



Teacher's Toolkit: *Macbeth*

Using *Discovering Literature* in the classroom

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A toolkit for teaching *Macbeth*

This free pack was created by the [English and Media Centre](#), with the [Learning](#) team at the British Library. It offers a wealth of new ideas for using [Discovering Literature](#) to refresh your teaching of *Macbeth*, witchcraft and kingship. You'll find innovative ways of using vivid primary sources and illustrated articles to explore key contexts, engage with critics' ideas, inspire creativity and promote independent research.



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Before reading

1. Icebreakers using British Library collection items

- Talk about the seven images that you have been given – anything that interests, surprises or puzzles you.
- Focus in on the words, fonts and pictures.
- What connections do you notice? Are there any striking differences?
- Use post-it notes to record your ideas.
- Don't read the information on the back yet!
- Put the images and your notes to one side. You'll have chance to explore them in a bit more detail later.



A Rehearfall both straung
and true, of hainous and horrible ac-
tes committed by Elizabeth Stile,
Alias Rockingham, Mother Durren, Mo-
ther Deuell, Mother Margaret, Fower noto-
rious Witches, apprehended at winsore in the
Countie of Barkl. and at Abbing-
ton arraigned, condemned, and
executed, on the 26. daye
of Februarie laste
Anno. 1579.



Imprinted at London for Edward White at the
little North-doore of Paules, at the signe
of the Gun, and are there to be sold.

Roberti Hare

Witchcraft pamphlet: *A Rehearsal both Strange and True*, 1579

This 16th-century pamphlet describes 'horrible' acts of witchcraft. These include keeping animals such as cats and toads that were thought to be spirits or devils, and were fed with the witch's own blood.

The pamphlet describes the harm witches caused (ranging from making people sick to murder) and how they used their animal spirits or familiars to do this.

The stories in the pamphlet are taken from the testimony of 65-year old Elizabeth Stile, who made a confession at Reading gaol before facing execution.

The illustration shows two old women, holding a devilish figure.

bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-a-rehearsal-both-strange-and-true-1579

© Public Domain

A Rehearsal both strange
and true, of heinous and horrible ac-
ts committed by Elizabeth Stile,
Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mo-
ther Margaret, Four noto-
rious Witches, apprehended at Windsor in the
County of Berkshire, and at Abbing-
ton arraigned, condemned, and
executed, on the 26 day
of February last
Anno .1579.

Imprinted at London for Edward White at the
little North-door of Pauls, at the sign
of the Gun, and are there to be sold.

Robert Hare



of

The discouerie of witchcraft,

Wherein the lewde dealing of witches
and witchmongers is notablie detected, the
knauerie of coniurors, the impietie of inchan-
tors, the follie of soothsaiers, the impudent fals-
hood of coufenors, the infidelitie of atheists,
the pestilent practises of Pythonists, the
curiositie of figurecasters, the va-
nitie of dreamers, the begger-
lie art of Alcu-
mystrie,

The abhominacion of idolatrie, the hor-
rible art of poisoning, the vertue and power of
naturall magike, and all the conueiances
of Legierdemaine and iuggling are deciphered:
and many other things opened, which
haue long lien hidden, howbeit
verie necessarie to
be knowne.

Heerevnto is added a treatise vpon the
nature and substance of spirits and diuels,
&c : all latelie written
by Reginald Scor
Esquire.

I. Iohn. 4, 1.

Beleeue not euerie spirit, but trie the spirits, whether they are
of God; for manie false prophets are gone
out into the world, &c.

1584

The Discovery of Witchcraft by Reginald Scot, 1584

This book from 1584 was written by Reginald Scot – a country gentleman and MP from Kent.

Scot didn't believe in witchcraft, magic or superstitions. He said that the people accused of and executed for witchcraft were innocent, and blamed the Catholic Church for encouraging superstitions.

He argued that there were non-magical reasons for the things other people blamed on witches. For example, Scot argued that people who felt guilty about denying charity to poor women sometimes accused those women of witchcraft.

Lots of people read Scot's book. It was a key text in debates about witchcraft. His argument was challenged by people who believed in witches, including King James VI and I.

bl.uk/collection-items/the-discovery-of-witchcraft-by-reginald-scot-1584

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The discovery
of witchcraft,
Wherein the lewd dealing of witches
and witch-mongers is notably detected, the
knavery of conjurors, the impiety of enchant-
ers, the folly of soothsayers, the impudent false-
hood of cozeners, the infidelity of atheists,
the pestilent practices of Pythonists, the va-
nity of dreamers, the beggar-
ly art of Alcu
mystery,
The abomination of idolatry, the hor-
rible art of poisoning, the virtue and power of
natural magic, and all the conveyances
of Legerdemaine and juggling are deciphered:
and many other things opened, which
have long been hidden, howbeit
very necessary to
be known.
Hereunto is added a treatise upon the
nature and substance of spirits and devils,
etc: all lately written
by Reginald Scot
Esquire.
1 John 4, 1.
Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are
of God; for many false prophets are gone
out into the world, etc.

1584

Newes from Scotland.
Declaring the damnable life of Doc-
tor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned
at Edenbrough in Ianuarie laſt.

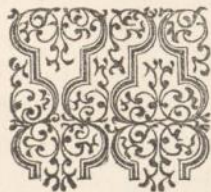
1591.

Which Doctor was regiſter to the dewill,
that fundrie times preached at North Baricke
Kirke, to a number of notorious
Witches.

With the true examinations of the ſaid Doctor and
witches, as they vttered them in the preſence
of the Scottiſh king.

Diſcouering how they pretended to bewitch and
drowne his Maieſtie in the ſea comming from Den-
marke, with ſuch other wonderfull matters
as the like hath not bin heard
at anie time.

Published according to the Scottiſh copie.



Printed for William Wright.

Witchcraft pamphlet: *News from Scotland*, 1591

This witchcraft pamphlet, *News from Scotland*, was originally printed in London in 1591 (but this is a later reprint from 1816).

It contains accounts of three women accused of witchcraft and tried before King James VI of Scotland, one of whom was said to be using her witchcraft against the King himself.

James caused the pamphlet to be printed as part of his attack on witchcraft.

The pamphlet includes woodcut illustrations depicting scenes from the alleged acts, including the casting of spells over a cauldron. To see these, visit our website:

bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-news-from-scotland-1591

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News from Scotland.

Declaring the damnable life of Doctor
Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned
at Edinburgh in January last.
1591.

Which doctor was register to the devil,
that sundry times preached at North Barrick
Kirk, to a number of notorious
Witches.

With the true examinations of the said Doctor and
witches, as they uttered them in the presence
of the Scottish king.

Discovering how they pretended to bewitch and
drown his Majesty in the sea coming from Denmark,
with such other wonderful matters
as the like hath not been heard
at any time.

Published according to the Scottish copy.
Printed for William Wright.