**Literature AO3 Mastery Therapy:**

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

All of Shakespeare’s plays (just like any other literary text) have key themes playing through them that reflect the values and concerns of the time they were written in. When looking at a text, do not just look at the year it was performed or published, look at the years leading up to the performance too.

*Macbeth* was first performed in 1611 and is believed to have been written between 1599 and 1606.

So what was happening leading up to the performance of the play:

1. Shakespeare’s son died, probably from the bubonic plague, in 1596
2. James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1601
3. 1594 to 1603 is The Nine Years’ War where the Irish fought against English rule in Ireland
4. The Gunpowder Plot was in 1605
5. There was still tension between Catholics and Protestants
6. James was the son of the Catholic, Mary Queen of Scots, and was brought up a Protestant
7. Elizabeth I gave the order for Mary’s death
8. The Great Chain of Being was a widely held belief
9. The development of Jacobean theatre and a change in public taste – the more shocking and bloodier, the better the audience enjoyed it
10. Playwrights looked to older forms, such as Greek tragedy, for inspiration.

**Task**

Using the points above as a guide, research the context for Shakespeare’s Tragedies.

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