ACT I

1. What are your impressions of Lady Macbeth at the end of Act I? What is her relationship with Macbeth (beyond being his wife)? What details in this act support your impressions?
2. In the very first scene of a play, a dramatist must tell the audience what kind of play they are about to see. What does the brief opening scene of *Macbeth* reveal about the rest of the play? How does the weather reflect the human passions revealed in the rest of the act?
3. Find details in the play that point to temperamental**contrasts** between Macbeth and his wife. Who is more single-minded and logical? Who is more argumentative and sensitive? Which one wins the argument?

**Act II**

1. In Act I, Scene 7, Lady Macbeth seemed to be planning to murder Duncan herself. But at the last moment, in Act II, Scene 2, she is unable to wield her dagger. Consider the reason she gives, and decide what her actions and explanation reveal about her **character**.
2. In Scene 3, when Duncan’s corpse is discovered, Macbeth utters a hypocritical lament beginning, “Had I but died. . . .” But is it really hypocritical? The critic A. C. Bradley argues that, although the speech is meant to be a lie, it actually contains “Macbeth’s profoundest feelings.” Explain this apparent contradiction. How does Macbeth feel about having murdered Duncan? What clues tell you how he feels?
3. Lady Macbeth’s fainting spell, like everything else she has done so far, has a purpose. What message do you think she wants her fainting spell to convey?
4. What would you say is the**mood** of Act II? What**images** and actions help to create this mood? Why might images of blood and water appear in Scene 2? What do they **symbolize**?
5. A terrible murder is committed in this act. How do various characters respond to the violence? How would people today, say, react to the news that a ruler has been assassinated in cold blood and that a nation is in political chaos?

Act III

1. In Scene 2, Macbeth describes his surroundings by saying, “Light thickens, and the crow / Makes wing to th’ rooky wood.” How can these remarks also be seen as a**metaphorical** commentary on the events of the play?
2. What other remarks by Macbeth function in this way? At the beginning of Scene 2, Lady Macbeth quietly tells herself, “Nought’s had, all’s spent, / Where our desire is got without content.” What does she mean? At this point, would her husband agree?