***Hamlet Prep – Act 1, scenes 4 and 5***

1. Read Act 1, scenes 4 and 5, annotating, using the notes in the text and the CGP revision guide to help you
2. Answer questions below on Act 1, scene 4 in full sentences

Act 1, scene 4, lines 1-38

1. Compare the scene setting with beginning of scene. What similarities and differences do you notice?

Notice:

* The sound of the party promised in scene 2 to celebrate Claudius’ coronation and Hamlet’s comments on their drinking: ‘swaggering’ ‘drunkards with swinish phrase…’
* That this observation leads him – as it frequently does – to muse upon a wider issue; in this case, Denmark’s reputation for drunkenness and how it overshadows any virtues.

Act 1, scene 4, lines 39-end

1. Hamlet addresses the ghost as ‘thou’. Why might this be important?
2. Look at Hamlet’s response to the ghost; how does he react? How does Shakespeare emphasis his fear and uncertainty?
3. Look at what Horatio says from line 69-78 when Hamlet says he is going to follow the ghost. What is he worried about?
4. Hamlet pursues the ghost in spite of his friends’ warnings and their concerns for his welfare. Why do you think he does?
5. Marcellus comments, ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.’ What do you think he means and how does this comment reflect upon things we have heard before about the condition of the ‘state’?