English 200: Reading (and Rereading) *Hamlet*

Passage Analysis Practice

Goals

1. To model the close reading and annotating of text you will have to do for your passage analysis homework.
2. To learn how to use Word’s comment function.

Instructions

1. Save a copy of this document in your student folder, adding your code letter to the file name.
2. From the **Office Button** menu, select **Word Options**.
3. Enter your name and initials under the heading **Personalize Your Copy of Microsoft Office**.
4. Click **OK**.
5. Highlight the text you want to annotate. From the **Review** menu, choose **Comment**. A box should appear next to the passage. Type your commentary into the box.

Passage

*Hamlet* 1.1.74-124

Source: <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/hamlet.1.1.html>

MARCELLUS

Is it not like the king?

HORATIO

As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armour he had on

When he the ambitious Norway combated;

So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,

He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

'Tis strange.

MARCELLUS

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

HORATIO

In what particular thought to work I know not;

But in the gross and scope of my opinion,

This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

MARCELLUS

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch

So nightly toils the subject of the land,

And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

And foreign mart for implements of war;

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;

What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:

Who is't that can inform me?

HORATIO

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,

Dared 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 seized 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 covenant,

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 resolutes,

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 compulsatory, 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.

BERNARDO

I think it be no other but e'en so:

Well may it sort that this portentous figure

Comes armed through our watch; so like the king

That was and is the question of these wars.

HORATIO

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:

As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

Disasters in the sun; and the moist star

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands

Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:

And even the like precurse of fierce events,

As harbingers preceding still the fates

And prologue to the omen coming on,

Have heaven and earth together demonstrated

Unto our climatures and countrymen.--

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!