

ESSAY SKELETON

1. First, fill in all red areas.
2. Find three pieces of evidence to support the red ideas in each paragraph.
3. Explain how the evidence supports the red ideas in each paragraph.
4. Provide a smooth transition (movement) from one paragraph to the next.

Thesis Statement: Passion is an emotion that can prove to be a powerful force in determining the course of one's life, but, one must be careful to temper that passion. In his tragedy, <i>Macbeth</i> , William Shakespeare suggests that ruling passion may prove to bring about disastrous results, when this passion becomes an obsession.
(Body Paragraph #1) New idea: Macbeth's tragic flaw becomes evident early in the play. After meeting the witches and hearing their prophecies, Macbeth begins to show the imperfect nature of his character.
Evidence: "Two truths are told / As happy prologues to the swelling act / Of the imperial theme."
eXplanation: When he hears that, indeed, the prophecy of him becoming Thane of Cawdor has come true, his remarks suggest that his royal ambition may have been in place before this encounter with the weird sisters.
Evidence: "If chance will have me King, why, chance / will crown me, / Without my stir".
eXplanation: The title of Thane of Cawdor has fallen unsolicited upon his shoulders, not Banquo's, who is equally deserving of the title. Macbeth sees this as fate. He wants to believe the prophecies.
Evidence: "That is a step / on which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap / for in my way it lies. / Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and deep desires."
eXplanation: His passion to become king has now taken hold.
Transition: Shakespeare uses these prophecies to bring Macbeth's secret desire to be king to the surface and also acts as the catalyst that triggers the sequence of events that leads Macbeth down the path to darkness.
(Body Paragraph #2) New idea: Macbeth's descent into darkness is also influenced by the machinations of his wife, Lady Macbeth.
Evidence: "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be / what thou are promis'd."
eXplanation: Lady Macbeth's ruthless nature is shown in her response to his letter informing her that he had been made Thane of Cawdor.
Evidence: "Yet do I fear thy nature; / it is too full o' the milk of human kindness."
eXplanation: She worries he is not be ruthless enough.
Evidence: "Art thou afeard / to be the same in thine own act and valour /...and live a coward in thine own esteem", and, "When you durst do it, then you were a man; / and, to be more than what you were, you would / be so much more the man."
eXplanation: Shakespeare uses Lady Macbeth's persistence and cruel words as the vehicle that gives Macbeth the added affirmation he needs to murder Duncan.

<p>Transition: By this time, Macbeth's ruling passion to be king overtakes the noble person that he was. His murder of Duncan starts a chain of treacherous events that leads to his demise.</p>
<p>(Body Paragraph #3) New idea: The murder of Duncan is just the beginning of the treachery involving Macbeth. His ruling passion has resulted in him becoming a murderer in order to become king of Scotland. Now he is determined to retain power.</p>
<p>Evidence: In an attempt to manipulate this situation to his favour, Macbeth employs two murderers to dispatch Banquo and his son, Fleance.</p>
<p>eXplanation: His belief in the witches had been strengthened by two of the prophecies coming true; he had become Thane of Cawdor and was also crowned king. However, the forecast that Banquo's line would be kings in the future disturbed him greatly.</p>
<p>Evidence: During this next encounter with the witches, Macbeth is told to "beware Macduff."</p>
<p>eXplanation: His reaction to this is, "thou hast harp'd my fear aright" which indicates that he already had concerns about Macduff.</p>
<p>Evidence: "Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn / the power of man, for none of woman born / shall harm Macbeth."</p>
<p>eXplanation: Macbeth naively believed he could not be harmed. Despite his belief in his newfound invincibility, he remarked, "Then live Macduff, what need I fear of thee? / But yet, I'll make assurance double sure". He then takes the action of being bloody and bold, and has MacDuff's family brutally murdered in broad daylight as extra insurance to keep his power and his crown.</p>
<p>Transition: Macbeth interprets the prophecies to justify his actions to himself. Macbeth now has no qualms about murdering anyone he believes may endanger his reign as king of Scotland.</p>
<p>(Body Paragraph #4) New idea: It is evident with these murders, that Macbeth has started his descent into madness due to his ruling passion regarding the crown. He has become obsessed with maintaining power, to the point where he is not thinking logically. He has also lost any humanity that he had previously exhibited.</p>
<p>Evidence: Macbeth is aware that Macduff had fled to England, joining forces with Malcolm, son of Duncan, and should have been cognisant of the fact that destroying Macduff's family would only serve to strengthen Macduff's desire for vengeance. It also bolsters Malcolm's resolve to rid Scotland of a usurping madman who has plunged his country into despair and darkness. Macbeth's irrational actions cement the conviction his formidable adversaries have in their determination to overthrow him.</p>
<p>eXplanation: There is no justification for the annihilation of Macduff's household, as Macduff is the threat, not his wife and children.</p>
<p>Evidence: Macbeth believes himself to be invincible. Convinced that he could not be killed by "none of woman born," he murders, and orders murders, with impunity. His feelings of invincibility are further supported by the witches' statement, "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come</p>

against him”.

eXplanation: Surely a general with Macbeth’s expertise would have used similar camouflage techniques in battle himself, and should have recognized the prophecy as illusory. His interpretation of the witches’ words proves to be unfortunate for Macbeth.

Evidence: Macduff was “untimely ripped” from his mother’s womb.

eXplanation: Macbeth discovers this at the most inopportune time.

Transition: Had Macbeth’s rationality not been overtaken by his ambition, a man of his stature would not have fallen prey to such suggestions.

Concluding Statement: Shakespeare’s Macbeth meets his death as a result of ruling passion. It was an obsession that overtook him and removed all sense of nobility and humanit. Macbeth’s underlying desire to be king, his compliance with his wife’s wishes, his belief in the prophecies, and his subsequent madness, all contributed to the tragic events in the play. Macbeth fell victim to his ambition. Shakespeare suggests that when one is consumed by a passion, the ensuing results may have inconceivable consequences. The course of one’s life may be drastically altered by how one pursues that passion.