EXAM STASH

CHARACTER REVISION SHEET

LADY MACBETH

MACBETH

GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE



AMBITION | POWER | GUILT

WHO ARE THEY?

Macbeth's wife, whose ambition and determination drive the plan to kill Duncan.

THE BIG IDEA

Lady Macbeth tries to make conscience and compassion disappear. The return of blood and hand imagery exposes the limits of that imagined control.

CHARACTER JOURNEY

1.  Invokes cruelty
2.  Directs the plan
3.  Loses private control
4.  Dies offstage

PAIRED KEY QUOTATIONS

"Water fails to erase guilt

'A little water clears us of this deed'	Lady Macbeth, 2.2
'Out, damned spot!'	Lady Macbeth, 5.1

Method: Early declarative certainty makes guilt sound washable. The later imperative cannot command imagined blood to leave.

Reveals: Her sleepwalking turns a claimed practical solution into a repeated sign of distress.

"Gender as a weapon

'unsex me here'	Lady Macbeth, 1.5
'When you durst do it, then you were a man'	Lady Macbeth, 1.7

Method: The first appeal rejects qualities she associates with femininity; the later conditional turns masculinity into a test Macbeth must pass.

Reveals: These are her manipulative definitions, not rules the play asks us to accept.

CONNECTIONS TO THEMES AND OTHER CHARACTERS

- **Ambition:** Shares Macbeth's desire for power and helps turn thoughts into action.
- **Guilt:** Her growing distress shows the emotional cost of violence.
- **Gender:** Challenges expectations of femininity to exert control.
- **Macbeth:** First influences and drives him, but later loses power over his choices.

DEVELOP YOUR IDEAS

BASIC POINT

Lady Macbeth is a powerful and manipulative figure who pushes Macbeth to commit regicide.

MORE NUANCED INTERPRETATION

She is influential in Duncan's murder but increasingly excluded from Macbeth's later plans. Do not claim she orders Banquo's or the Macduff family's deaths.

RECALL

1. *Why is the sleepwalking scene a reversal of her earlier authority?*
2. *How does Lady Macbeth's use of language shape our view of her at different stages?*