**Notes on Context**

1. **Divine Right of Kings**

James I attempted to emphasise his legitimacy through the Divine Right of Kings doctrine, which promoted the idea that monarchs derived their power from God.

* *The murder of Duncan is described by Macduff as a sacrilegious act.*

1. **The Gunpowder Plot**

England was divided both politically and religiously at the time the play was first performed. In 1605, Catholic plotters attempted to blow-up the Houses of Parliament

* *Treason is a central theme in the play.*

1. **Witches and Witchcraft**

Witches were viewed very differently during the reign of James I to how they are now in the sense that there was a widespread belief that they existed and were harmful.

* *The ‘otherness’ of the witches is conveyed through their grotesque appearance.*

1. **Daemonologie**

James I felt so strongly about the threat posed by witches – whom he called the ‘detestable slaves of the Devil’ – that he wrote a book called Daemonologie.

* *Banquo attempts to warn Macbeth that the witches are evil.*

1. **Tragedy – The Beginning**

A ‘classical’ tragic hero initially has a high status and a good reputation. However, they possess a ‘fatal flaw’ and commit an act that is ultimately responsible for their downfall

* *Macbeth’s bravery and prowess in battle is celebrated at the start of the play.*

1. **Tragedy – The End**

A tragic hero both suffers and causes other to suffer. Before a tragic hero dies, they usually experience a moment of insight that provides an opportunity for reflection.

* *Macbeth is struck by his increasingly isolation towards the end of the play.*