How is the theme of guilt presented in 'Macbeth'? Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.

**Task:** Read the following information about guilt in 'Macbeth'.

One of Shakespeare's reasons for writing the play was to illustrate the terrible consequences of murdering a king. The play was first performed in 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot, and this theme would be very politically acceptable to an audience composed of members of James I’s court. Shakespeare shows the murderers of a king tormented by their own guilt and driven to their doom.
How is the theme of guilt presented in 'Macbeth'? Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.

Blood is a **recurring symbol** in 'Macbeth'; it represents guilt.

- M: "my soul is too much charged with **blood** of thine already." (V, viii)
- LM: "Make thick my **blood**" (I,v)
- M: "And on thy blade and dungeon gouts of **blood**" (I,vii)
- M: "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this **blood** clean from my hand?" (II,ii)
- LM: "Here's the smell of the **blood** still" (V,i)
- LM: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much **blood** in him." (V,i)
- M: "I am in **blood** Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more" (III,iv)
- M: "It will have **blood** they say: **blood** will have **blood**." (III,iv)
How is the theme of guilt presented in 'Macbeth'? Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.

Sleep is also a **recurring symbol** in 'Macbeth'; it represents a guilty conscience.

Doctor: "A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of **sleep**, and do the effects of watching!" (V,i)

LM: "You lack the season of all natures, **sleep**." (III,ii)

M: "Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse The curtain'd **sleep**" (II,i)

M: "'**Sleep** no more!' to all the house; 'Glamis hath murder'd **sleep**, and therefore Cawdor Shall **sleep** no more; Macbeth shall **sleep** no more." (II,ii)

M: "**Sleep** In the affliction of these terrible dreams That shake us nightly" (III,ii)
How is the theme of guilt presented in 'Macbeth'? Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth both have visions. These visions are a symbol of their guilty consciences.

LM: "Out, damned spot! out, I say!" (V,i)

M: "Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand?" (II,i)

M: "when the brains were out, the man would die, And there an end; but now they rise again," (III,iv)
How is the theme of guilt presented in 'Macbeth'? Be able to identify relevant quotations and explore the effect on the audience.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's guilt is also linked to hell and the sin they have committed.

Macduff: "Turn, hell-hound, turn!" (V, viii)

LM: "Hell is murky!" (V, i)

M: "But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'? I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen' Stuck in my throat." (II, ii)

Macduff: "Not in the legions Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd In evils to top Macbeth." (IV, iii)