According to William Shakespeare
Two Kings

- **Norway: Old Fortinbras**
  - One son: Fortinbras
  - One (younger) brother
  - Killed by King Hamlet
  - His brother takes over, not his son and rightful heir

- **Denmark: Old Hamlet**
  - One son: Hamlet
  - One younger brother: Claudius
  - Killed by his brother
  - His brother takes over, not his son and rightful heir
**Two Princes**

**Norway**
- Fortinbras becomes angry
- Gathers a group of thugs and criminals behind his uncle’s back
- Threatens to invade Denmark
- Is told off by his uncle
- Goes against Poland instead

**Denmark**
- Hamlet becomes angry
- Decides to kill his uncle
- Then does nothing for a very long time except get a lot of innocent people killed
The Danish Royal Family

- Ghost = Old Hamlet, King of Denmark
- Gertrude
- Hamlet
- Claudius, King of Denmark
The Polonius Family

- Polonius, advisor to the Danish King
- Laertes
- Ophelia
The Friends

- Horatio
- Rosencranz
- Guildenstern
Soldiers

- Marcellus
- Bernardo
- Francisco
Courtiers

- Voltimand
- Cornelius
- Osric
The Norwegians

- Fortinbras
- Captain
Others

- Grave-diggers (clowns)
- Reynaldo
- Players
- Ambassadors
- A priest
- A gentleman
People Who Don't Say Anything = spear carriers

- Lords
- Ladies
- Officers
- Soldiers

- Sailors
- Messengers
- Attendants
Old Fortinbras of Norway challenges Old Hamlet of Denmark to do battle.

They make an agreement of lands the victor should receive after the battle.

Old Hamlet kills Old Fortinbras in battle and gets the lands promised by him.

Fortinbras’s brother takes power in Norway.
Young Fortinbras gathers a group of thugs behind the king’s (his uncle’s) back and threatens to take back the lands his father lost.

Old Hamlet decides to do battle and prepares for war.

Claudius decides he can do better, kills his brother and takes power in Denmark.

Claudius marries his brother’s wife.
And the Play Begins

- Claudius’s first official act is to tell the king of Norway what Fortinbras is up to
- The king of Norway tells Fortinbras not to attack Denmark and allows him to attack Poland
- Fortinbras moves his armies through Denmark to get to Poland
Shakespeare had absolutely no idea of how Denmark, Norway and Poland are arranged.
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According to him, the shortest way from Norway to Poland is through Denmark.