Scene 1:

* Fleance, Banquo’s son, has a very small part in this scene. Why do you think Shakespeare includes him?  
  The inclusion of Fleance links back to the witches’ prophecy about Banquo, who foretold his descendants eventually taking the throne.
* Examine the representation of the character Macbeth in his famous soliloquy “Is this a dagger, which I see before me,” (line 41 onwards). Is he still doubtful of the intended murder, resolved, or determined? Justify your position.  
  Macbeth’s words towards the “dagger” exemplify his belief that these despicable acts of murder are inevitable. He briefly perceives the negative implications of the murder, then decides that the vision of the dagger is a sign to act promptly and avoid fretting over the consequences.

Scene 2:

* Which character – Lady Macbeth or Macbeth – is represented as more powerful in this scene? Justify your response  
  Lady Macbeth as the more powerful figure in this scene, shown to be undisturbed by the troubles faced by her husband, even calling him cowardly for worrying about the act of murder. Displeased by Macbeth’s hesitance, she decides to take the matter into her own hands.
* Read the scene from line 55 onwards. How does the repeated imagery of cleansing and washing of hands foreshadow events to come?  
  The imagery of cleansing and washing bloodstained hands showcases a clear juxtaposition between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s views on personal guilt/responsibility about the crime. Macbeth implies that his guilt (the blood on his hands) is an inescapable burden, one that will persist even through attempts to escape responsibility. In opposition, Lady Macbeth deems that evading blame for the crime elicits a full expungement of any personal guilt.

Scene 3:

* How is Macduff represented in this scene? Consider:  
  his title/position in society  
  his conversation with Porter  
  his relationship with Duncan  
  the way in which he is spoken/referred to by others
* Before Duncan’s death is revealed, Macbeth speaks to Macduff in short phrases and sentences. What can we perceive about his mood and conscience by this departure from lyrical sentences?
* Read Lennox’s speech in lines 51-60. How does the stormy atmosphere conveyed by Lennox compare with the atmosphere with the witches in Act 1, Scene 1? Why is there this correlation?
* Why does Lady Macbeth faint upon hearing of the death of Duncan?

Scene 4:

* Ross describes how the day seems dark and dreary after Duncan’s murder (5-11). What is Shakespeare symbolising with this imagery?
* How is Macduff represented in this scene? Consider:  
  his title/position in society  
  the way in which he is spoken/referred to by others  
  his reaction to Macbeth’s coronation