ambition.

SUPPRESSED THREAT RETURNS

'royalty of nature'	Macbeth about Banquo, 3.1
'Never shake thy gory locks at me'	Macbeth to the ghost, 3.4

Method: Macbeth's praise makes Banquo a political threat; the direct command at the banquet reveals failed control.

Reveals: The ghost has no lines, yet disrupts the king's public performance.

CHARACTER JOURNEY



CONNECTIONS TO THEMES AND OTHER CHARACTERS

- **Ambition:** A more cautious response to the Witches.
- **Power:** A threat to Macbeth's rule because of the prophecy.
- **Macbeth:** A friend whose fate exposes Macbeth's growing paranoit.
- **The Witches:** Their prophecy links them both, but Banquo is more skeptical.

DEVELOP YOUR IDEAS

POINT

Banquo acts as a moral foil to Macbeth, showing greater caution and a stronger sense of right and wrong.

NUANCE

Banquo does not expose Macbeth before his death. His silence can invite debate, but it should not be treated as evidence that he joins the murder plot.



RECALL

How can Banquo be both a moral foil and a person tempted by future power?

How does Banquo's fate deepen our understanding of Macbeth?