

Exploring Macbeth Through Art: Storyboards

By [Rachel Thompson](#).



In this sixth and final resource on Shakespeare's Macbeth, we look back over the arching action of the play to consolidate knowledge of its characters and themes.

The aim of the session is to invite the children to recount their knowledge of the play through drawing moments of action. Whilst the activity is based on the idea of a storyboard, in fact this could be interpreted more loosely. You may wish to guide the children to create a concertina style sketchbook with each page relating to a particular plot point which can then be displayed. We recommend leaving the finer details and

approach open for the children to interpret.

[Back to all six sessions here.](#)

Session 6: The final battle and recounting the story.

(NB: The 6 sessions in this exploration of Macbeth have taken specific plot points as starters for discussion and activity. If further exploration of the play has taken place outside of these art sessions, a full outline of the play can be used for this final session. Otherwise, just using the plot points discussed as part of the above sessions is fine).

Warm up: 15 minutes

Main Activity: 45 minutes

Materials Needed: Sketchbooks, A3 cartridge/sugar paper, drawing pencils and a selection of other dry and wet materials such as charcoal, coloured pencils, pastels, watercolour paints

Focus Theme/s: Courage/Ambition

Time for a Warm up! Drawing your day.

Partner up! Get a sketchbook (or paper) and drawing pencils

Think of a day-to-day activity. Examples of these could be:

Making a cup of tea or slice of toast

Getting your shoes and coat on to leave the house

Playing football and scoring a goal.

Can you break your chosen activity into 4 or 5 separate frames of action? Take it in turns to hold yourself in each of these frames while your partner draws you. The frames don't have to be drawn in boxes but can be fluid across your page. Work quite quickly and think carefully about what key moments are in these activities.

Starter Discussion: As the play Macbeth progresses, the speed of the action increases. Many of the scenes are short and cut between locations. What effect does this have?

With Lady Macbeth driven mad and having visited the witches for a second time and being told to beware Macduff, Macbeth

continues on his course of murderous plans. Suspecting Macbeth, Macduff goes to England to gather an army against him. In doing so, he leaves his family unprotected and Macbeth has them murdered.

The final action of the play then begins to turn against Macbeth. King Duncan's son Malcom returns with his army and they advance on Macbeth's castle. Macbeth is hopeful his castle can withstand the invasion, but upon hearing of Lady Macbeth's suicide his thoughts turn to ones of hopeless despair. In the final scenes, Macbeth is beheaded by Macduff.

Take a look at these extracts to help you visualise this final sequence of events and how Macbeth changes over the course of them:

*'The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear'*
(Macbeth, Act 5 Scene 3)

*'I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunisnane'*
(Act 5 Scene 3)

Upon learning of lady Macbeth's death:

*'Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard not more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing'*
(Act 5 Scene 4)

As the final battle with Macduff begins in the final scene:

*'I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet'*

Context:

An Elizabethan audience would have looked for the triumph of

good over evil – for order over disorder. Do you think a modern audience would feel the same? Macbeth fights to the last (‘*Yet I will try my last*’ - Act 5 Scene 7). What is your opinion of him at this point? Do you admire his determination or do you think his desire to be powerful has caused him to lose all sense of right and wrong?

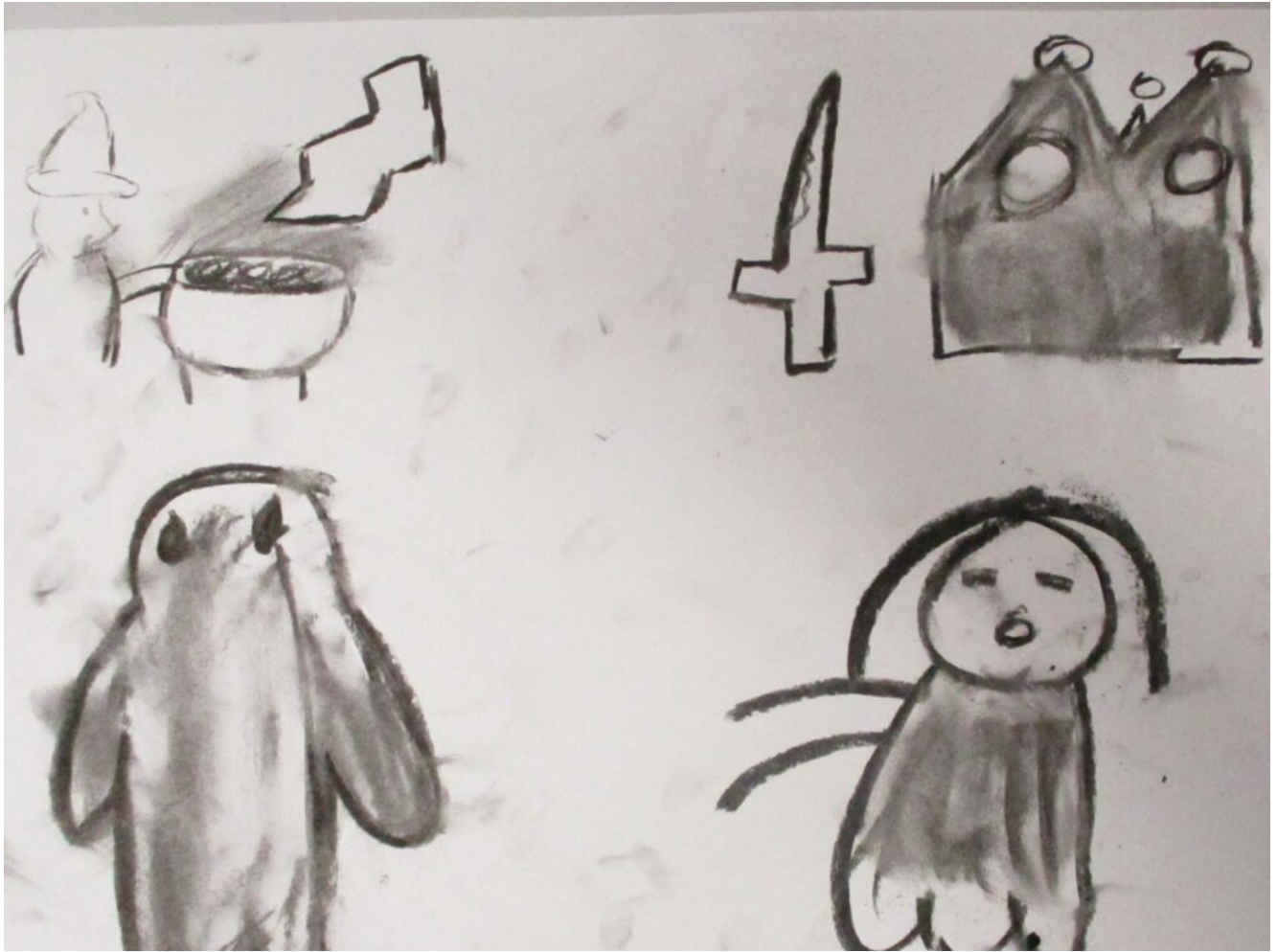
Main Activity: Storyboards

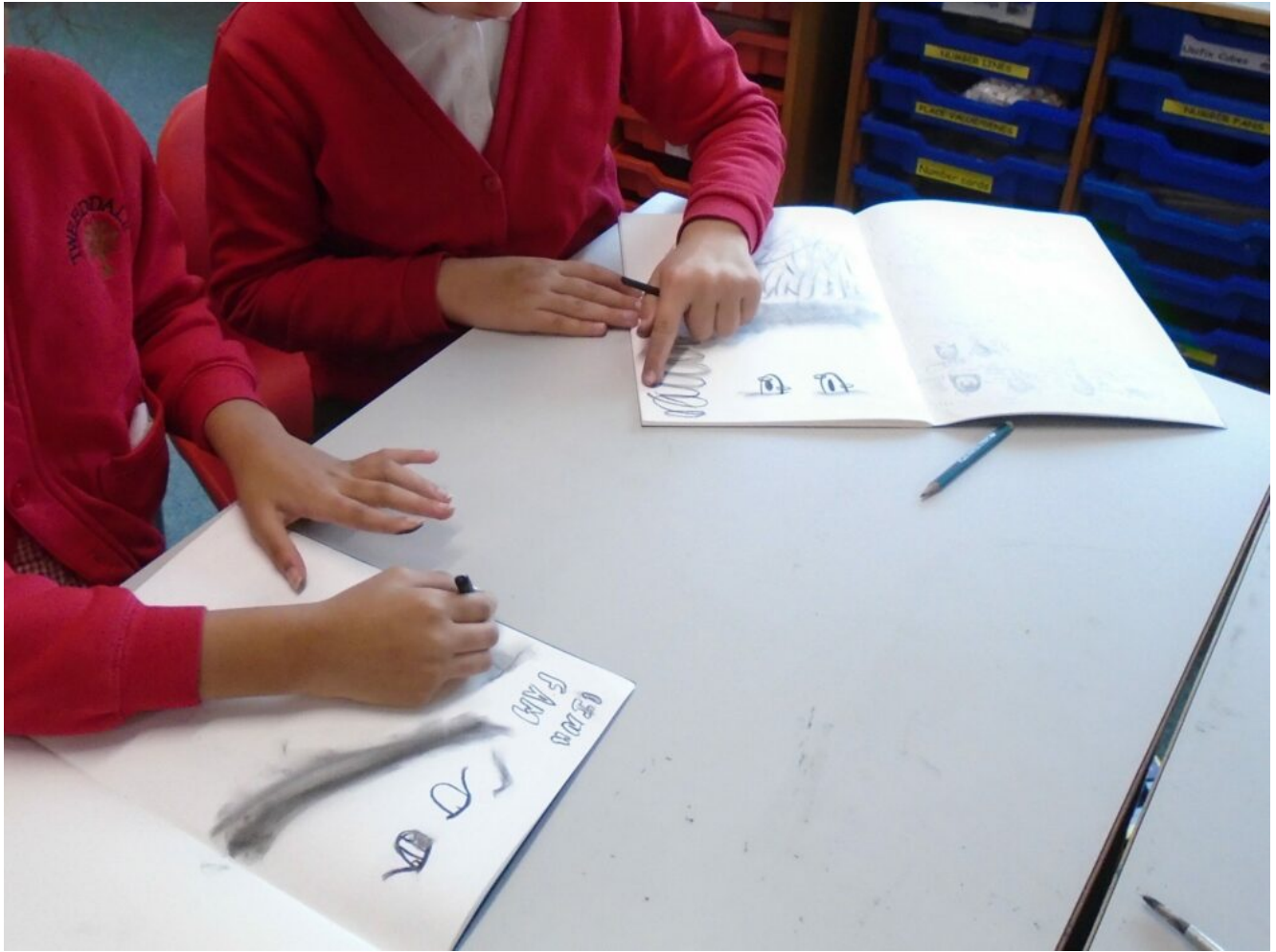
Looking back over the key plot points we’ve discussed in Macbeth, you’re going to create a storyboard that recounts them. The storyboard will also serve as a visual diary of the different visual arts techniques, skills and materials you have used along the way.

How you design your storyboard is up to you. You may want to draw a series of boxes in a more ‘traditional’ style—or you may want to experiment with ways to show the steps of a story - like folding a large strip of paper into a concertina. Or you could experiment with how the plot points can interlock or merge into each other in some other way.

For some inspiration, you may want to look at the following [Talking Point on the Bayeux Tapestry](#) which is a great example for how a story can be told in a series of connected frames.

We have discussed the idea of ideas development in these sessions, and how working things out ‘in rough’ first enables us to journey through our thoughts and engage with our creativity. Working in this way allows us to be freer and let ideas flow. Sketchbooks are perfect for this, so begin by mapping your ideas out in yours – or on a piece of A4 cartridge paper.

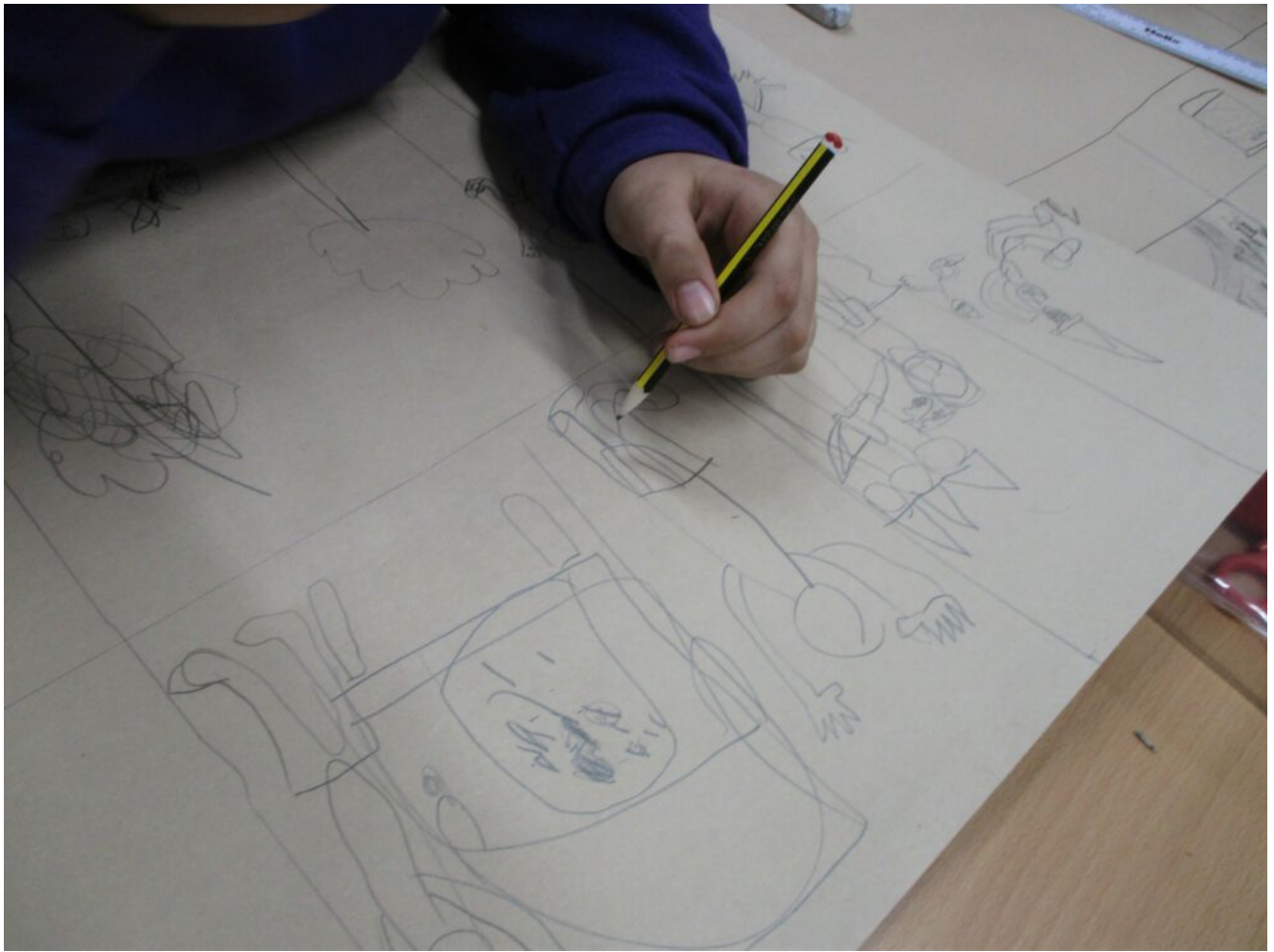




Cast your mind back to the candlelight observational drawing you did and how you had to find and discover lines between objects. Can you adopt this approach for your storyboard?

When you have spent some time working through the sequence of your storyboard, take a piece of A3 or A2 cartridge paper. Begin by roughly marking out where each 'frame' will go. If you are not using boxes, how will someone who doesn't know the play Macbeth understand the sequence? Can you use arrows or lines in an inventive way to connect the frames?

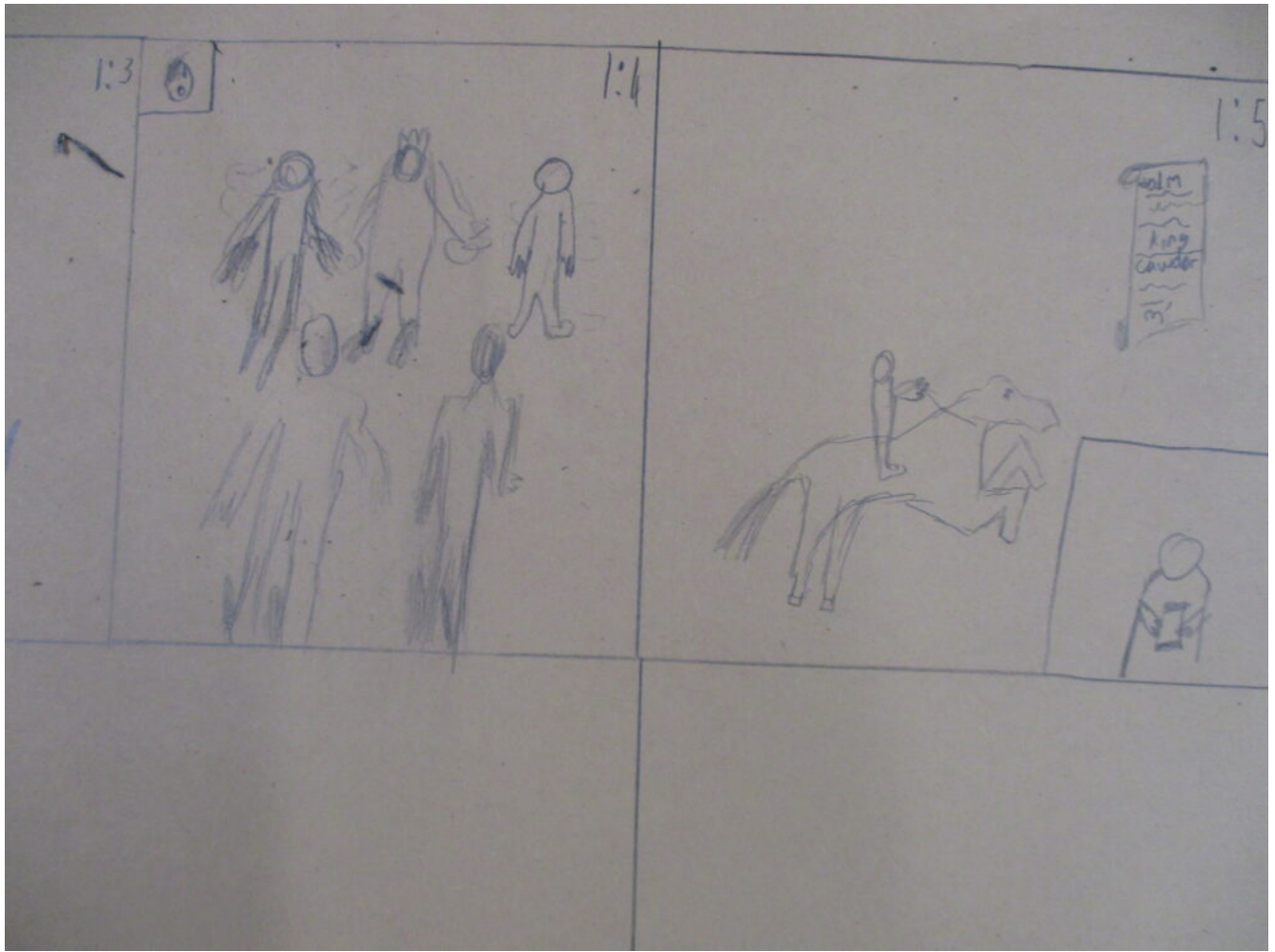


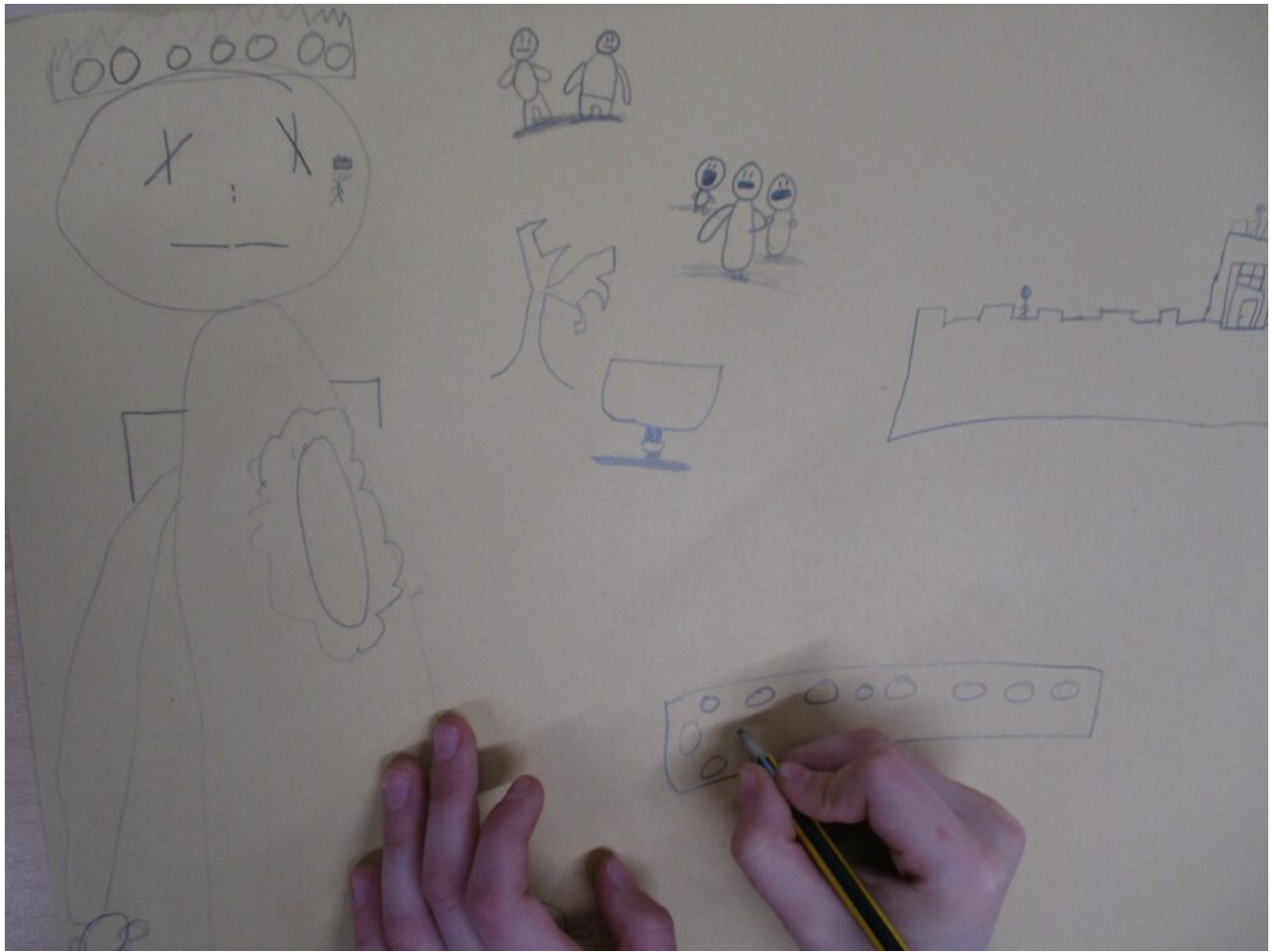




The play begins with the heath when we meet the witches. Can you remember what that landscape was like? Can the wild wind and the withered arms of the witches be reaching across into the next frame, where we meet Macbeth himself? Can you remember what the witches tell Macbeth? Try and annotate your storyboard with key references to the text. This doesn't have to be in Shakespearean language - just notes in your own words that relates to the action taking place.

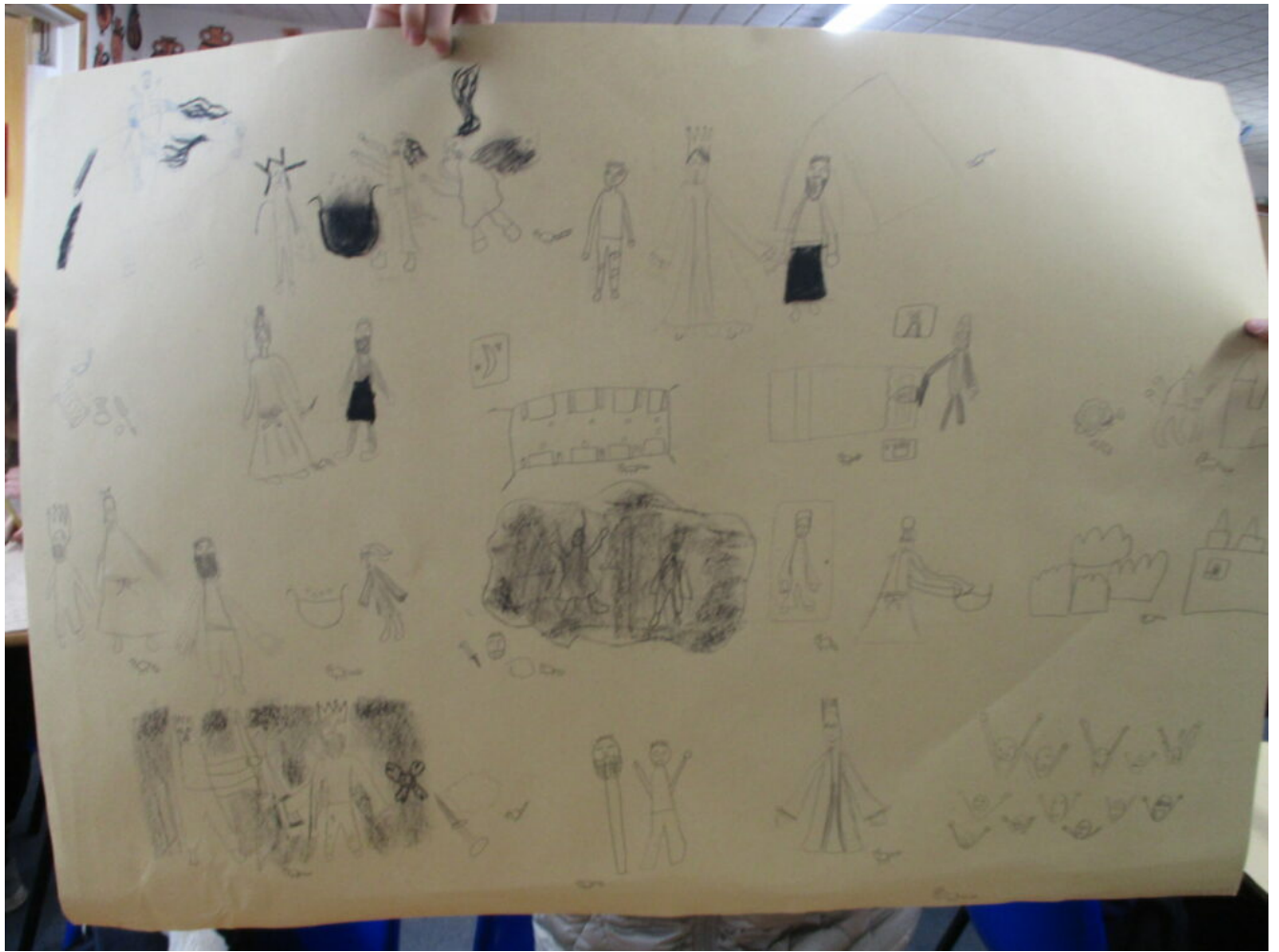
Next, we meet Lady Macbeth....

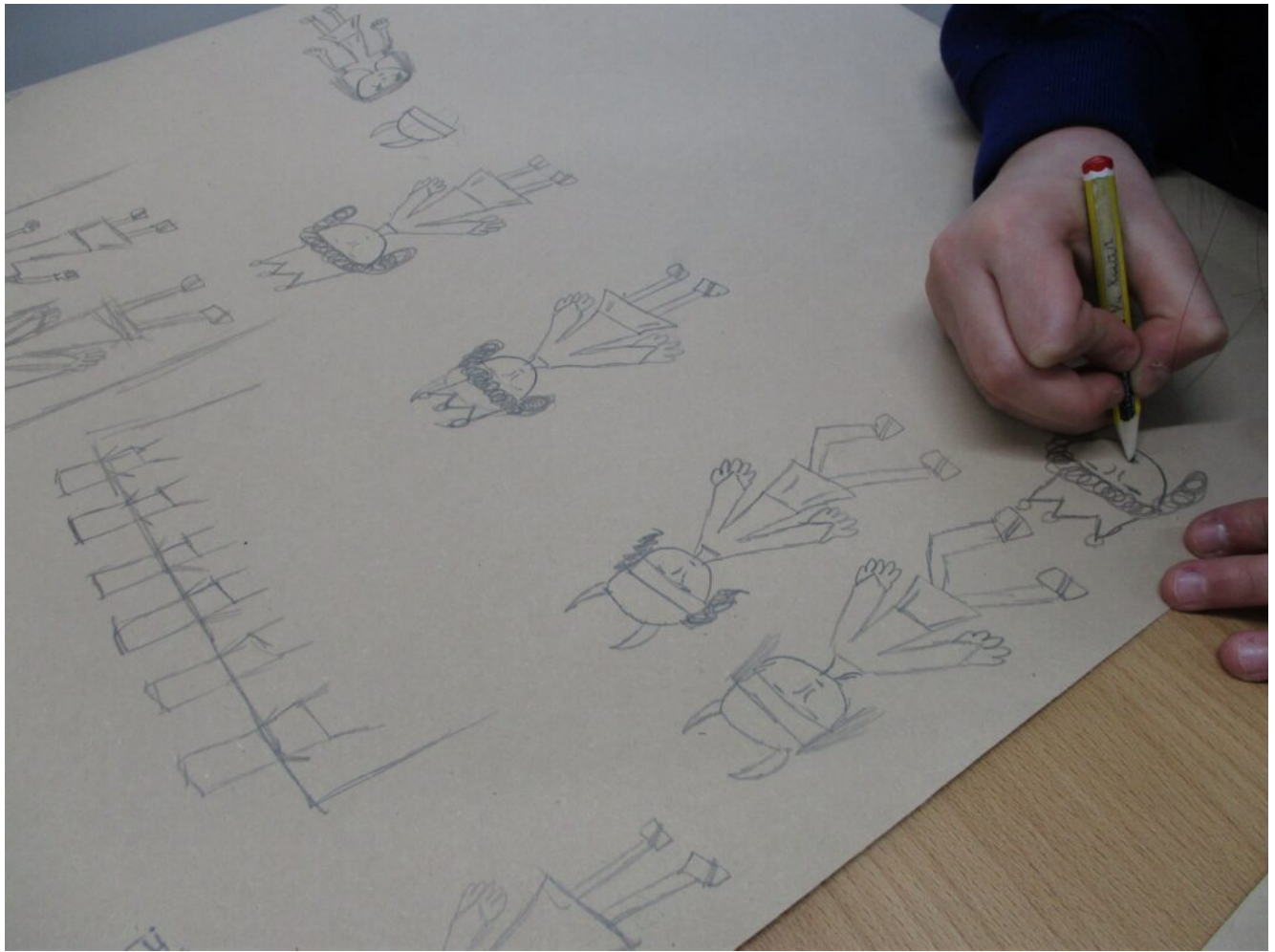


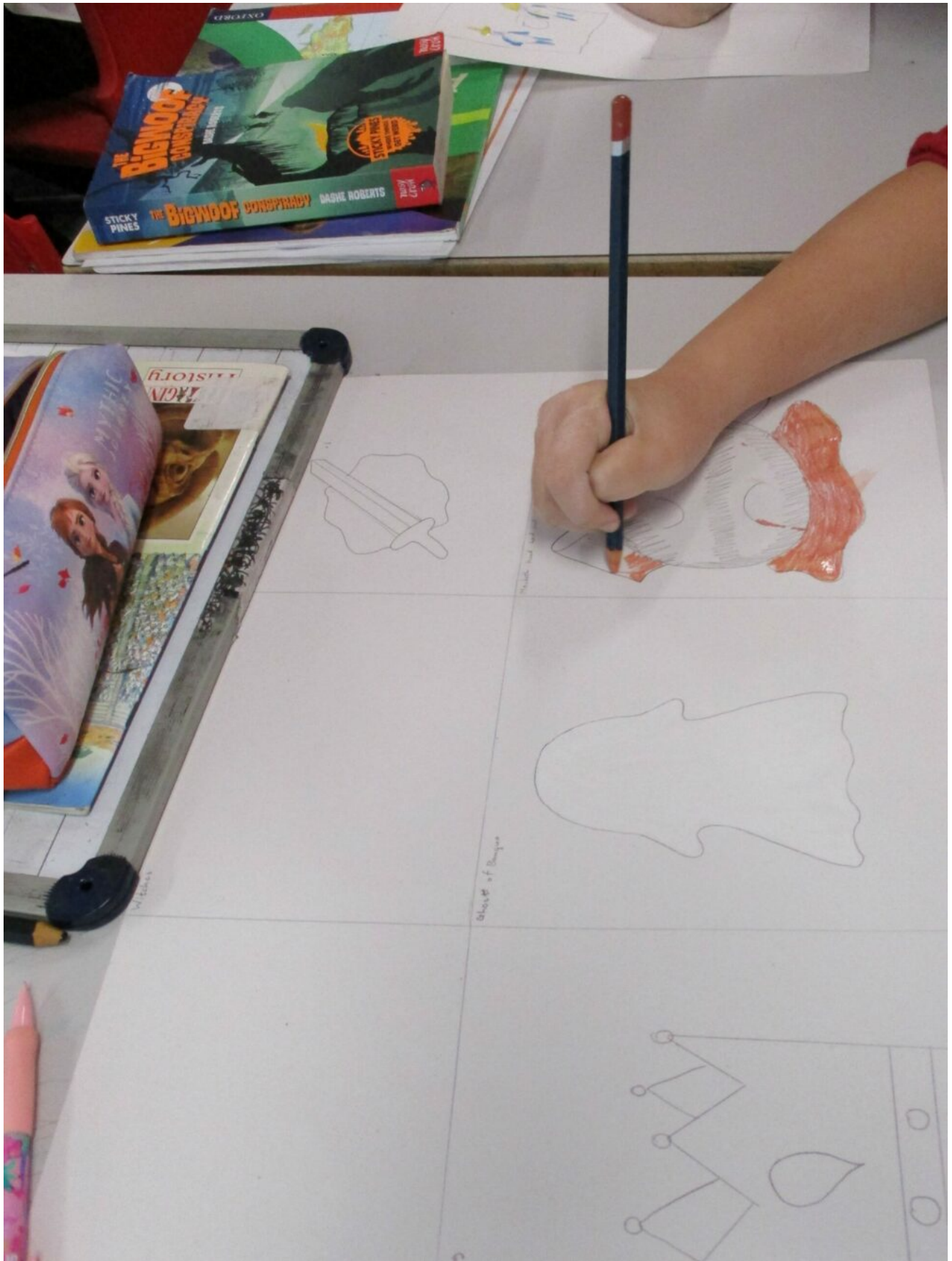


Continue working through the plot points you remember, trying to communicate the themes and imagery to help you.









Reflection:

How does making a storyboard help you remember the play? Do you think it's an effective way of recounting a story or series of events? Why?

Why do you think film makers use storyboarding before they begin filming?

If you go on to study Macbeth in more detail, or revisit the play in secondary school, you may want to add to your storyboard or begin a new one. You could add more key quotes matched to the images, to help you remember some of the revealing things the characters say.

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