



Exploring Senior Cycle Texts *Othello* by William Shakespeare

Please note: *Othello*, by William Shakespeare, is a drama included as part of the List of Texts prescribed for comparative study, for examination in the year 2027 and 2028. At Higher Level a play by Shakespeare must be one of the texts chosen.

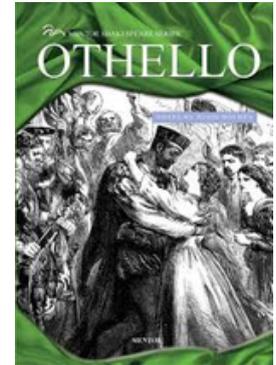


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Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons.
- You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.
- *Othello* covers themes which could be considered sensitive or controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



Scan the QR code or [click here to access a Getting Started with Guide for this Text](#)

Before You Read (Teacher Guidance)

These activities may help students connect with the social and political issues raised in the text.

1. Cover Predictions

Display the front cover of the play for pupils. Have pupils discuss themes or issues the story might engage with.

2. Plot Decoding

On the board, display the following tabloid style headlines for pupils.

- “Military Hero Secretly Marries Politician’s Daughter”
- “Trusted Officer Accuses Rival of Treachery”
- “Jealousy Sparks Deadly Confrontation in Cyprus”

In pairs, have students arrange the headlines in the order they think the story will unfold. They should discuss their ideas with another group.

3. Quotation Exploration

Give students the quotation below from the play. Ask them to discuss with a partner what they think jealousy will do to the characters in *Othello*.

“O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on” Iago, Act 3 Scene 3.



Extract

Background: This extract is from William Shakespeare's, *Othello*. Act 3 Scene 3. In this scene, Iago begins to manipulate Othello by warning him about the dangers of jealousy and subtly suggesting that his wife, Desdemona, may be unfaithful with Cassio. Othello resists the idea at first, but Iago's insinuations begin to take hold.

IAGO:

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly
loves!

OTHELLO:

O misery!

IAGO:

Poor and content is rich, and rich enough;
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

OTHELLO:

Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No! To be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me
jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes and chose me.
No, Iago, I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt,
prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,
Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO:

I am glad of it, for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am
bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with
Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure.
I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of selfbounty be abused. Look to't.
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their
best conscience
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't
unknown.

OTHELLO:

Dost thou say so?

IAGO:

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear
your looks,
She loved them most.

OTHELLO:

And so she did.



Activities Based on Extract (Teacher Guidance)

The following may be completed in written or oral format,
as individuals or as part of a group activity.

1. Jealousy Debate

Split the class into two groups. One argues that jealousy is an internal weakness, the other that it is caused by external manipulation. Students could use the extract, their wider knowledge of the play and any other learning to support their points.

2. Power Dynamics

Instruct pupils to underline and annotate where they see the power in the scene. Have them consider, does it change? Why/Why not? Ask them to predict what this might mean for the plot.

3. Performance + Direction

In small groups, have students rehearse and perform this exchange between Othello and Iago. One student should act as director, making decisions about: tone and delivery, use of space/staging, movement and body language.

Afterward, hear each group explain how their choices show the power dynamic and emotional shifts in the scene.

4. Language Analysis

Give students the question below. They should write their answers in an analytical paragraph.

Explore how Shakespeare uses language in this scene to present the development of Othello's jealousy.

In your answer, you should consider:

- How Othello's language changes over the course of the scene
- The techniques Shakespeare uses to convey Othello's emotional state
- The effects of Iago's language on Othello.

Reflect and Respond

The following question may be based on the extract included or form part of
your extended study of the novel.

1. Speech

Give pupils the prompt: *We must learn to question, but not to assume.*

Have them write a speech to be delivered at a school assembly or youth event about the importance of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and resisting snap judgements.

2. Reflective Essay

Provide prompt: *Sometimes, the greatest damage is done by a whisper, not a shout.*

Pupils should write a reflective essay exploring how subtle actions like rumours and insinuations can impact relationships and trust. They could use personal anecdotes or literary references.

3. Short Story

Instruct pupils to write a short story exploring the theme of manipulation, trust, or betrayal. The story can be realistic or symbolic. They should begin the story with the line: *I never meant to plant the seed of doubt, but once it took root...*