**KEY THEMES IN MACBETH**

**ORDER VS. CHAOS**

The play explores Macbeth’s struggle to keep or destroy both social order and the bonds of decency.

Macbeth comes to believe that the ends justify the means, and one after another, he destroys his own morality as he destroys family and friends.

**APPEARANCE VS. REALITY**

Shakespeare purposely blurs the line between what seems to be true and what actually is true. As Macbeth descends into madness, he does not know who to trust, even his own eyes are mistrusted.

The play reminds us that a friendly exterior can often hide evil internal thoughts.

**AMBITION**

Ruthlessly seeking power at all costs, costs Macbeth his soul. His wife, deranged by the loss of her child, makes a project of getting the crown for her husband, and is ready to do any evil thing necessary.

**VIOLENCE AND TYRANY**

The play is filled with many battles on and off the battlefield and at first, casts Macbeth as a beloved war hero. As the play progresses, Macbeth is forced to go to war with his former friends, and his ruthless governance turns him into a tyrant, so hated, that he must hire soldiers from Ireland to fight for him.

Warfare, destruction, murder and tyranny are explored in various ways throughout the play.

**CONSCIENCE AND GUILT AND PUNISHMENT**

Macbeth is fully aware that what he is doing is wrong. However he still proceeds with it and suffers both the physical and mental consequences as a result. Lady Macbeth is eager to murder the King and suffers terribly for her crimes. The play is a cautionary tale against murder, especially the murder of a King.

**WITCHCRAFT AND THE SUPERNATURAL**

The three weird sisters possessed the same powers which would have been expected from witches. They have the ability to predict the future, affect the weather, cast spells, and raise evil spirits. King James of England was very interested in the occult and Shakespeare wrote this play to please his interests. He allows the witches to lead Macbeth down a path that at first seems impossible to lose, then they show him that they only told him what he wanted to hear, and have led him down the path of murder and the destruction of his own soul.