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Co-Founder and Producing Director

The Tragedy of  
**Othello**

By William Shakespeare

Teacher Resource Guide  
by **Paul Michael Fontana**

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**It is strongly suggested that students read at least some of  
William Shakespeare's *Othello*  
before seeing the performance if possible.**

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# Welcome

**To The Teacher:** Thanks for taking some of your classroom time to work on *Othello*! This play is a powerful exploration of trust and relationships. Although your students will enjoy the play without preparation, the experience can be deepened by some pre- and post-performance classroom work.

The exercises in this guide are intended to help you and your students get the most out of the performance. Please do not feel that you need to do everything in this guide! They provide a wide variety of drama-based teaching techniques that you can use as they are presented or you can adapt for your class or for other pieces of literature. You can experiment with them and add the ones that work for you to your “bag of tricks.”

Since its founding in 1972, The Acting Company has taken great pride in performing classic plays for student audiences. In the Company’s effort to extend our educational outreach programming, we have created our one-hour workshop performance based on Shakespeare’s *Othello*. By paring down the production to simple props and suggestions of costumes, we are celebrating Shakespeare’s language and the Theater as a medium of artistic expression.

The education programs of The Acting Company are intended to mirror the mission of the company itself: to celebrate language, to deepen creative exploration, to go places where theater isn’t always available. We try to use the same skills in our outreach programs that actors use in the preparation of a role. Many of the exercises here are adaptations of rehearsal “games” and techniques.

In addition to the Teacher Resource Guides for our performances, the Education Department provides week-long artist-in-residence experiences called **Literacy Through Theater**, an introductory Shakespeare workshop for young theatergoers called **Bob Hope Student Workshop Series**, Actor-driven **Workshops and Master Classes**, post-performance **Question and Answer Sessions**, teacher training workshops called **Partners in Education**, and a variety of specially-designed outreach programs for high school students, college students, and adults.

If you need more information on any of these programs, please call Stephen Alemán of the Education Department at 212-944-5517 or e-mail him at [education@TheActingCompany.org](mailto:education@TheActingCompany.org).

We wish to be of service to you and your students. Please contact us if there is anything we can do for you.

Enjoy the Show!

Paul Michael Fontana  
Director of Education  
The Acting Company

# Section One: Getting Your Students Started

## Overall Objective:

- The students will make assumptions about William Shakespeare's play *Othello* before reading the entire text.

## Reading Schedule for *Othello*

Week 1:	Day 1:	1, 1	The Street at Night
	Day 2:	1, 2	Othello and his men
	Day 3:	1, 3, 1 - 218	The Council
	Day 4:	1, 3, 219 - 296	Preparations for War
	Day 5:	1, 3, 297 - end	Iago & Brabantio
Week 2:	Day 1:	2, 1, 1 – 170	Arrival in Cyprus
	Day 2:	2, 1, 170 - end	Othello in Cyprus
	Day 3:	2, 2 & 2, 3	Cassio's fall from grace
	Day 4:	2, 3 (continued)	Cassio's fall from grace
	Day 5:	3, 1 & 3, 2	In the Castle
Week 3:	Day 1:	3, 3, 1 – 173	Green-eyed Monster introduced
	Day 2:	3, 3, 174 – 291	Jealousy grows
	Day 3:	3, 3, 292 – end	The Handkerchief
	Day 4:	3, 4	About the Handkerchief
	Day 5:	4, 1	The ocular proof
Week 4:	Day 1:	4, 2	Desdemona abused
	Day 2:	4, 3	The Willow Song
	Day 3:	5, 1	The Street at Night
	Day 4:	5, 2	In the bedchamber

## Discussion: Judging a Book by its Cover

### Objective:

- The students will discuss their expectations of *Othello* from looking at the words and images on the cover of the play script.
- The students will discuss the choices made by publishers and executives to put the images and words on the cover.

**Exercise:** Bring in copies of the script of *Othello*. Ask the students to look at the cover of their copy and the other copies in the room.

Ask them to share with the class images on the covers. What function do those images have? Note too the colors used on the cover. What do the colors mean and why were they chosen? Do these images help sell this edition?

What words did the publishers choose to put on the cover? In what font is the title of the play? What other words or phrases are on the cover? Do these words and phrases help sell this edition? Are you more likely to buy a book or magazine based on images or words? Are there images and words on the back cover?

Why did Shakespeare choose this title? Did he feel the title would help sell tickets to the play?

**Post Performance follow up:** Ask the students to create a poster or book cover for *Othello*. They can cut images out of magazines and newspapers or draw them. What words will they include and why?

## The Plot of Othello

### Objective:

- The students will be familiar with the plot of the play
- The students will evaluate Shakespeare's choice of locations for the play

**Act One:** **Othello**, a Moorish general of Venice, has promoted **Cassio** as his lieutenant; **Iago**, who was hoping for the promotion himself, makes plots against both Cassio and Othello to exact revenge. Othello has secretly married **Desdemona**, the daughter of Venetian senator **Brabantio**, and Iago determines to use Desdemona as the means of his revenge. Iago uses the fact that Othello is black and that Desdemona is white to enrage Brabantio, who appeals to the **Duke of Venice** to annul the marriage on the grounds that Othello used magic to seduce Desdemona. The Duke weighs the evidence and determines that Othello used only the magic of words and the Desdemona and Othello are truly in love. However, Othello is needed on the island of Cyprus to fight for Venice in a war against the Turks and is sent there by the Duke. Iago escorts Desdemona there to meet him, taking along his own wife, **Emilia**.

**Act Two:** When they arrived in Cyprus, Iago sets his plot into motion. He determines to convince Othello that Desdemona is cheating on him with Cassio. As the first step in his plan, he tricks Cassio into getting drunk. Cassio is demoted for disorderly conduct and Iago is promoted to lieutenant. Iago convinces Cassio to visit Desdemona, saying that an appeal to her might persuade Othello to reinstate him.

**Act Three:** Iago goes to Othello so that he can lead him to where Desdemona and Cassio are talking. As Iago and Othello view the scene, Iago plants seeds of doubt and jealousy in Othello's mind concerning Desdemona's fidelity. Iago suggests to Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair. Later, fortune literally drops Desdemona's handkerchief, a special and sentimental gift to her from Othello, into Emilia's hand; who gives the handkerchief to her husband. Iago plants the handkerchief in Cassio's room, and then tells Othello that he saw Cassio with it. When Othello asks Desdemona about the handkerchief, she tells him that it was lost (which is the truth as she knows it). He tells her the exotic history of the handkerchief and the curse laid upon anyone who loses it.

**Act Four:** Cassio, meanwhile, has given the handkerchief to Bianca, a girl he has been dating. Iago manipulates a conversation with Cassio about Bianca to make it appear to Othello—who is eavesdropping at the urging of Iago—that Cassio is talking about Desdemona. Othello's smoldering rage now beginning to

bubble over, Othello tells Iago to kill Cassio and then angrily confronts Desdemona. In spite of Desdemona's protests of innocence (backed up by Iago's wife, Emilia), Othello is now convinced of her infidelity with Cassio.

**Act Five:** Iago has an attempt made on Cassio's life, which is unsuccessful. Othello strangles Desdemona in her bed. When Emilia discovers the crime, she calls the Moor a villain and at first refuses to believe that Iago has so evilly manipulated Othello. However, Iago's appearance and subsequent answers lead Emilia to confront the fact that her husband is responsible for this tragedy. When Iago cannot keep Emilia from telling the truth about the handkerchief, he stabs her and attempts to escape; not only is he captured, but evidence is found that thoroughly implicates Iago as the treacherous villain that he is. Faced with the sorrow of having murdered his beloved wife, Othello stabs himself and dies beside Desdemona.

**Exercise:** Go over the plot of Othello before seeing the play and answer any plot-based questions the students might have. To allow the plot to come as a surprise to the students, you may wish to only go over the relationships and motivations of the main characters.

**Exercise:** Is Venice a real place or a fictional one? Help the students to locate Venice on a map of modern Italy. Have them locate Cyprus. Point out London, where William lived. Remind them that Shakespeare probably never visited Venice. How did Shakespeare learn enough about Venice to write about it? Did he make some details up? Is Venice a real place or a fictional one? A little bit of both. Brainstorm why Shakespeare might have set the play in Venice and Cyprus. Would the play be different if he had set it in China? or Denmark?

## Introduction to Tragedy

### Objective:

- The students will use reference books to define a term.
- The students will come to consensus on a definition.
- The students will create lists of stories they consider fall into the category of "Tragedy"
- The students will compare suggested stories to the definition of "Tragedy"

**Facts:** A Tragedy is a drama or literary work in which the main character is brought to ruin or suffers extreme sorrow, especially as a consequence of a tragic flaw, moral weakness, or inability to cope with unfavorable circumstances. Usually, as a consequence of the hero's downfall, he learns something about himself.

**Exercise:** Have one or more students look up the literary term "Tragedy" in the dictionary or in an on-line reference (perhaps Bartleby.com). After a discussion of the definition(s) and a sense of agreement as to the definition, ask the students to come up with a list of stories, historical, current, fictional, to which they feel the term "Tragedy" can be applied. After 5 or 6 minutes of listing on

their own, ask the students to share the lists and compare the examples to the definition of “Tragedy.”

## Characters in Othello

### Objective:

- The students will be familiar with the characters in the play.
- The students will make assumptions about characters based on their names.
- The students will compare the characters in the play to the characters featured in **The Acting Company** production.

**Exercise:** Give each student a copy of the following page (also found in the Appendix of this guide). Approaching it as if we have never heard anything about these characters, discuss what each of the names makes us feel about them. What consonants are featured in their names? What vowels? Ask the students to play with ways of saying the names.

**Exercise:** The characters with an \* following their name are in **The Acting Company** production of *Othello*. As the students read the play, ask them to make assumptions about why some characters were left in and some left out of **The Acting Company**'s production.

### The Characters in *Othello*

Othello, a black army general in the service of the Duke of Venice\*  
Desdemona, Othello's wife, daughter to Brabantio\*  
Iago, Othello's ensign (standard-bearer)\*  
Emilia, Iago's wife, companion to Desdemona\*  
Cassio, Othello's lieutenant\*  
Bianca, in love with Cassio

Duke of Venice\*  
Brabantio, a Venetian senator, father of Desdemona \*  
Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman, in love with Desdemona  
Gratiano, Brabantio's brother  
Lodovico, Brabantio's relative

Montano, Governor of Cyprus  
Senators of Venice  
Gentlemen of Cyprus

Clown  
Herald  
Sailor  
Messenger  
Musicians, soldiers, attendants, servants

## Section Two: The Play: Things to Look For

- **Overall Objective:** The students will learn a variety of ways to analyze Shakespearean texts.

### Tableaux: Othello's Storytelling

#### Objective:

- The students will identify and trace the theme of the magic of words in the play.
- The students will do a close reading of Othello's speech.
- The students will create tableaux of passages from Othello's speech.

**Exercise:** Divide the class into 12 groups. Assign each group one of the sections of Othello's speech in Act 1, scene 3. Ask the groups to create a tableau, a frozen silent physical picture with their bodies, based on their passage. After a three- or four-minute preparation time, ask volunteers to show their tableaux. Ask the class to count with you: "One-two-three, Freeze," to signal the group to freeze into their tableau. Ask the class to determine which section from the speech the volunteers are illustrating. With the text in front of them, have each group show theirs to the whole class. Finally, read the entire speech, and have each group execute their tableau as their passage is read.

As the students read the play and see the performance, ask them to be aware of the way characters are persuaded by the words and stories of others, just as Desdemona fell in love with Othello because of his words.

1. Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
Still question'd me the story of my life,
2. From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed. I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
3. Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field  
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
4. Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
5. And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders.
6. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline:  
and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse:
7. And often did beguile her of her tears,



When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffer'd.

8. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
9. She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
10. And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story.  
And that would woo her.
11. Upon this hint I spake:  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.
12. This only is the witchcraft I have used.

William Shakespeare, *Othello* 1, 3, 128 - 168

## Metaphor: The Green-Eyed Monster

### Objective:

- The students will create an piece of art based on a description in *Othello*
- The students will examine an extended metaphor and extend it further

Exercise: Present the students with the following two texts (found in the Appendix to this guide) and ask them to draw a picture of the “monster,” perhaps extending the metaphor further by giving the monster more characteristics. Provide as many different colors of pencils, markers, and crayons as you can. The students should label the parts of the monster.

After the exercise, students should share their drawings. In a class discussion, explore the uses of metaphor and give examples from works you have examined in class.

### 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!

### EMILIA

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;  
They are not ever jealous for the cause,

But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster  
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

## Black and Fair

### Objective:

- The students will use a reference book.
- The students will analyze the definitions of several words.
- The students will explore the difference between the connotative and denotative meanings of several words.

**Exercise:** Ask the students, for homework, to look up the words “black,” “Fair,” and “White” in a dictionary or on-line resource (like Bartleby.com). Each student should divide the definitions into *positive* and *negative* uses. In class, have the students discuss their findings, creating a *positive* and *negative* list for each of the three words on the board or on newsprint.

Follow the dictionary activity with an analysis of the following quote from Act One of *Othello*. Does the Duke mean this statement as a compliment? Is it a compliment? Could it be seen as an insult?

### DUKE of VENICE

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

## Web of Deception

**Note:** This exercise is designed to be used **AFTER** seeing the performance

### Objective:

- The students will identify the characters that Iago deceives in the play
- The students will use quotes to support their answers
- The students will use a graphic organizer to analyze the play

**Exercise:** Iago reminds Othello that Desdemona “did deceive her father marrying you...” but Iago is the master of deception. After seeing The Acting Company’s *Othello*, create a spider web on the board with Iago in the center. Represent the characters in the play, as suggested by the students in discussion, caught in Iago’s web. Have the students identify the ways that Iago is deceiving them, perhaps supplying quotes to back up the answers, and write those in the web.

## Text Analysis: Puns and Insults

### Objective:

- The students will explore the use of **puns** as a literary device.
- The students will learn about the Elizabethan fondness for wordplay.
- The students will insult one another in Elizabethan style.

**Facts:** In the time of Queen Elizabeth I, verbal eloquence was honored above all other accomplishments. The Elizabethans were amused and fascinated by

language especially by puns. They also loved insults. To have a friend yell "Roundly answered!" after a well turned phrase was a tremendous compliment!

A **Pun** is play on words based on the similarity of sound between two different words with different meanings. Puns are as common a source of jokes today as they were when Shakespeare wrote *Othello*.

*Othello* contains many puns. Iago is a master of puns.

**Exercise:** Have the students keep a running list of the puns they notice as they read *Othello* and who said them. What do the subject of the puns they use tell us about the characters who say them?

**Exercise:** Present the students with the following list of insults from Shakespeare. In pairs, ask the students to take turns insulting one another with phrases from the list. Provide a dictionary to the students who may be unsure of the meanings of some words or phrases.

After allowing a four or five minute period to exchange insults, discuss the phrases with the whole group. Which were their favorite phrases? Why? Were there words that they didn't know before? Were there words they felt the meaning of while saying them? Which *sounds* felt the most insulting? How might an actor intensify those sounds when saying that line on stage? (For example, an actor might wish to stress the hissing quality of the repeated "s" in the line "You remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain.")

What are the hardest-hitting insults today? Are any of these similar in tone or subject matter? Some of the students may be familiar with the term "Snaps," which is a form of insult competition.

After the discussion, you can ask two volunteers to take turns insulting one another with phrases from the list. This time the rest of the class will observe the effectiveness of each phrase.

## Shakespearean Insults

You puppet  
You cold porridge  
You living dead man  
You untutored churl  
You painted Maypole  
You cream-faced loon  
You worshiper of idiots  
You dwarf, you minimus  
You bloody, bawdy villain  
You injurious, tedious wasp  
You base, fawning spaniel  
You infectious pestilence  
You botcher's apprentice  
You ugly, venomous toad  
You base, ignoble wretch  
You old, withered crab tree  
You lunatic, lean-witted fool  
You filching, pilfering snatcher  
You tiresome, wrangling pedant  
You impudent, tattered prodigal  
You whoreson, clap-eared knave  
You dull and muddy mettled rascal  
You gross lout, you mindless slave  
You base, vile thing, you petty scrap  
You dull, unfeeling barren ignorance  
You rank weed, ready to be rooted out  
You irksome, brawling, scolding pestilence  
You brawling, blasphemous, uncharitable dog  
You ignorant, long-tongued, babbling gossip  
You smiling, smooth, detested pestilence  
You mangled work of nature, you scurvy knave  
You caterpillar of the commonwealth, you politician  
You juggler, you canker-blossom, you thief of love  
You decrepit wrangling miser, you base ignoble wretch  
You remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain

Adapted from a list in Robert Barton, *Style for Actors*

# Verse and Prose

## Objective:

- The students will discover the differences between **verse** and **prose** in *Othello*.
- The students will learn the literary terms **Iambic Pentameter**, **Blank Verse**, and **Rhyming Couplet**.
- The students will examine the character of Iago and the styles of language he employs in *Othello*.

**Facts:** Some of what Shakespeare wrote is in verse. Some of the verse is in Iambic Pentameter. Pentameter is a line of poetry having five metrical feet (“Penta-” is the prefix meaning five; as in Pentagon). An Iamb is a metrical foot having two syllables, the first one short, and the second long. So, Iambic Pentameter feels like a heartbeat: Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**; Short, **Long**.

One example from the play:

Othello:

“Of **one** that **loved** not **wisely** **but** too **well**?” (Act Five, scene 2)

Some of the verse is in **Rhyming Couplets**, pairs of lines of Iambic Pentameter that rhyme. The rhyming couplet is often used at the end of scenes to indicate to the audience, the other actors, and the crew, that the scene is over. Much of the verse in Shakespeare’s plays rhymes, however **Blank Verse** is a kind of poetry that does not rhyme, and is written in Iambic Pentameter.

Some of the characters in Shakespeare speak in **Prose**. Prose is common language that does not necessarily have an underlying rhythmical sound to it. Usually servants or the lower classes speak prose in Shakespeare’s plays.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to look at the script of *Othello*. Point out the groups of lines that are indented on the left margin and are rough on the right margin. These are the lines of verse. Some of them rhyme, and some do not. As they examine Act two, they will notice that all the scenes except scene four are written in verse.

Throughout the play, Iago, shifts between verse and prose depending on with whom he is talking and what façade he is presenting. Discuss what, if anything, Shakespeare is telling us about his character through this.

## Section Three: The Playwright: William Shakespeare

- **Overall Objective:** The students will know the facts of the life and career of William Shakespeare and his continuing impact.

### William Shakespeare's Life

#### **Objective:**

- The students will learn about Shakespeare's life
- The students will write an essay about writing.
- The students will assess what makes a good story and a good play.
- The students will write a will based on Shakespeare's will.

**Facts:** The most famous playwright of the English-speaking world was born in Stratford-on-Avon, a small town in England on or about April 23, 1564. His father was a prominent citizen or "gentleman," who made gloves for a living. As a student, William seems to have read everything available in print: he read the Greek and Latin classics, French and Italian plays, legends, folk plays, mythology, historical chronicles, and the Bible. Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway and had three children -- Susanna, and the twins Hamnet and Judith. He lived in London for many years, but returned to Stratford late in his life and died there on his birthday in 1616.

When Shakespeare lived in London in the late 1500's, England was a rich and powerful nation under the leadership of Queen Elizabeth I. Moreover, the Theater was thriving! Shakespeare joined a theater company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men (which was later known as the King's Men when King James I took the throne) and was successful as an actor, poet and a playwright. He wrote 37 plays. In writing his plays, he would often use a plot he already knew or read about, convert it, add to it, and make it his own. Seven years after his death, his friends John Hemings and Henry Condell published a book containing 36 of Shakespeare's plays, called the "First Folio." His work covered many subjects and styles, including comedies, tragedies, romances, and historical plays. Shakespeare was a well-loved writer in his lifetime; and now, 400 years later, he is the most produced playwright in the world.

**Exercise:** Each of us knows many stories. In writing his plays, Shakespeare adapted plots he already knew or had read. Which stories are the students' favorites? Ask them to choose one story that they have read and write a one-page paper telling why it would make a good play or film. In a discussion after the assignment, ask the class to assess what makes a good story and what makes a good performance piece. What elements from their list are in *Othello*?

**Exercise:** In Shakespeare's last will and testament, he left his house and lands to his eldest daughter, Susanna. To his wife Anne he left his "second-best bed." He left his youngest daughter, Judith a silver bowl (her twin brother Hamnet having died in childhood). He left enough money for each of his fellow actors to buy a ring to wear in his memory. Discuss Shakespeare's will with the class. Why did he leave these items to those people? Ask the students to write a will for themselves, based on Shakespeare's.

**Behind the Scenes: The Acting Company's** production of *Othello* is performed with only simple costumes and props. Director Gregory Lamont Allen says, "We felt it was important to strip the play down to its bare essentials. If we drastically minimized the sets, lights, and costumes, the focus of the play is the language. We thereby ask the audience to listen better and use our imaginations as Shakespeare intended."

## Theater in the Time of William Shakespeare

### Objectives:

- The students will compare modern theatrical convention with theater in the time of Shakespeare

**Exercise:** Review the list below with the students. After **The Acting Company's** production of *Othello*, ask the students to compare the conventions of the theater in Shakespeare's day to the performance they have just seen. For example, as in Shakespeare's time, **The Acting Company's** production used no scenery.

### Theater in the Time of William Shakespeare

- The theater building was open air.
- Performances started at 2:00 to make the most of daylight.
- The stage was usually bare.
- Elizabethan theaters held 1500 - 3000 people
- There was a balcony, called the "inner above" to be used if needed, but most of the action took place downstage.
- When Shakespeare moved to London, he met with actor/manager Richard Burbage and became a prompter, then he became an actor, and later he became Burbage's star writer.
- Richard and Cuthbert Burbage opened "The Globe Theatre" in 1599.
- Shakespeare produced most of his plays in The Globe and became part owner.
- After the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, Shakespeare had to write plays that would please the new King James I who had come from Scotland (one of these is *Macbeth*).
- The Globe burned down in 1613 during a production of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, but then was rebuilt in 1614.
- Characters usually tell us where they are and what time of day it is in their lines.
- Acting was not a well-respected profession at this time.
- Women were not allowed to perform on stage, so boys would perform all female parts, including Desdemona and Emilia in *Othello*. Boys were apprenticed to the acting companies between the ages of 6 and 14.
- Actors would have to learn many parts of a play, since up to three different plays would be performed in the same week by a company.
- Actors usually wore their own clothes unless they were portraying someone evil, royal, or female.

We are all unwitting Shakespeare quoters, sometimes **"without rhyme or reason."** If you are **"in a pickle"** because you have been **"eaten out of house and home"** and even your **"salad days"** have **"vanished into thin air,"** you are quoting Shakespeare. You've been **"hoodwinked"** and **"more sinned against than sinning."** No wonder you're not **"playing fast and loose"** and haven't **"slept a wink"** and are probably **"breathing your last."** It's **"cold comfort"** that you are quoting Shakespeare. If you **"point your finger"** at me, **"bid me good riddance"** when you **"send me packing"** and call me a **"laughing-stock,"** **"the devil incarnate,"** a **"sorry sight,"** **"eyesore,"** and a **"stone-hearted,"** **"bloody-minded"** **"blinking idiot"** and wish I were **"dead as a door-nail,"** then I would say that you possess neither a **"heart of gold"** nor **"the milk of human kindness,"** especially considering that we are **"flesh and blood."** Now that we have gone **"full circle"** and you are still waiting with **"bated breath"** since I have not been able to make you **"budge an inch,"** it is **"fair play"** for me to quit this sermon since Shakespeare himself taught me that **"brevity is the soul of wit."** After all, it is a **"foregone conclusion"** that we all speak Shakespeare's language!

adapted from

Take My Words:

*A Wordaholic's Guide to the English Language*

by Howard Richler



## Section Four: The Theater

**Overall Objective:** The students will have a stronger understanding of the art of the Theatre.

### Brainstorm: Creating a Theatrical Production

**Objective:**

- The students will identify careers in the theater.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will know the collaborative nature of theater.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to name some of the people who work to put a theatrical production like *Othello* on stage. Write their answers on the board. As the brainstorm continues, present information about the various professions.

#### **Producer or Producing Organization**

The producers raise the money needed to produce the play - the money allows the Creative Team to build its vision of the play. Producers oversee all aspects of the production and make sure that the play sticks to their artistic standards. They often put together the package of Script, Director, Designers, and Cast. **The Acting Company** is a not-for-profit organization, which means that money to produce the plays comes from fund-raising through grants and donations rather than from investors.

[a "Not-for-Profit" organization uses money raised from donors, foundations, grants to do its work. A "Profit Making" organization gets money from investors. The investors receive a percentage of the profit made by the work.]

#### **The Playwright**

A "wright" is a type of artisan who makes things that people can use. A wheelwright makes wheels. A playwright makes plays. Plays are of use to other artists - Actors, Directors, Designers - who use the script to make their own artistic statement.

Mark Twain wrote the novel *Othello*. Charles Smith created a new piece of art based on that novel when he wrote the play.

#### **The Composer**

In *Othello*, there is vocal music, namely "The Willow Song." The music serves the story. The music was composed specifically for The Acting Company's production of the play. Often, a composer works with the director to create music to enhance the play by helping to set the mood and to further the plot.

### **The Director**

After reading the playwright's script, the director decides on an overall vision for the production. The director meets with the Creative Team to assemble a unified look for the sets, costumes, lighting, and other elements. The director oversees the actors in rehearsal, often with the help of Assistant Directors and Stage Managers.

### **The Actor**

The Cast is the group of men, women, and children who perform the play. Many people call all the performers "actors" (instead of "actors" and "actresses"), since this is the professional term that applies to people of both genders. The members of the cast may be seasoned actors or new to the stage. They may have trained at different theater schools that teach acting in various ways. They draw on their own experiences and understanding of life to create believable characters.

Actors usually audition for the parts they play. This means that they had to work on the part and read, sing, or dance for the director and producers before they were given the role. All of the actors had to memorize their lines and attend many rehearsals, including some with costumes and props, before opening night.

### **The Voice and Dialect Coach**

The Shakespearean language in *Othello* can be very complex. Often a Voice Coach acts as an advisor to the actors and director on the play. She is an expert on the text, the meanings and nuances of the words, and their pronunciation. She can assist the actors with the verse. She is an expert in the period language of the script and helps the actors approach the text from a unified angle.

### **The Costume Designer**

Costumes in a play must help the actors as they create the characters. The costumes should not restrict the movement of the performers. The costume designer and her staff work within the vision of the director for each character. They choose colors and styles to help the audience better understand the characters. They do historical research to make the time period of the play come to life.

### **The Set Designer and Lighting Designer**

The play needs an environment in which to take place. The set can be a literal world, with many objects ("props") and lots of furniture. It can be a suggestion of reality with minimal actual components. The lights add to the environment of the play and enhance the mood that the other designers, the actors, the playwright, the composer, and the director have created. For The Acting Company productions, the set must be easy to assemble and disassemble and must be portable. The lighting design must be able to be recreated in each venue.

### **The Staff and The Crew**

The theatre staff - house manager, ushers, box office people, and others - assist the audience in many ways and support each performance. Backstage the Stage Managers and the running crew run the lighting equipment, move the scenery, and make sure the technical aspects of the performance are perfect. In

the office, Marketing people work to make sure people know about the performances and the Development staff makes sure the producers have money to put on the play.

**Exercise:** Ask the students to see how many of the members of the cast, crew and staff they can find at The Acting Company website: [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org). Feel free to have them correspond with the Company members through e-mail links.

## ***Costumes from the 1940's***

**Note:** This Exercise is best used AFTER seeing the play.

**Objective:**

- The students will evaluate the use of period styles in **The Acting Company's** production of *Othello*

**Exercise:** After the performance, discuss the costumes in the show with the students. Did the 1940's styles enhance *Othello*? Which character had the most interesting costume? Who had the best shoes? Was there a difference between military and non-military personnel? How might specific period costumes help actors create their characters? How did costumes help the audience differentiate between two characters played by the same actor? Could the play have been performed in clothes from 2001? Would that have changed the play? Could it have been done in Elizabethan period dress? Why do you think the director chose the 1940's as a setting for the play? What other periods might it have been set?

## **Casting**

**Objective:**

- The students will create a cast list for a movie of *Othello*

**Exercise:** Ask the students, "If you were casting a movie of *Othello*, what stars would you get to be in it?" Ask each to work independently and cast Othello, Desdemona, Iago, Cassio, and Emilia.

**Discussion:** How important is race as a factor in casting a play like *Othello*? Could it be cast with a black Iago? A black Cassio? A black Desdemona? A white Othello?

## **Types of Theater Buildings**

**Note:** This Exercise is best used AFTER seeing the play.

**Objective:**

- The students will be able to identify different types of theatres.
- The students will weigh the benefits of each type of performance space.
- The students will use The Acting Company website as a resource.
- The students will write a report about a theater.

**Discussion:** In which types of theaters have the students seen plays, concerts, or other live performances? In what type of theatre was **The Acting Company's** production of *Othello* performed? What might be the benefits of each type of performance space? What might be the drawbacks of each?

**Facts:**

Three different types of performance space are most common in the theatre:

- **The Proscenium Stage** is the most common. The play is performed within a frame. The frame is called a proscenium arch; the audience looks through this frame as if the performance was a picture.
- **The Thrust Stage** extends into the audience. Spectators sit on three sides.
- **Theatre-in-the-Round** has the audience sitting all around the stage. The action takes place on a platform in the center of the room. Another name for a Theatre-in-the-Round is an Arena Stage because it is similar to a sports arena.

**Exercise:** At The Acting Company website, [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org), have the students find the "Itinerary" page. Many of the theaters that the Company is playing this year are linked to this page. The students can learn about different types of theaters in different parts of the country from these links. Students can write a report about one of the theaters where The Acting Company is performing this year. Their report might include a map of the location, distance from the last theater and to the next theater, and statistics about the theater (size, seating capacity, ticket prices).

## Word Power: Most Important Words

**Objectives:**

- The students will do a close reading of some dialogue from *Othello*
- The students will evaluate the individual words in the dialogue
- The students will create a rhythmic version of the dialogue

**Exercise:** Provide each student with the passage from the play *Othello*. Ask 22 students to each take one of the lines. Standing in a circle, closed against the rest of the class, ask them to read their lines in order. They should do it a second time, faster. Now, ask them to choose one word from their line that they feel is most important. The third read-through should be just the words deemed most important in each line. A fourth time should be the same only faster.

Finally, they can do it once, in a line facing the other students. In a discussion following the exercise, both the 22 participants and the other students can talk about the passage and the exercise.

1. Will you think so?
2. Think so, Iago!
3. What, To kiss in private?
4. An unauthorized kiss.

5. Or to be naked with her friend in bed  
 6. An hour or more, not meaning any harm?  
 7. Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!  
 8. It is hypocrisy against the devil:  
 9. They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,  
 10. The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.  
 11. So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:  
 12. But if I give my wife a handkerchief,--  
 13. What then?  
 14. Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,  
 15. She may, I think, bestow't on any man.  
 16. She is protectress of her honor too: / May she give that?  
 17. Her honor is an essence that's not seen;  
     They have it very oft that have it not:  
 18. But, for the handkerchief,--  
 19. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.  
 20. Thou said'st, it comes o'er my memory,  
 21. As doth the raven o'er the infected house, / Boding to all  
 22. He had my handkerchief.

Act 4, Scene 1, *Othello*

## Why Theater?

### Objective:

- The students will explore the importance of theater.

**Exercise:** Give each student a copy of the following quote from George Cram Cook (1873 –1924), founder of New York’s Provincetown Playhouse (artistic home of Eugene O’Neill). Ask each student to identify the two reasons Cook gives for the importance of theater, especially in time of crisis. Are they important and relevant today? Are there other reasons?

Ask the students to write a paragraph or two, based on the passage, in which they explore the importance of Theater (or the Arts in general) in post-September 11 America. Have volunteers share them with the class.

After seeing the performance, ask the students which reason (as a means of escape or as a gateway for imagination) does *Othello* provide? Or does it do something else? Can theater provide different things for different people? Can it provide many things for an individual?

Still trembling from the World Trade Center disaster, we found the following 1918 quote to be relevant, moving, and insightful 84 years later.

“Seven of the Provincetown Players are in the army or working for it in France and more are going. Not lightheartedly now, when civilization itself is threatened with destruction, we who remain have determined to go on next season with the work of our little theatre. It is often said that theatrical entertainment in general is socially justified in this dark time as a means of **relaxing the strain of reality**,

and thus helping to keep us sane. This may be true, but if more were not true - if we felt no deeper value in dramatic art than entertainment, we would hardly have the heart for it now. One faculty, we know, is going to be of vast importance to the half-destroyed world - indispensable for its rebuilding - the faculty of creative imagination. That spark of it, which has given this group of ours such life and meaning as we have, is not so insignificant that we should now let it die. The social justification, which we feel to be valid now for makers and players of plays, is that they shall help **keep alive in the world the light of imagination**. Without it, the wreck of the world that was cannot be cleared away and the new world shaped."

George Cram Cook, founder of New York's Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

# Theatre Etiquette

**Note: This Exercise is best used BEFORE seeing the play.**

**Objective:**

- The students will know standard rules of behavior in the theatre.

To make the theatre-going experience more enjoyable for everyone, a code of behavior has been established. When attending theatrical performances, remember these simple rules of conduct.

- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theatre lobby.
- ❖ Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

# Prepare for Q & A Session

## Objective:

- The students will create questions for the post-performance Q & A session

**Exercise:** To make the post-performance Question and Answer session more beneficial to everyone, the students might create a few questions before the performance. Ask the students to think what questions they might want to ask the actors in the play? Here are some starter questions:

Are there questions about the **theater** as an art form? Does it require training? Where did the actors train? Can a person make a living in the theater? What careers are there in the theater? Are any of the students aspiring actors? Are they seeking advice

Are there questions about **traveling** the country? Have the actors seen a lot of the United States? What is the bus like? How many hours do they spend on the bus? Does everybody get along?

What about life in **New York City**? How long have the actors lived there? And where are they from originally? (Have any of the students ever been in NYC?) How has New York City survived the September 11<sup>th</sup> Tragedy? What is the best part of living in New York? What is the worst?

What about **Othello**, the play? How has it been received in places across the country? What is the best part about working on this play? What have been its drawbacks? Is it different working on a new play than working on Shakespeare? What do the actors think the themes of the play are?

NOTE: If there are questions that your students have after the company departs, feel free to contact the Education Department of The Acting Company, and we will get an answer for you!



## Section Five: What to Do After You See This Play

Please encourage your students to reflect on the play in some of the following ways. We would love to have copies of some of the writings or artwork your students create: **The Acting Company, Box 898, New York, NY 10108 or fax 212-944-5524.** We have also included in the appendix short pre- and post-performance questionnaires, and would be interested in gathering data about the play.

### Write

- Write a play or scene in response to the play.
- Improvise a scene with a partner and then write it down.
- Write a soliloquy for one of the characters in *Othello*.
- Write a scene for two of the characters in the play that you think we should have seen but that was not in Shakespeare's play. For example, a scene between Brabantio and Desdemona, father and daughter.
- Write an epilogue. For example, what happens to Iago or Cassio after the story ends?
- Write a review of our production.
- Write an analysis of the poster for this production.
- Write a theatrical adaptation of another piece of literature, perhaps a short story.

### Draw

- Draw the world of Venice, Italy.
- Draw images from the production.
- Draw figures re-created from old photographs or paintings.
- Draw a world with jealousy and a world without jealousy.
- Draw a poster for our production.
- Create a collage of images from magazines in response to the play.

### Read and Research more

Check out some of the following Web Addresses:

**Complete Text of the Play:** [www.theplays.org/othello/](http://www.theplays.org/othello/)

**SparkNotes on the Novel:** [www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/othello/](http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/othello/)

**Shakespeare on the Web:** [www.bardweb.net](http://www.bardweb.net)

**Shakespeare's Globe theater in London, England:** [www.shakespeares-globe.org](http://www.shakespeares-globe.org)

**National Council of Teachers of English:** <http://www.ncte.org/>

**The Acting Company:** [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org)

## **Section Six: The Acting Company**

The Acting Company, America's only nationally-touring classical repertory theater, was founded in 1972 by current Producing Director Margot Harley and the late John Houseman with a unique mission:

- + By touring smaller cities, towns and rural communities of America, the Company reaches thousands of people who have few opportunities to experience live professional theater.
- + By presenting superior productions of classic and contemporary plays, the Company builds a discerning national audience for theater, helping preserve and extend our cultural heritage.
- + By providing continuing opportunities for gifted and highly-trained young actors to practice their craft in a rich repertoire for diverse audiences, the Company nurtures the growth and development of generations of theater artists.
- + By commissioning and premiering important new works by America's foremost playwrights, the Company fosters a theater tradition in which story-telling, language and the presence of the actor are primary.
- + By making the language of the theater accessible in performance, special classes and other educational outreach activities, the Company inspires students of all ages and helps them excel in every field of study.

The Acting Company has been fulfilling this singular mission since it was formed out of the first graduating class of the Juilliard School's Drama Division in 1972. Since then, it has traveled over 500,000 miles through 48 states and nine other countries, performing a repertoire of 77 plays for more than 2 million people.

### **Trace Our Tour**

If the students want to follow the tour as it progresses across the United States, they can read the Tour Journal (on our website [www.theactingcompany.org](http://www.theactingcompany.org)) and see pictures of the places we visit. You can check in with us every day, check the itinerary, and see where we are on the map.

# **We Want to Hear from YOU and your STUDENTS!**

## **By Mail**

The Acting Company  
PO Box 898  
New York NY 10108  
tel 212-944-5517  
fax 212-944-5524

## **By E-Mail**

Paul Fontana, Director of Education  
Pfontana@ TheActingCompany.org  
Stephen Alemán, Associate Director of Education  
Saleman@ TheActingCompany.org  
Education@TheActingCompany

## **On the Internet**

[www.TheActingCompany.org](http://www.TheActingCompany.org)

## **Internships**

Please submit a letter of interest and your resume along with two references to the Intern Coordinator at the address above. You can call or check the website for more information.

## **Questionnaires and FREE Posters!**

You will find a Pre-Performance and a Post-Performance Questionnaires on pages 38 and 39 of this guide. Please have your students fill out the Pre-Performance Survey before you begin working on exercises from this guide. Ask them to fill out the Post-Performance Survey after seeing *Pudd'nhead Wilson*.

Send them to us at the above address and we will send you a POSTER from one of The Acting Company's productions as a "Thank You."

## Section Seven: Cast List and Information

# The Tragedy of Othello

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Gregory Lamont Allen

**Cast** (in alphabetical order)

Cassio, Brabantio

Iago

Desdemona

Othello

Emilia, Duke of Venice

Michael Abbot, Jr.

Spencer Aste

Katherine Puma

John Livingstone Rolle

Jordan Simmons

Costume Designer

Fight Director

Dialect Coach

Stage Manager

Sarah Iams

Felix Ivanov

Sarah Felder

Janice Brandine

## Section Eight: Bibliography

Barton, Robert, Style for Actors. Mayfield Publishing Company: Mountain View, CA, 1993.

Davis, James E. and Ronald E. Salomone (Eds.). Teaching Shakespeare Today: Practical Approaches and Productive Strategies. National Council of Teachers of English: Illinois, 1993.

Engen, Barbara and Joy Campbell. Elementary, My Dear Shakespeare. Market Masters: Utah, 1995.

Foster, Cass and Lynn G. Johnson. Shakespeare: To teach or not to teach. Five Star Publications: Arizona, 1994.

Gibson, Rex. Teaching Shakespeare. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1998.

O'Brien, Peggy. Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Twelfth Night and Othello. Washington Square Press: New York, 1995

Pinness, Gerald M. and Roger Lockyer (Eds). Shakespeare's World: Background Readings in the English Renaissance. A Frederick Ungar Book: New York, 1990.

Richler, Howard. Take My Words: A Wordaholic's Guide to the English Language. Ronsdale Press: Vancouver, 1996.

Shakespeare, William, Othello. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1992.

**For the complete text of the play, Othello on the Web:**

<http://www.theplays.org/othello/>

# Appendix: Reproducibles

## Reading Schedule for Othello

Week 1:	Day 1:	1, 1	The Street at Night
	Day 2:	1, 2	Othello and his men
	Day 3:	1, 3, 1 - 218	The Council
	Day 4:	1, 3, 219 - 296	Preparations for War
	Day 5:	1, 3, 297 - end	Iago & Brabantio
Week 2:	Day 1:	2, 1, 1 – 170	Arrival in Cyprus
	Day 2:	2, 1, 170 - end	Othello in Cyprus
	Day 3:	2, 2 & 2, 3	Cassio's fall from grace
	Day 4:	2, 3 (continued)	Cassio's fall from grace
	Day 5:	3, 1 & 3, 2	In the Castle
Week 3:	Day 1:	3, 3, 1 – 173	Green-eyed Monster introduced
	Day 2:	3, 3, 174 – 291	Jealousy grows
	Day 3:	3, 3, 292 – end	The Handkerchief
	Day 4:	3, 4	About the Handkerchief
	Day 5:	4, 1	The ocular proof
Week 4:	Day 1:	4, 2	Desdemona abused
	Day 2:	4, 3	The Willow Song
	Day 3:	5, 1	The Street at Night
	Day 4:	5, 2	In the bedchamber

## Exercise: The Plot of Othello

**Act One:** Othello, a Moorish general of Venice, has promoted Cassio as his lieutenant; Iago, who was hoping for the promotion himself, makes plots against both Cassio and Othello to exact revenge. Othello has secretly married Desdemona, the daughter of Venetian senator Brabantio, and Iago determines to use Desdemona as the means of his revenge. Iago uses the fact that Othello is black and that Desdemona is white to enrage Brabantio, who appeals to the Duke of Venice to annul the marriage on the grounds that Othello used magic to seduce Desdemona. The Duke weighs the evidence and determines that Othello used only the magic of words and that Desdemona and Othello are truly in love. However, Othello is needed on the island of Cyprus to fight for Venice in a war against the Turks and is sent there by the Duke. Iago escorts Desdemona there to meet him, taking along his own wife, Emilia.

**Act Two:** When they arrived in Cyprus, Iago sets his plot into motion. He determines to convince Othello that Desdemona is cheating on him with Cassio. As the first step in his plan, he tricks Cassio into getting drunk. Cassio is demoted for disorderly conduct and Iago is promoted to lieutenant. Iago convinces Cassio to visit Desdemona, saying that an appeal to her might persuade Othello to reinstate him.

**Act Three:** Iago goes to Othello so that he can lead him to where Desdemona and Cassio are talking. As Iago and Othello view the scene, Iago plants seeds of doubt and jealousy in Othello's mind concerning Desdemona's fidelity. Iago suggests to Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair. Later, Iago literally drops Desdemona's handkerchief, a special and sentimental gift to her from Othello, into Emilia's hand; who gives the handkerchief to her husband. Iago plants the handkerchief in Cassio's room, and then tells Othello that he saw Cassio with it. When Othello asks Desdemona about the handkerchief, she tells him that it was lost (which is the truth as she knows it). He tells her the exotic history of the handkerchief and the curse laid upon anyone who loses it.

**Act Four:** Cassio, meanwhile, has given the handkerchief to Bianca, a girl he has been dating. Iago manipulates a conversation with Cassio about Bianca to make it appear to Othello—who is eavesdropping at the urging of Iago—that Cassio is talking about Desdemona. Othello's smoldering rage now beginning to bubble over, Othello tells Iago to kill Cassio and then angrily confronts Desdemona. In spite of Desdemona's protests of innocence (backed up by Iago's wife, Emilia), Othello is now convinced of her infidelity with Cassio.

**Act Five:** Iago has an attempt made on Cassio's life, which is unsuccessful. Othello strangles Desdemona in her bed. When Emilia discovers the crime, she calls the Moor a villain and at first refuses to believe that Iago has so evilly manipulated Othello. However, Iago's appearance and subsequent answers lead Emilia to confront the fact that her husband is responsible for this tragedy. When Iago cannot keep Emilia from telling the truth about the handkerchief, he stabs her and attempts to escape; not only is he captured, but evidence is found that thoroughly implicates Iago as the treacherous villain that he is. Faced with the sorrow of having murdered his beloved wife, Othello stabs himself and dies beside Desdemona.

## Exercise: Characters in Othello

### The Characters in *Othello*

Othello, a black army general in the service of the Duke of Venice\*

Desdemona, Othello's wife, daughter to Brabantio\*

Iago, Othello's ensign (standard-bearer)\*

Emilia, Iago's wife, companion to Desdemona\*

Cassio, Othello's lieutenant\*

Bianca, in love with Cassio

Duke of Venice\*

Brabantio, a Venetian senator, father of Desdemona \*

Roderigo, a Venetian gentleman, in love with Desdemona

Gratiano, Brabantio's brother

Lodovico, Brabantio's relative

Montano, Governor of Cyprus

Senators of Venice

Gentlemen of Cyprus

Clown

Herald

Sailor

Messenger

Musicians, soldiers, attendants, servants



## Exercise: Othello's Storytelling

1. Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
Still question'd me the story of my life,
2. From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed. I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
3. Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field  
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
4. Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
5. And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders.
6. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline:  
and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse:
7. And often did beguile her of her tears,  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffer'd.
8. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
9. She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
10. And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story.  
And that would woo her.
11. Upon this hint I spake:  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.
12. This only is the witchcraft I have used.

William Shakespeare, *Othello* 1, 3, 128 - 168

## **Text Analysis: The Green-Eyed Monster**

### **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!

### **EMILIA**

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;  
They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster  
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

## Exercise: Word Power: Most Important Words

1. Will you think so?
2. Think so, Iago!
3. What, To kiss in private?
4. An unauthorized kiss.
5. Or to be naked with her friend in bed
6. An hour or more, not meaning any harm?
7. Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!
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16. Her honor is an essence that's not seen;
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19. By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.
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George Cram Cook, founder of New York's Provincetown Playhouse, 1918

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- ❖ Be on time for the performance.
- ❖ Eat and drink only in the theatre lobby.
- ❖ Turn off all cellular phones and pagers.
- ❖ Talk before and after the performance or during the intermissions only. Remember that the people near you and on stage can hear you.
- ❖ Appropriate responses to the performances, such as laughing and applauding, are appreciated.
- ❖ Act with maturity during romantic, violent, and other challenging scenes.
- ❖ Keep your feet off chairs around you.
- ❖ Read your program before or after, not during, the play.
- ❖ Personal hygiene (e.g., combing hair, applying make-up, etc.) should be attended to in the restrooms.
- ❖ Once you are seated and the play has begun, stay in your seat. If you see empty seats ahead of you, ask the usher during the intermission if you can move to them.
- ❖ Always stay until after the curtain call. After the final curtain, relax and take your time leaving.
- ❖ Open your eyes, ears, and mind to the entire theatrical experience!

# Pre-Performance Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I feel excited about seeing *Othello*.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

I have been to see plays before.

**None** **Some** **Many**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Name some plays you have seen?

Theater is fun!

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

I like Shakespeare's writing.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Seeing a play can teach me about life.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Comments:

Student Initials:

# Post-Performance Questionnaire

After seeing *Othello*, please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 7. "1" represents something with which you strongly disagree "7" represents something with which you strongly agree. Circle the number that best matches your feelings.

I enjoyed seeing *Othello*.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

I want to learn more about Theater.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

*Othello* was better than other plays I have seen before.

**Disagree** **Agree**      I have never  
1            2            3            4            5            6            seen a play.

I want to see more theater.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

I like Shakespeare's writing.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Seeing *Othello* taught me something about life.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Some lessons in *Othello* are:

Theater is more real than television and movies.

**Disagree** **Agree**  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Comments: