

Act 1 Passage Translation

(5 Passages Total!)

Directions: Translate the Shakespearian passage into modern English, line by line.

Purpose: Get more comfortable with the language, phrasing, etc.

Original	Student Translation
<p>Horatio (1.1.78-106) That can I. At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king, Whose image even but now appear'd to us, Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway, Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride, Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet (For so this side of our known world esteem'd him) Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact, Well ratified by law and heraldry, Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror; Against the which a moiety competent Was gaged by our king; which had return'd To the inheritance of Fortinbras, Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same cov'nant And carriage of the article design'd, His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras, Of unimproved mettle hot and full, Hath in the skirts of Norway, here and there, Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute, For food and diet, to some enterprise That hath a stomach in't; which is no other, As it doth well appear unto our state, But to recover of us, by strong hand And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands So by his father lost; and this, I take it, Is the main motive of our preparations, The source of this our watch, and the chief head Of this post-haste and romage in the land.</p>	<p>Horatio. I can inform you. Here is the rumor: Our last king, Who we just saw, Was...</p>

Original	Student Translation
<p>King Claudius (1.2.1-25)</p> <p>Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death The memory be green, and that it us befitted To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom To be contracted in one brow of woe, Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature That we with wisest sorrow think on him Together with remembrance of ourselves. Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen, Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state, Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, With an auspicious, and a dropping eye, With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage, In equal scale weighing delight and dole, Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone With this affair along. For all, our thanks. Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras, Holding a weak supposal of our worth, Or thinking by our late dear brother's death Our state to be disjoint and out of frame, Colleagued with this dream of his advantage, He hath not fail'd to pester us with message Importing the surrender of those lands Lost by his father, with all bands of law, To our most valiant brother. So much for him.</p>	<p>Horatio.</p> <p>The death of King Hamlet Is still young in our memory, and we must benefit With the grief he had left us, and the entire kingdom Must...</p>

Original	Student Translation
<p>Hamlet (1.2.129-159)</p> <p>O that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God! How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world! Fie on't! ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature Possess it merely. That it should come to this! But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two. So excellent a king, that was to this Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother That he might not beteem the winds of heaven Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth! Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him As if increase of appetite had grown By what it fed on; and yet, within a month- Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman!- A little month, or ere those shoes were old With which she followed my poor father's body Like Niobe, all tears- why she, even she (O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason Would have mourn'd longer) married with my uncle; My father's brother, but no more like my father Than I to Hercules. Within a month, Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears Had left the flushing in her galled eyes, She married. O, most wicked speed, to post³⁶⁰ With such dexterity to incestuous sheets! It is not, nor it cannot come to good. But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue!</p>	

Original	Student Translation
<p>Father's Ghost (1.5.42-79)</p> <p>Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast, With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts- O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power So to seduce!- won to his shameful lust The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen. O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there, From me, whose love was of that dignity That it went hand in hand even with the vow I made to her in marriage, and to decline Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor To those of mine!</p> <p>But virtue, as it never will be mov'd, Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven, So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd, Will sate itself in a celestial bed And prey on garbage.</p> <p>But soft! methinks I scent the morning air. Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard, My custom always of the afternoon, Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole, With juice of cursed hebona in a vial, And in the porches of my ears did pour The leperous distilment; whose effect Holds such an enmity with blood of man That swift as quicksilver it courses through The natural gates and alleys of the body, And with a sudden vigour it doth posset And curd, like eager droppings into milk, The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine; And a most instant tetter bark'd about, Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust All my smooth body.</p> <p>Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd; Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, Unhous'led, disappointed, unanel'd, No reckoning made, but sent to my account With all my imperfections on my head.</p>	

Original	Student Translation
<p>Hamlet (1.5.92-112)</p> <p>O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? And shall I couple hell? Hold, hold, my heart! And you, my sinews, grow not instant old, But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee? Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat In this distracted globe. Remember thee? Yea, from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past That youth and observation copied there, And thy commandment all alone shall live Within the book and volume of my brain, Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven! O most pernicious woman! O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain! My tables! Meet it is I set it down That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain; At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. [Writes.] So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word: It is 'Adieu, adieu! Remember me.' I have sworn't.</p>	