



# ENGLISH

Welcome to the English Super Curriculum. Below you'll find a whole host of things to do to stretch yourself beyond the classroom curriculum.

Let's take a look at this month's focus: Shakespeare's tragedies.

## READ

As with everything Shakespeare, there is only so much we have been able to unearth about him. His plays are the best key we have to unlocking more about his ability to captivate an audience and his views on the human condition – an element that has made his plays stand the test of time.

His most notable tragedies are often referred to as the "Four Great Tragedies": *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Take a look at the 12 tragedies listed and learn more about the dark tales that intrigued the Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences that Shakespeare's work spanned:

[Tragedies, Comedies and Histories: List of Shakespeare's plays by genre](https://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/tragedies-comedies-and-histories-list-of-shakespeares-plays-by-genre) - rsc.org.uk

## LISTEN

*Macbeth* is a text we study for GCSE. Have a listen to the song that reveals the violent plot, including elements of the supernatural, treason, hallucinations, suicide and beheading. The rap is quite upbeat, considering!

[An educational Macbeth song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) - YouTube

## WATCH

Tragedies are full of Memento Mori – a technique used by a writer as a powerful reminder that the nature of life is fleeting and must ultimately end in death. Skulls, clocks and wilting flowers are common symbols.

This is encapsulated in the eponymous *Hamlet* when the protagonist is holding the skull of his old friend Yorick – a court jester who entertained him in his youth with songs, pranks and humour.

Watch this clip as Hamlet talks to his friend Horatio about the deceased wit:

[David Tennant as Hamlet](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) - YouTube

## DO

Pick a tragedy that interests you and do a deep dive into it. Use the link to help you research the play of your choice:

[Shakespeare Learning Zone](https://www.rsc.org.uk/learning/shakespeare-learning-zone) - rsc.org.uk