Scene 1:

* Describe the atmosphere created in this scene. How is this created and what is the effect on the audience?  
  Act 1 Scene 1 creates an atmosphere of suspense/mystery. Through the witches’ lack of a formal introduction, and the thunderous weather.
* What is the significance of the line: “Fair is foul and foul is fair” (I, i, 11)? Use the margin notes to guide you.  
  This line expresses the deceptive nature of appearances, suggesting those who appear “fair” on the surface are putting up a facade.

Scene 2:

* How is Macbeth represented in this scene? (refer to lines 18-26 and 61-76). Consider words and phrases used to describe him, his actions, and the way in which he is addressed by others. Write 4-5 sentences.  
  Macbeth is represented as courageous and heroic, through the description of his actions in battle.
* Consider the witch’s line from Scene 1 - “Fair is foul and foul is fair” (I, i, 11). Does this line affect the representation of Macbeth in Scene 2? Consider the concept of appearances vs reality.  
  The line from the witches suggests that Macbeth, portrayed as “fair” through description of his heroic feats, may likely be the opposite.
* How does the mood in the scene differ from the mood in Scene 1?  
  The mood in Scene 2 is much less dark/mysterious, as the characters’ speech gives much more context.

Scene 3:

* What do the witches prophesise for:

Macbeth?  
The witches prophesise that Macbeth is to become Thane of Cawdor, then be crowned as King.

Banquo?  
Banquo is prophesised to have his descendants become Kings, but not become a King himself.

* Asides are used frequently by Shakespeare in this scene to reveal Banquo and Macbeth’s inner thoughts. What do these asides reveal? Consider their reactions to the prophecies.  
  Macbeth’s aside reveals his suspicion towards the witches’ prophecies,
* How do the witches use binaries and paradoxes in this scene? What is the effect on the characters Macbeth and Banquo?

Scene 4:

* Duncan declares, “But signs of nobleness, like stars shall shine/On all deserves” (I,iv,48-49). Explain the symbolism used in this line.
* Refer to Macbeth’s aside in lines 56 – 61.

What decision has Macbeth made at this point?

How does Shakespeare use imagery of darkness and light? What is the effect?

Scene 5:

* How is Lady Macbeth represented in this scene? Consider:

her reactions to Macbeth’s letter

her relationship with Macbeth

how she subverts the stereotypical woman

Scene 6:

* How is Lady Macbeth represented in this scene? Consider:

her relationship with Macbeth (Duncan’s impressions)

the way in which is spoken to by Duncan

the irony used in the scene

Scene 7:

* Why does Macbeth decide he cannot kill Duncan?  
  Macbeth is against the idea of murdering Duncan because he sees him as a good man, thinking that the act of killing him is wrong (comparing it to a poisoned chalice – beautiful but is bad for you). In addition, he does not know how he would get away with the crime.
* What arguments does Lady Macbeth use to convince Macbeth to carry through their plan?  
  Lady Macbeth comforts Macbeth’s stresses about the plan by redirecting the blame onto the guards, and plays on his guilt by bringing up their deceased child.
* Do Lady Macbeth’s actions challenge or reinforce Elizabethan/Jacobean cultural assumptions about gender? Consider:

Lady Macbeth’s words and actions - lines 80-82  
Lady Macbeth’s actions in this part of the scene challenge the Elizabethan / Jacobean cultural assumptions about gender by illustrating her acting whole-heartedly on impulse, a characteristic typically assumed of men at the time.