**Act 1, scene 5 questions**

* 1. Hamlet notes he is ‘bound’ to hear the ghost and the ghost replies that he is also bound ‘to revenge when thou shalt hear.’ (lines 7-8) What are the connotations of this word ‘bound’ and what might it suggest about responsibility?
  2. The story that has been told to the rest of the court (described as ‘the whole ear of Denmark) is that Old Hamlet died when ‘a serpent stung’ him accidentally (35-38). Why might Shakespeare have chosen a snake and how close is it to the truth? Is Claudius a ‘serpent’ of a sorts? (hint: consider the biblical allusion)
  3. The ghost uses lots of language that seems to echo Hamlet’s earlier – for example, he describes Claudius as ‘that incestuous, adulterate beast’; describes Gertrude as ‘seeming-virtuous’. How might we use this observation as a way of interpreting the ghost?
  4. Claudius poisons his brother by pouring it into his ear. Why did Shakespeare choose this method of death?
  5. ‘Thus I was sleeping by a brother’s hand/ Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched.’ (lines 74-75). What do you think the ghost/Old Hamlet is most upset by? Does this quote give us any indication?
  6. Old Hamlet says to Hamlet that, ‘if thou hast nature in thee’, you will avenge my death. Why is this notion problematic?
  7. Hamlet comments that, ‘One may smile and smile and be a villain -/ At least I’m sure it may be so in Denmark.’ How does this statement connect to other comments about Denmark in the play so far and what examples of deception/hypocrisy have we seen elsewhere in the play?