Shakespearean Insults

Here are 125,000 Shakespearean Insults, thou mammering hedge-born gudgeons.

To construct a Shakespearean insult, combine one word from each of the three columns below, and preface it with "Thou":

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<th>Column 1</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>artless</td>
<td>base-court</td>
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<td>bawdy</td>
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<td>foot-licker</td>
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<td>goatish</td>
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Literary terms for Shakespeare’s *Othello*

**aside**
a brief statement uttered by a character in a play, intended to be heard by the audience but not by other characters on the stage

**blank verse**
unrhymed poetry written in iambic pentameter; this is standard form for all Shakespearean drama

**dramatic irony**
words or actions of a character carry meaning that is unperceived by the character but understood by the audience

**foil**
a character who, through contrast, highlights the distinctive characteristics of another

**foreshadowing**
presentation of material that hints at events to occur in later action; may take the form of an established atmosphere, a parallel action, a physical object, or the revelation of a decisive character trait

**heroic couplet**
a pair of rhyming lines, written in iambic pentameter, that expresses a complete thought; employed in Shakespearean drama to end a scene and to emphasize character or action

**soliloquy**
a speech delivered while a character is alone on stage, which calculatingly reveals to the audience the honest thoughts and plans of that character

**tragedy**
drama that relates the fall of a person of high status as a result of the protagonist’s tragic flaw; celebrates courage and dignity as the hero faces inevitable doom; begins in chaos and ends with the restoration of order through death
A Brief History of the Moors

Othello is subtitled, “The Moor of Venice.”

The word “Moor” comes from Mauri, the name of an old tribe in the area of present-day Morocco in northern Africa. Their northern-African kingdom was known as Mauretania. The descendents of the Mauri became Muslims very early in Islamic history.

In the year 711, these Islamic Moors conquered Spain. They ruled lands in North Africa, Spain, and Portugal for the next seven hundred years (a coalition of Christian kings drove the Moors from Central Spain in 1212, but the Moorish Kingdom of Granada thrived for almost another three hundred years). In 1492, the last Muslim stronghold in Granada surrendered to Christian Spain (united by the marriage of Queen Isabella of Spain and King Ferdinand of Portugal), in an agreement called “The Capitulation of Granada.” By 1502, the remaining Muslims had been forced either to leave Spain or convert to Christianity. The converts were known as moriscos.

Most of the expelled moriscos went to Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Others became pirates. Many passed themselves off as Gypsies and migrated to other countries in Europe. Between the years 1609 and 1614, all remaining Moors were systematically hunted down and expelled from the few regions in Spain where they remained.

The first recorded performance of Othello was in 1604, during the time when Christian European tolerance of Muslims was greatly strained.

When Shakespeare identifies his tragic hero as a Moor, he clearly wants to establish that Othello is a descendent of these North-African/Spanish Muslims, whose not-too-distant ancestors were exiled. This could explain why Othello finds himself in Venice, Italy. Yet it is significant to remember that Othello is the tragic hero of the play, not the villain.
Vocabulary from Act I: Othello

Part I: Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text.

1. But he, as loing his own pride and purposes, Evades them, with a bombast circumstance Horribly stuffed with epithets of war.

2. 'Tis the curse of service, preferment goes by letter and affection, And not by old gradation, where each second Stood heir to the first.

3. You shall mark Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave That doting on his own obsequious bondage Wears out his time, much like his master's ass, For naught but provender . . . .

4. My house is not a grange.

5. But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier, To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor –

6. If she be in her chamber or your house, Let loose on me the justice of the state For thus deluding you.

7. 'Tis yet to know -- Which, when I know that boasting is an honor, I shall promulgate -- . . .

8. Who'er he be that in this foul proceeding Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself And you of her, the bloody book of law You shall yourself read in the bitter letter . . .

9. A natural and prompt alacrity I find in hardness, and do undertake These present wars against the Ottomites.

Part II: Determining the Meaning - Match the vocabulary words to their dictionary definitions.

___ 1. bombast A. farm; grainery
___ 2. preferment B. deceiving
___ 3. obsequious C. promotion
___ 4. grange D. lecherous
___ 5. lascivious E. eagerness; quickness
___ 6. deluding F. puffed-up; pompous
___ 7. promulgate G. officially announce
___ 8. beguiled H. diverted; taken away; also charmed or delighted
___ 9. alacrity I. fawning; showing servile compliance
Study Guide: Act I

- **Exposition**-All of Shakespeare’s plays have 5 Acts. Act 1 is called “exposition.” In Act I, the general atmosphere, time, place, main characters, and opening conditions of the play are exposed.

- **Soliloquy**-A monologue in which a character in a play is alone and speaking to him or herself. Soliloquies are used to let the audience know what characters are thinking. They help the audience understand and relate to the character or action in the play.

- **Aside**-This element is a dramatic convention that finds a character explicitly speaking to the audience while the other characters on stage are not able to hear the speech. Asides can also occur between two characters; in this case, again, the audience is able to hear the conversation but the other characters on stage are not.

Act I, Scene 1

1. Iago says he hates Othello. For what reason?

2. What two kinds of followers are there, according to Iago? Shortly after this, Iago speaks to the point of appearance and reality. He concludes, “I am not what I am.” State what came before this speech and the meaning of the speech?

3. How do Iago and Roderigo stir up trouble? What is Brabantio’s reaction?
**Act I, Scene 2**
1. Why does Iago say he wishes to kill Roderigo? What reason does he give for not killing him? What is Othello’s response? Why is Othello not worried about Brabantio’s wrath?

2. What message does Cassio bring? As Othello is about to leave for the Senate, Brabantio and his supporters show up and draw their swords. How would you describe Othello when he responds?

3. Brabantio wishes to arrest Othello and hold him in jail until he can be brought to court. What does Brabantio accuse Othello? What forces him to change his plans?

**Act I, Scene 3**
1. At the opening of scenes 1 and 2 the audience is smack in the middle of the action. About what are the Duke and Senators concerned?

2. By what adjective do the Senators and the Duke refer to Othello? What does this indicate?

3. Othello tells us how he won Desdemona’s heart. How did he do this?

4. Desdemona speaks well before this group, and Brabantio is convinced she did it of her own free will. The Duke then gives Brabantio advice. What is Brabantio’s mood at this point?

5. After Roderigo leaves, see into Iago’s thoughts in the soliloquy. What is his opinion of Roderigo? Why does he hate the Moor? What plan has he formulated?
### Othello: Act I

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Identify:</th>
<th>Current mood:</th>
<th>What he/she says:</th>
<th>What others say:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iago</td>
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<td>Roderigo</td>
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Summary of scene i:  
Summary of scene ii:  
Summary of scene iii:
Identification and Interpretation:

- Who said this soliloquy?
- Who is the “fool” (1)?
- What is the speaker’s explanation for serving this fool (4)?
- Translate lines (5-8).
- How is the speaker going to incriminate Cassio?
- How does the speaker describe Cassio in lines 15-16?
- How does the speaker describe Othello in lines 17-20?

1Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:

5And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.

10Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery — How, how? Let's see: —
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.

15He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose

20As asses are.
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
Vocabulary from Act II: Othello

Part I: Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text.

1. Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death, Stand in bold cure.

2. If after every tempest comes such calms, May the winds blow till they have wakened death!

3. . . . they say base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them . . . .

4. When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor, sympathy in years, manners and beauties, all which the Moor is defective in.

5. Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after.

6. . . . and the impediment most profitably removed without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

7. . . . Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me For making him egregiously an ass And practicing upon his peace and quiet Even to madness.

8. It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant General, that upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph -- . . . .

II. Determining the Meaning - Match the words to their dictionary definitions.

___ 1. surfeited A. the condition of being overfilled or over gratified
___ 2. tempest B. total ruin; damnation
___ 3. base C. requirements
___ 4. satiety D. conspicuouslyoffensively
___ 5. requisites E. violent storm
___ 6. impediment F. common; low in station
___ 7. egregiously G. something in the way; a hindrance
___ 8. perdition H. fed to excess
Othello: Act II Study Questions

Scene i
1. Explain the purpose of the descriptions at the beginning of the act.
2. Describe the nature of the weather as the scene opens. What might the weather indicate about the “nature of things”?
3. What do we learn about Othello’s character from the trouble at sea?
4. Using your understanding of the imagery in the following passage, characterize the relationship between Cassio and Othello.

   CASSIO: His bark is stoutly timber’d, and his pilot
   Of very expert and approved allowance;
   Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
   Stand in bold cure. (lines 53-56)

5. Early in scene i, as Iago and Desdemona’s ship approaches, Cassio describes Desdemona to the Gentlemen with whom he is speaking:

   CASSIO: Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
   That paragons description and wild fame;
   One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
   And in the essential vesture of creation
   Does tire the ingener.

   and later refers to Desdemona as “the riches of the ship” (line 91). Reread Iago’s description of women as he characterizes them in line 115 through line 177. Contrast the two descriptions of women. Why does Shakespeare include both of the descriptions? What do the commentaries tell us about the person making the assertions?

6. After the interchange between Desdemona and Iago, how would you characterize Desdemona?
7. What is the purpose of Iago’s aside in lines 180-185 “He takes her by the palm . . .”
8. Read the following section and explain how it functions as an example of foreshadowing:

   OTHELLO: …If it were now to die,
   Twere now to be most happy; for I fear
   My soul hath her content so absolute
   That not another comfort like to this
   Succeeds in unknown fate.
   (II, I, 202-206)

9. Why do Iago and Roderigo stay behind after all the others have left to travel to Cyprus? What is further revealed about Iago’s plan? How does Roderigo respond to Iago’s claims?
10. What does Iago instruct Roderigo to do?
11. Read the soliloquy that ends the scene. What does the reader learn about Iago’s plan? What are the possible motivations for Iago’s revenge? What do you believe is the reason for Iago’s anger at Cassio and Othello?

Scene ii
12. Explain the occasion on which the Herald is giving his proclamation. Summarize the Herald’s proclamation.
Scene iii

13. On what occasion are Iago and Cassio going to spend time together? Explain the dramatic irony in the situation and in Othello’s statement, “Iago is most honest.” (II, iii, 7)

14. In the first 42 lines of the scene, using examples from the text, explain the differences between how Othello speaks about and to Desdemona and how Cassio and Iago discuss the current “situation” between Othello and Desdemona. What might these speeches tell the audience about the characters of the men?

15. Analyze the conversation between Iago and Cassio in lines 13 through lines 41 in Act II, scene iii. What do you believe Iago is trying to accomplish?

16. When Iago learns that his plan to influence Cassio’s feelings about Desdemona has failed, what does he then try to do?

17. Explain the significance of the following line by first explaining the speaker, the audience, and the situation in which the line is contextualized.
   “He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar and give direction.”

18. Summarize what happens after Cassio and Iago drink with the men.

19. Explain Othello’s insinuation when he states, “Are we turn’s Turks, and to ourselves do that which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?” (II, iii, 162-164)

20. Why do you think the men will not answer Othello’s questions about what happened between the men?

21. When Iago is explaining to Othello what happened to cause the fight, why do you think he leaves Roderigo’s name out of the narration?

22. What action does Othello take against Cassio upon hearing that Cassio is responsible for the fight?

23. Describe the relationship between Desdemona and Othello as it appears at this point in the play.

24. Explain the difference between the way Cassio and Iago view reputations. Is the view of reputation that Iago explains to Cassio an accurate depiction of how he really feels? How do we know?

25. How does Cassio misunderstand the “devil” in the situation?

26. Examine Iago’s language at the end of Act Two. How does the language change? What might have been a reason for Shakespeare to employ this change at the end of the act?
Read the following passages from Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice*. Choose the best responses to the prompts that follow each passage. There is one and only one correct answer to each prompt.

*Act II Scene i Lines 280–311*

RODERIGO: 280 I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

IAGO: I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

RODERIGO: Adieu. *Exit*

IAGO:

285 That Cassio loves her, I do well believe ’t; That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit: The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not, Is of a constant, loving, noble nature, And I dare think he’ll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too; Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure I stand accountant for as great a sin, But partly led to diet my revenge,

For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards; And nothing can or shall content my soul Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife. Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do, If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace For his quick hunting, stand the putting on, I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip, Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb (For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too) Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me. For making him egregiously an ass And practicing upon his peace and quiet, Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused: Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

1. *(RL4)* *Adieu* as it is used in this context most nearly means ________________.
   A. Hello       B. Farewell       C. Perhaps       D. Oh my

2. *(RL3)* What is the purpose of the situational irony used in lines 287-289?
   A. to show that Othello the Moor was the best match for Desdemona after all
   B. to suggest that Iago’s dislike of the Moor may not be related to the Moor’s character
   C. to show the reader that the Moor is a better man than Cassio is
   D. To prove that in order to be noble one must also be constant

3. *(RL1)* Which inference is supported by lines 285-290?
   A. Cassio loves Desdemona more than Othello loves Desdemona.
   B. Iago is jealous because Othello, the Moor, is married to the woman Othello loves.
   C. Desdemona enjoys having three men who are interested in her.
   D. Venice is a place where people openly express how much they love one another.

4. *(RL1)* Which lines suggest a reason why Iago has harsh feelings toward the Moor?
5. **(RL1)** What would Iago like to do if he is unable to “get even” with the Moor?
   A. make the Moor jealous
   B. make Desdemona suffer for it
   C. become the Moor’s favorite
   D. get even with Cassio instead

6. **(RL5)** Which two lines are a couplet?
   A. 287-288
   B. 294-295
   C. 301-302
   D. 310-311

**Act II Scene iii Lines 202–247**

**OTHELLO:** Now, by heaven,
   My blood begins my safer guides to rule,
   And passion, having my best judgment collied,
   Assays to lead the way: if I once stir
   Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
   Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
   How this foul rout began, who set it on;
   And he that is approved in this offense,
   Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,
   Shall lose me. What? In a town of war
   Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
   To manage private and domestic quarrel?
   In night, and on the court and guard of safety?
   'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began’t?

**MONTANO:** If partially affined, or leagued in office,
   Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
   Thou art no soldier.

**IAGO:** Touch me not so near.
   I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
   Than it should do offense to Michael Cassio.
   Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth
   Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general.
   Montano and myself being in speech,
   There comes a fellow crying out for help,

   And Cassio following him with determined sword
   To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
   Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause.
   Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
   Lest by his clamor
   --as it so fell out--
   The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
   Outran my purpose; and I returned then rather
   For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
   And Cassio high in oath; which till tonight
   I ne’er might say before. When I came back--
   For this was brief--I found them close together
   At blow and thrust, even as again they were
   When you yourself did part them.
   More of this matter cannot I report;
   But men are men; the best sometimes forget.
   Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
   As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
   Yet surely Cassio I believe received
   From him that fled some strange indignity,
   Which patience could not pass.

**OTHELLO:** I know, Iago,

   Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
   Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee;
   But never more be officer of mine.

7. **(RL4)** In lines 205-207, what is Othello’s tone toward his audience?
   A. threatening
   B. inspirational
   C. apathetic
   D. comical

8. **(RL1)** As the passage opens, what does Othello want to know?
   A. Who was injured in the altercation?
   B. Exactly where did the altercation take place?
   C. Who began the altercation?
   D. Did anyone insult Desdemona during the altercation?
9. (RL6) What is so ironic about Iago’s answer to Othello’s opening question?
A. Even though he makes Cassio look badly, he is Cassio’s best friend.
B. Even though he names Cassio as the culprit, he states that he does not want to harm him.
C. Even though he blames Cassio, the conversation makes Othello favor Cassio even more.
D. Even though he really loves Cassio, he pretends to hate him when Othello is around.

10. (RL1) What does Othello believe Iago attempts to do here regarding Cassio?
A. Iago smears Cassio’s reputation by telling more than he should tell.
B. Iago is entirely loyal to Cassio and does not mention Cassio’s involvement.
C. Iago minimizes Cassio’s blame by telling only a modest account of Cassio’s mistakes.
D. Iago dehumanizes Cassio by telling every gruesome detail of Cassio’s awful deeds.

11. (RL1) What decision has Othello made here regarding Cassio?
A. to promote him
B. to love him
C. to fire him
D. to ignore him

12. (RL4) Which of Othello’s lines is written in iambic pentameter?
A. 203  B. 211  C. 214  D. 245

Act II Scene iii Lines 333-366

IAGO: And what’s he then that says I play the villain,
When this advice is free I give, and honest,
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For ’tis most easy
Th’ inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit; she’s framed as fruitful
As the free elements. And then for her
To win the Moor--were’t to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin—
His soul is so enfetter’d to her love
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I’ll pour this pestilence into his ear:
That she repeals him for her body’s lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. How now, Roderigo?

[Enter Roderigo.]

RODERIGO: I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains, and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.
13. **(RL1)** Which inference best reflects Iago’s opinion of the marriage of Othello and Desdemona?
   A. Desdemona loves Othello more than Othello loves Desdemona.
   B. If Desdemona’s virtue is tarnished, the marriage will be threatened.
   C. Othello wants to dominate Desdemona publicly but allows her to do as she pleases privately.
   D. Both Desdemona and Othello listen closely to Iago, so he can make them hate one another.

14. **(RL1)** According to lines 348-350, what is Iago doing now?
   A. covering his terrible deeds with the appearance of goodness
   B. trying to learn to act like a living devil
   C. thinking of a specific way to gain Cassio’s support
   D. debating if he should change his terrible deeds to good deeds

15. **(RL4)** Which is the best definition of *virtue* as it is used in line 357?
   A. goodness  
   B. shyness  
   C. wickedness  
   D. youthfulness

16. **(RL1)** Why does Roderigo plan to return to Venice?
   A. He is out of money.  
   B. He realizes Iago is not his friend.  
   C. He fell out of Othello’s favor.  
   D. He has a family to return to.

17. **(RL3)** Which method of characterization used in this excerpt best reveals Iago’s character?
   A. dialogue  
   B. appearance  
   C. actions  
   D. private thoughts

18. **(RL5)** Iago’s soliloquy suggests that the resolution of this play will be ______________.
   A. comical  
   B. musical  
   C. tragic  
   D. academic
Vocabulary from Act III: *Othello*

Part I: Using Prior Knowledge and Contextual Clues

Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text.

1. His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift. I'll intermingle every thing he does With Cassio's suit.

2. Whereon I do beseech thee grant me this . . . .

3. Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady, Know of your love?

4. Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago . . . .

5. Note if your lady strain his entertainment With any strong or vehement importunity – Much will be seen in that.

6. . . . --this hand of yours requires A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer, much castigation, exercise devout.

7. My advocation is now in tune.

8. But now I find I had suborned the witness, And he's indicted falsely.

II. Determining the Meaning - Match the words to their dictionary definitions.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>shrift</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>beseech</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>wooed</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>conspire</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>importunity</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>castigation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>advocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>suborned</td>
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</table>
# Close Reading of Act III: *Othello*

## Scene i

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMILIA</td>
<td>Good morrow, good Lieutenant: I am sorry For your displeasure; but all will sure be well. The general and his wife are talking of it; And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies, That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus, And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you And needs no other suitor but his likings To take the safest occasion by the front To bring you in again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What basic plot information do Emilia’s words provide?**

## Scene iii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESDEMONA</td>
<td>Do not doubt that; before Emilia here I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee, If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it To the last article: my lord shall never rest; I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience; His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift; I'll intermingle every thing he does With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio; For thy solicitor shall rather die Than give thy cause away.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What does Desdemona promise Cassio she will do?**

**Who is the “him”?**

**How does this promise foreshadow Iago's soliloquy at the end of Act II, scene iii?**

**And by how much she strives to do him good, She shall undo her credit with the Moor. So will I turn her virtue into pitch, And out of her own goodness make the net That shall unmesh them all.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul, But I do love thee! and when I love thee not, Chaos is come again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What will happen if Othello stops loving Desdemona?**

**What technique did Shakespeare use in these lines? Explain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>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!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Translate Iago’s words:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHELLO</th>
<th>What is your opinion of Othello based on his response to Iago's warning about the “green eyed monster”?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Why, why is this?  
Think'st thou I'd make a lie 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 exsufficate 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! | |
| What is Othello’s opinion of jealousy?  
Underline the lines that support your claim. |
| **EMILIA** | What basic plot information do Emilia’s words provide? |
| I am glad I have found this napkin:  
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,  
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,  
And give't Iago: what he will do with it  
Heaven knows, not I;  
I nothing but to please his fantasy. | |
| Based on this information, to whom is Emilia most loyal? |
| **IAGO** | What basic plot information do Iago’s words provide? |
| I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,  
And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.  
The Moor already changes with my poison:  
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons.  
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
But with a little act upon the blood.  
Burn like the mines of Sulphur. I did say so:  
Look, where he comes! | |
| In this passage, Iago is attempting to “poison Othello’s ears” with lies about Cassio and Desdemona. What are Iago’s lies? |
| **IAGO** | In your opinion, are these lies convincing? Explain. |
| I do not like the office:  
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,  
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,  
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;  
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,  
I could not sleep.  
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,  
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:  
One of this kind is Cassio:  
In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,  
What is your opinion of Othello based on his response to Iago's warning about the “green eyed monster”?
| What is Othello’s opinion of jealousy?  
Underline the lines that support your claim. |
| **EMILIA** | What basic plot information do Emilia’s words provide? |
| I am glad I have found this napkin:  
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
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For he conjured her she should ever keep it,  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,  
And give't Iago: what he will do with it  
Heaven knows, not I;  
I nothing but to please his fantasy. | |
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And, being troubled with a raging tooth,  
I could not sleep.  
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,  
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:  
One of this kind is Cassio:  
In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;  
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,  
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,  
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots  
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg  
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then  
Cried 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHELLO</th>
<th>Using modern language, rewrite the conversation between Iago and Othello</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I greet thy love, Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous, And will upon the instant put thee to't: Within these three days let me hear thee say That Cassio's not alive.</td>
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<td>My friend is dead; 'tis done at your request: But let her live.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am your own for ever.</td>
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**Scene iv:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHELLO</th>
<th>What is so special about the handkerchief?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That is a fault. That handkerchief Did an Egyptian to my mother give; She was a charmer, and could almost read The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it, 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father Entirely to her love, but if she lost it Or made gift of it, my father's eye Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me; And bid me, when my fate would have me wive, To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't; Make it a darling like your precious eye; To lose't or give't away were such perdition As nothing else could match.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is't possible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it: A sibyl, that had number'd in the world The sun to course two hundred compasses, In her prophetic fury sew'd the work; The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk; And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful Conserved of maidens' hearts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.

Translate Emilia’s words:

1 This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
5 I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,
To pray at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years,—yet that's not much—
10 She's gone. I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
15 Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogatived are they less than the base;
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
20 When we do quicken.

1 Lines1-3: Who is this fellow? What is Othello's opinion of him?

5 Lines 3-12: What will the outcome be if Othello’s “proves [Desdemona] haggard”?

10 Lines 11-13: Why does Othello curse marriage?

15 Lines 13-16: Othello would prefer being a toad instead of being ____________

20 Lines 16-18: What is the plague of important men?
CASSIO: Masters, play here; I will content your pains, Something that's brief; and bid “Good morrow, general.” [They play.]

[Enter Clown.]

CLOWN: Why masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?

MUSICIAN: How, sir, how?

CLOWN: Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

MUSICIAN: Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLOWN: O, thereby hangs a tail.

MUSICIAN: Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

CLOWN: Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

MUSICIAN: Well, sir, we will not.

CLOWN: If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again. But, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

MUSICIAN: We have none such, sir.

CLOWN: Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away. Go, vanish into air; away! Exit Musicians

CASSIO: Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN: No. I hear not your honest friend. I hear you.

CASSIO: Prithee keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee. If the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favor of speech. Wilt thou do this?

CLOWN: She is stirring, sir. If she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. Exit Clown.

1. What would the clown like the musicians to do?
   A. play louder
   B. stop playing
   C. play requested songs
   D. play with different instruments

2. What is the overall purpose of this scene with the clown?
   A. comic relief
   B. flashback
   C. dramatic irony
   D. present a myth

3. The clown’s response to Cassio’s question in line 21 creates ________________.
   A. internal conflict
   B. a pun
   C. internal rhyme
   D. an aside

4. What does Cassio want the musicians to do for him?
   A. stop playing
   B. find the clown
   C. play something brief
   D. play something lengthy

5. Which term primarily identifies this excerpt as a whole?
   A. monologue
   B. soliloquy
   C. prose
   D. dialogue

6. Which best identifies the clown’s lines in this excerpt?
   A. prose
   B. lyric poetry
   C. couplets
   D. verse

7. According to the stage directions of this excerpt, which character(s) would be left on stage after the clown exits?
   A. none
   B. Musicians
   C. Cassio
   D. musicians and Cassio
IAGO: I am glad of this; 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 eyes thus: not jealous nor secure.
I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of self-bounty 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 kept unknown.

OTHELLO: Dost thou say so?

IAGO: She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.

OTHELLO: And so she did.

IAGO: Why, go to then!
She that so young could give out such a seeming
To seel her father’s eyes up close as oak—
He thought ‘twas witchcraft. But I am much to blame.
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.

OTHELLO: I am bound to thee forever

8. What implication does Iago make in lines 193-197?
   A. He loves Othello over everyone else.
   B. Othello’s wife has a suspicious relationship with Cassio.
   C. There is something wrong with Othello’s spirit.
   D. Cassio is not a qualified officer.

9. Which line states what Iago feels that Othello should do?
   A. 197  B. 202-203  C. 206  D. 211
10. In line 203, whom does Iago reference when he says, “they”?
   A. husbands  B. wives  C. military officers  D. all citizens of Venice

11. Why does Iago mention that Desdemona deceived her father in line 206?
   A. He is proud of her action.
   B. He faults Desdemona’s father for this action.
   C. He implies that she could treat Othello the same way.
   D. He wants to prove to Othello that he knew Desdemona’s father.

12. Iago is being sarcastic when_______
   A. he begs Othello’s pardon for loving Othello too much.
   B. he makes a connection between Othello and Desdemona’s father.
   C. he mentions that he has no proof regarding Cassio and Othello’s wife.
   D. he mentions witchcraft.

13. Othello’s disposition in this excerpt shifts from______________________.
   A. rage to sorrow
   B. confusion to clarity
   C. disbelief to certainty
   D. questioning to gratitude

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*Act III Scene iii Lines 303–326*

**EMILIA:** O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?

**IAGO:** What handkerchief?

**EMILIA:** What handkerchief!
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,
That which so often you did bid me steal.

**IAGO:** Hast stol’n it from her?

**EMILIA:** No, but she let it drop by negligence,
And to th’ advantage, I, being here, took’t up.
Look, here ’tis.

**IAGO:** A good wench. Give it me.

**EMILIA:** What will you do with’t, that you have been so earnest to have me filch it?

**IAGO:** Why, what is that to you?

**EMILIA:** If it be not for some purpose of import,
Give’t me again. Poor lady, she’ll run mad
When she shall lack it.

**IAGO:** Be not acknowledged on’t.
I have use for it. Go, leave me.    Exit Emilia.

I will in Cassio’s lodging lose this napkin
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of Holy Writ. This may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But, with a little, act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulfur. I did say so.

[Takes it.]
14. What is most likely the reason that Emilia repeats Iago’s words in line 305?
   A. confusion  B. surprise  C. fear  D. joy

15. Emilia would most likely say that she ________________ the handkerchief if questioned about it.
   A. found  B. made  C. stole  D. dislikes

16. Which sentence uses the word *filch* as Emilia uses it in line 313?
   A. Where is the filch that the robber used to take the items?
   B. Maryann needs the vintage handkerchief instead of the filch handkerchief.
   C. His filch style of obtaining goods is frowned upon by the elite.
   D. Mark was tempted to filch the shirt, but he chose to pay for it instead.

17. Which is the reason why Emilia chose to take possession of the handkerchief?
   A. It is beautiful.  C. Her husband convinces her to do so.
   B. It was given to her.  D. It would replace one that she lost.

18. Which of the following is something that Emilia appears not to know?
   A. who gave the handkerchief to Desdemona
   B. what Iago plans to do with the handkerchief
   C. how Desdemona will most likely react to not having the handkerchief
   D. whether or not Iago wants her to make her knowledge of the handkerchief known

19. Where does Iago plan to place the handkerchief?
   A. Desdemona’s chamber  C. Othello’s chamber
   B. Cassio’s chamber  D. in an unidentified location

20. What does Iago’s diction in lines 322-326 suggest about his intentions?
   A. His intentions are dangerous.  C. His intentions are peaceful.
   B. His intentions are to reward Othello.  D. His intentions are based on honesty.
Study Questions: Othello, Act III

Scene i
1. How is the concept of honesty contrasted in the conversation between Iago and Cassio?
2. What request does Cassio make of Emilia?

Scene ii
3. Summarize the events in this scene.

Scene iii
4. What is significant about the action at the beginning of the scene? What do we learn about the conversation between Desdemona and Cassio?
5. Explain the foreshadowing in the following lines:

   CASSIO: Ay, but, lady,
   That policy may either last so long,
   Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
   Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
   That, I being absent and my place supplied,
   My general will forget my love and service. (III, iii, 15-20)

6. How does Iago take advantage of Cassio’s departure as soon as Othello enters the garden?
7. Explain the irony in Desdemona’s statement “I have no judgment in an honest face…” (III, iii, 54)
8. Explain Desdemona’s tone in her conversation with Othello concerning Cassio.
9. After Desdemona compels Othello to speak to Cassio, she leaves. Othello states the following:

   OTHELLO: Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
   But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
   Chaos is come again. (III, iii, 100-103)

10. Why do you think Iago is able to sow the seed of jealousy in Othello’s heart, if Othello loves Desdemona as much as he claims he does? How does Iago influence Othello’s thoughts?
11. What does the image of the “green-eyed monster” signify, and how is it represented as a theme throughout the play? Read the following lines and explain the irony.

   IAGO: O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
   It is the green-eyes monster, which doth mock
   The meat it feeds on. (III, iii, 165-167)

12. Desdemona’s handkerchief becomes an important piece of stage business. Why did Desdemona produce it? What happens to it? What does Emilia plan to do with it? Finally, who gets it, and what is to be done with it?
13. How would you characterize the relationship between Iago and Emilia?
14. Iago’s first step in his plan to dishonor Othello is to ruin the Moor’s opinion of Cassio. That being accomplished, Iago then attempts to make Othello jealous. Again, with only so much as a word, Iago is able to accomplish the task. After he retrieves the handkerchief from Emilia, how does he prompt Othello to discuss the proof again?
15. Why do you think Othello is willing to believe Iago without confronting his wife with the accusation? What do you believe Shakespeare is saying about the relationships between men and women during this time?

16. Analyze Iago’s view of love as is illustrated in his following statement:

   It is impossible you should see this
   Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
   As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
   As ignorance made drunk. (III, iii, 448-451)

17. At the end of Act III, scene iii, Othello makes a request. What does he ask of Iago? What becomes of Iago?
Scene iv
18. Explain how the scene’s beginning is in direct contrast to the end of the previous scene.
19. What do you believe is the symbolism associated with the handkerchief?

20. Othello and Desdemona see each other for the first time since Iago has poisoned Othello’s mind. How does Othello seem to be treating Desdemona? What language gives away the complexity behind Othello’s emotions?
21. Explain the significance of the following speech.

   **OTHELLO:** This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
   Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
   A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
   Much castigation, exercise devout,
   For here’s a young and sweating devil here
   That commonly rebels. ‘Tis a good hand,
   A frank one. (III, iv, 39-45)

22. After Othello describes the importance of the handkerchief (lines 60-73), he tries to elicit a response from Desdemona about where she may find the handkerchief. Evaluate the language between Desdemona and Othello. What do you notice about Othello’s demeanor as it is illustrated through his language?
23. How does Desdemona interpret Othello’s questions in lines 75-107?
24. Explain the symbolism in the following lines:

   **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. (III, iv, 169-172)

25. Explain the connection and the irony between Iago’s earlier reference to the green-eyed monster and Emilia’s reference to the monster above.
26. Some people characterize Emilia and Bianca as foil for Desdemona. How would you explain Emilia as a foil for Desdemona?
27. In the final scene Act III, Bianca is angry at Cassio. How do Bianca and Othello parallel each other in their relationships with their significant others?
28. In this scene, Othello recounts the way in which he came to have the handkerchief that Desdemona has lost. What does Othello’s speech highlight about his character?
29. How does this play into Iago’s manipulation of the scenario between Othello, Cassio, and Desdemona? Cite an example from the play that illustrates Iago’s use of Othello’s perceived weakness.
Vocabulary from Act IV: Othello

Part I:

1-2. Thus *credulous* fools are caught, And many worthy and chaste dames even thus, All guiltless, meet *reproach*.

3. . . . of so high and plenteous *wit* and invention ---

4. If you are so find over her *iniquity*, give her patent to offend . . . .

5. Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not *expostulate* with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again.

6. Sir, I obey the *mandate*, And will return to Venice.

7. The *bawdy* wind, that kisses all it meets, Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth And will not hear it.

8. I will be hanged if some eternal villain, Some busy and *insinuating* rogue, Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office, Have not devised this slander.

9. He says he will return *incontinent*.

II. Determining the Meaning - Match the words to their dictionary definitions.

___ 1. *credulous*  
   A. command; official instruction

___ 2. *reproach*  
   B. introducing an idea subtly

___ 3. *wit*  
   C. criticism; disgrace; blame; shame

___ 4. *iniquity*  
   D. gullible

___ 5. *expostulate*  
   E. vulgar; humorously coarse

___ 6. *mandate*  
   F. uncontrolled; unrestrained

___ 7. *bawdy*  
   G. reason earnestly

___ 8. *insinuating*  
   H. sin(s)

___ 9. *incontinent*  
   I. intelligence; humor
Othello, Act IV Study Questions

Scene i
1. How does the scene begin? Explain the significance of the following conversation between Iago and Othello. Explain the symbolism of the handkerchief.
   IAGO: So they do nothing, ‘tis a venial slip:
   But if I give my wife a handkerchief
   OTHELLO: What then?
   IAGO: Why, then, ‘tis hers, my lord, and being hers,
   She may, I think, bestow’t on any man.
   OTHELLO: She is protectress of her honour too:
   May she give that?
   IAGO: Her honour is an essence that’s not seen;
   They have it very oft that have not it:
   But, for the handkerchief--
   OTHELLO: By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:
   Thou said’st—it comes o’er my memory,
   As doth the raven o’er the infected house,
   Boding to all--he had my handkerchief.

2. What physical reactions does Othello have to the news about Desdemona and Cassio? How might the audience interpret this response?

3. How does Othello misinterpret the dialogue between Cassio and Iago? How might an observant person realize that Cassio is speaking of Bianca rather than Desdemona?

4. With what does Othello charge Iago? How does Iago further influence Othello as they discuss Cassio’s and Desdemona’s murders?

5. How has Desdemona and Othello’s relationship changed since the beginning of the play?

6. Who is Lodovico? Explain what his presence in the play highlights about Othello’s character.

7. Explain the events as they transpire when Lodovico arrives. What do the events illustrate about Othello’s transformation? Cite a textual example that supports this recognized change in Othello’s behavior. How does this contribute to Othello’s ultimate demise?

8. Explain the irony in the following speech. How does Shakespeare continue to highlight the theme of appearance versus reality?
   IAGO: Alas, alas!
   It is not honesty in me to speak
   What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,
   And his own courses will denote him so
   That I may save my speech: do but go after,
   And mark how he continues.
   LODOVICO: I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

9. Pay attention to Othello’s language in this scene. How does his use of language parallel his language in Act III? What does Othello’s use of language explain about his character?

Scene ii
10. How does Emilia prove to be a friend to Desdemona? How does her characterization of the cause of Othello’s mistrust parallel Emilia’s beliefs about men and marriage?

11. Explain the rhetorical strategy that Shakespeare uses in the following passage. What is its effect?
   OTHELLO: Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
   Made to write “whore” upon? What committed?
   Committed! O thou public commoner!
   I should make very forges of my cheeks,
   That would to cinders burn up modesty,
   Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!
   Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks;
   The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets
   Is hush’d within the hollow mine of earth,
   And will not hear it. What committed!
   Impudent strumpet!
12. Roderigo is absent throughout much of the play. Explain Roderigo’s influence in the action in the play despite his invisibility. How is this a testimony to Iago’s manipulation? What is Roderigo’s purpose in this scene?
13. What exposition are we given through the conversation between Iago and Roderigo? What is Roderigo able to learn about Iago’s character that the other characters in the play have not?
14. How does Iago manipulate Roderigo at the end of scene two? How do we know that Iago is manipulating Roderigo?

Scene iii

15. Explain the meaning of Emilia’s statement, “I would you had never seen him!” (IV, iii, 19) What is the context in which she makes the statement? How does Desdemona respond to Emilia’s statement, and what does this illustrate about Desdemona’s character?
16. Shakespeare uses foreshadowing in this final scene to show what is going to happen to Desdemona. Cite several examples of foreshadowing in the scene and explain what they imply about Desdemona’s knowledge of her death.
17. Explain the purpose of the final conversation between Emilia and Desdemona. Of what do the two women speak?
18. Read Emilia’s final speech in Act Four (“Yes, a dozen . . . instruct us so”). What comment do you believe Shakespeare might be trying to make about the relationships between men and women through Emilia’s speech at the end of Act Four? How does Emilia’s speech contrast Desdemona’s beliefs about the relationships between men and women during the Renaissance?
Act IV, Scene I

1. How does the scene begin? Explain the significance of the following conversation between Iago and Othello. Explain the symbolism of the handkerchief.

IAGO: So they do nothing, ‘tis a venial slip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief

OTHELLO: What then?

IAGO: Why, then, ‘tis hers, my lord, and being hers,
She may, I think, bestow’t on any man.

OTHELLO: She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?

IAGO: Her honour is an essence that’s not seen;
They have it very oft that have it not:
But, for the handkerchief—

OTHELLO: By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it:
Thou said’st—it comes o’er my memory,
As doth the raven o’er the infected house,
Boding to all—he had my handkerchief.

2. Explain the irony in the following speech. How does Shakespeare continue to highlight the theme of appearance versus reality?

IAGO: Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,
And his own courses will denote him so
That I may save my speech: do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

LODOVICO: I am sorry that I am deceived in him. (Act IV, Scene I, lines 299 – 305)
OTHELLO: Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

IAGO: That’s not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

[Othello moves to one side, where his remarks are not audible to Cassio and Iago.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A huswife that by selling her desires
Buys herself bread and cloth. It is a creature
That dotes on Cassio, as ‘tis the strumpet’s plague
To beguile many and be beguiled by one,
He, when he hears of her, cannot restrain
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

Enter Cassio

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must conster
Poor Cassio’s smiles, gestures, and light behaviors
Quite in the wrong. How do you, lieutenant?

CASSIO: The worser that you give me the addition
Whose want even kills me.

1. Why does Othello use repetition in his opening lines?
   A. He is showing that he out-ranks Iago.
   B. He is boasting about his bloody military skills.
   C. The questions are rhetorical only.
   D. He wants to make sure he has Iago’s attention.

2. How does Iago expect Cassio to react when he mentions Bianca?
   A. embarrassed          B. cheerful          C. frightened          D. angry

3. Where is Othello during Iago’s conversation with Cassio?
   A. in the room being a part of the conversation
   B. eavesdropping while hidden from Cassio
   C. planning to confront Iago
   D. nowhere to be found
4. What emotion does Iago hope to create in Othello?
   A. pity  B. rage  C. excitement  D. contentment

5. Who lacks information, which is then used to create important dramatic irony in this scene?
   A. Cassio and Iago  B. Iago and Othello  C. Othello and Cassio  D. Emilia and Iago

6. Which of the following sentences uses the term *withdraw* most closely to the way the word is used in line 93?
   A. I wanted to remain onstage, but the director asked me to withdraw.
   B. I went to the bank to withdraw money so that I could go shopping.
   C. My friend plans to withdraw from art class, but I love the assignments too much to leave.
   D. I hoped the doctor could withdraw the nail from my foot.

7. After walking onto the stage, which line is most likely the point at which Cassio is able to hear what Iago is saying?
   A. 101  B. 102  C. 103  D. 104

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**Act IV scene I Lines 145-177**

**CASSIO:** 145 'Tis such another fitchew! Marry a perfumed one? What do you mean by this haunting of me?

**BIANCA:** Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work that you should find it in your chamber and know not who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There! [She throws down the handkerchief.] Give it your hobbyhorse. Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

**CASSIO:** How now, my sweet Bianca? How now? How now?

**OTHELLO:** By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

**BIANCA:** If you'll come to supper tonight, you may; if you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [Exit]

**IAGO:** After her, after her!

**CASSIO:** Faith, I must; she'll rail in the streets else.

**IAGO:** Will you sup there?

**CASSIO:** Yes, I intend so.

**IAGO:** 165 Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very fain speak with you.

**CASSIO:** Prithee come. Will you?

**IAGO:** Go to, say no more. [Exit Cassio.]

**OTHELLO:** [ Comes forward. ] How shall I murder him, Iago?

**IAGO:** Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

**OTHELLO:** O Iago!

**IAGO:** And did you see the handkerchief?

**OTHELLO:** Was that mine?

**IAGO:** 175 Yours, by this hand! And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath giv'n it his whore.
8. Which word best describes how Bianca feels about having accepted the handkerchief from Cassio?
   A. regretful
   B. proud
   C. inspired
   D. sinful

9. Which of the following statements is most likely an idea that Bianca does not believe?
   E. Cassio is handsome.
   F. Cassio likes her cooking.
   G. Cassio does not know who left the handkerchief.
   H. Iago is a friend to Cassio.

10. Based on the stage directions and dialogue here, which other characters are intended to hear Othello’s comment in line 158?
    A. Iago
    B. Bianca
    C. Cassio
    D. none of them

11. Why does Iago say that Othello’s wife is foolish?
    A. She believes Cassio is attractive.
    B. She trusts Bianca.
    C. She does not care for Othello.
    D. She gave Cassio a valuable item.

12. What does Iago want Othello to believe is the reason that Cassio laughs?
    A. He laughs because he’s nervous.
    B. Cassio is trying to anger Othello even more.
    C. Cassio thinks his bad deed is funny.
    D. He laughs because Iago says something comical.

13. Four students annotated this excerpt. Which student’s summary is most accurate, objective, and complete?
    A. Student A
    - Bianca confronts Cassio about the handkerchief.
    - She throws it down, offers a dinner invitation, and leaves.
    - Before chasing her, Cassio says he’ll go to dinner.
    - Othello secretly saw it all and discusses his anger with Iago.
B. Student B
-Bianca thinks the handkerchief is beautiful but is angry about it.
-Cassio runs after her because he needs to get the handkerchief back.
-Othello is secretly spying on Cassio, Bianca, and Iago.
-Iago is trying to make Othello calm down.

C. Student C
-Bianca is clearly an unstable woman looking to ruin Cassio.
-Cassio is too naïve to see what’s going on around him.
-Othello is angry about the handkerchief and everything else too.
-Thank goodness this scene is short!

D. Student D
-Bianca is angry about the handkerchief, so she confronts Cassio.
-He says that he doesn’t know who left it in his chamber.
-She throws the handkerchief down and leaves.
-As she goes, she offers him an invitation for dinner.
EMILIA: I have laid these sheets you bade me on the bed.

DESDEMONA: All’s one. Good Father, how foolish are our minds!
If I do die before, prithee shroud me
In one of these same sheets.
EMILIA: Come, come! You talk.

DESDEMONA: My mother had a maid called Barbary.
She was in love; and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a song of “Willow”;
An old thing ‘twas, but it expressed her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song tonight
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee dispatch.

EMILIA: Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

DESDEMONA: No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA: A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA: He speaks well.

EMILIA: I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DESDEMONA: [Sings.]
“The poor soul sat singing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her and murmured her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soft’ned the stones—
Sing willow, willow, willow—”
Lay by these. [Gives Emilia her clothes.]
14. Which description best explains the relationship between Desdemona and Emilia based on this passage?
   A. sisters
   B. boss and maid
   C. secret enemies
   D. mother and daughter

15. What is the purpose of the flashback about Barbary?
   A. to show that Emilia is just like Barbary
   B. to show that Desdemona sings well
   C. to show the way Desdemona felt about her mother
   D. to foreshadow Desdemona’s unfortunate fate

16. What might the song “Willow” symbolize?
   A. the pain of lost love
   B. the closeness shared by lovers
   C. the newness of meeting a mate
   D. the confusion women suffer when dating

17. What artistic strategy is primarily used in the first line of the verse from “Willow”?
   A. onomatopoeia
   B. hyperbole
   C. alliteration
   D. internal rhyme

18. Which item is personified in the verse of “Willow” sang by Desdemona?
   A. the sycamore tree
   B. her bosom
   C. the fresh streams
   D. the stones

19. Which device does Emilia use in lines 41-42 to make a point about Lodovico’s attractiveness?
   A. hyperbole
   B. dramatic irony
   C. pun
   D. paradox

20. What is the tone of the woman toward her own situation as she is described in the verse of “Willow” sang by Desdemona?
   A. forgiving
   B. proud
   C. vengeful
   D. sorrowful
Act IV, Scene II

1. How does Emilia prove to be a friend to Desdemona? How does her characterization of the cause of Othello’s mistrust parallel Emilia’s beliefs about men and marriage?

2. In the following speech, to what does “it” refer?

EMILIA: I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest, Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other, Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom. If any wretch have put this in your head, Let heaven requite it with the serpent’s curse! For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true, There’s no man happy; the purest of their wives Is foul as slander. (Act IV, Scene II, lines 14 – 21)

3. Explain the rhetorical strategy of repletion that Shakespeare uses in the following passage. What is its effect?

OTHELLO: Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, Made to write “whore” upon? What committed? Committed! O thou public commoner! I should make very forges of my cheeks, That would to cinders burn up modesty, Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed! Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks; The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets Is hush’d within the hollow mine of earth, And will not hear it. What committed! Impudent strumpet! (Act IV, Scene II, lines 79 – 89)
4. Read the following interchange between Iago, Desdemona, and Emilia. What question does Desdemona ask of Iago? How does he initially respond? What does this say about his character?

**IAGO:** What’s the matter, lady?

**EMILIA:** Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her, Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her, As true hearts cannot bear.

**DESDEMONA:** Am I that name, Iago?

**IAGO:** What name, fair lady?

**DESDEMONA:** Such as she says my lord did say I was.

**EMILIA:** He call’d her whore; a beggar in his drink Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

**IAGO:** Why did he so?

**DESDEMONA:** I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

**IAGO:** Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

**EMILIA:** Hath she forsook so many noble matches, Her father and her country and her friends, To be call’d whore? would it not make one weep?

**DESDEMONA:** It is my wretched fortune.

**IAGO:** How comes this trick upon him?

**DESDEMONA:** Nay, heaven doth know.

**EMILIA:** I will be hang’d, if some eternal villain, Some busy and insinuating rogue, Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office, Have not devised this slander; I’ll be hang’d else.

**IAGO:** Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible. (Act IV, Scene II, lines 130 – 152)

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32 whore 33 deceiving
5. Roderigo is absent throughout much of the play. Explain Roderigo’s influence in the action in the play despite his invisibility. How is this a testimony to Iago’s manipulation? What is Roderigo’s purpose in this scene?

6. What exposition are we given through the conversation between Iago and Roderigo? What is Roderigo able to learn about Iago’s character that the other characters in the play have not?

7. How does Iago manipulate Roderigo at the end of Scene Two? How do we know that Iago is manipulating Roderigo?

Act IV, Scene III

1. Explain the meaning of Emilia’s statement, “I would you had never seen him!” (Act IV, Scene III) What is the context in which she makes the statement? How does Desdemona respond to Emilia’s statement, and what does this illustrate about Desdemona’s character?

2. Shakespeare uses foreshadowing in this final scene of Act Four to show what is going to happen to Desdemona. Cite several examples of foreshadowing in the scene and explain what they imply about Desdemona’s knowledge of her death.
3. Explain the purpose of the final conversation between Emilia and Desdemona. Of what do the two women speak?

4. Read Emilia’s final speech in Act Four. What comment do you believe Shakespeare might be trying to make about the relationships between men and women through Emilia’s speech at the end of Act Four? How does Emilia’s speech contrast Desdemona’s beliefs about the relationships between men and women during the Renaissance?

**EMILIA:** Yes, a dozen, and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.
But I do think it is their husbands’ faults
If wives do fall; say that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us, or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite,
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them; they see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is’t frailty that thus errs?
It is so too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well; else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so. (Act IV, Scene III)

34 besides 35 enough besides to populate the whole world
36 withhold our allowance out of spite
Vocabulary from Act V: *Othello*

Part I: Below are the sentences in which the vocabulary words appear in the text.

1. Wear thy good rapier barde, and put it home. Quick, quick, fear nothing, I'll be at thy elbow. It makes us, or it mars us. Think on that, And fix most firm thy resolution.

2. There stand I in much peril.

3. Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.

4. Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

5. I would not have thee linger in thy pain.

6. If he say so, may his pernicious soul Rot half a grain a day!

7. And she did gratify his amorous works . . . .

8. That handkerchief thou speak' st of I found by fortune and did give my husband, For often with a solemn earnestness, More than indeed belonged to such a trifle, He begged of me to steal it.

9. Do you go back dismayed?

10. Speak of me as I am, nothing extenuate, Nor set down aught in malice.

II. Determining the Meaning - Match the words to their dictionary definitions.

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<td>3. anon</td>
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<td>C. reward; indulge; satisfy</td>
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<td>5. linger</td>
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Othello, Act V Study Questions

Scene i

1. Explain what the following speech illustrates about Iago’s character.
   **IAGO**: I have rubb’d this young quat almost to the sense, And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio, Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other, Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo, He calls me to a restitution large Of gold and jewels that I bobb’d from him, As gifts to Desdemona; It must not be. If Cassio do remain, He hath a daily beauty in his life That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril: No, he must die. But so: I hear him coming.

2. For what two reasons does Iago say he wants Cassio dead?

3. In the battle, who is responsible for the wounds?

4. Explain Othello’s reaction to Roderigo’s and Cassio’s injuries. With what does he give Iago credit? Explain the irony in Othello’s words.
   **OTHELLO**: ’Tis he. O brave Iago, honest and just, That hast such noble sense of thy friend’s wrong! Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead, And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come! Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted; Thy bed, lust-stain’d, shall with lust’s blood be spotted.

5. How is Iago able to manipulate the situation even further? How does his manipulation of the scene connect to the theme of the play?


7. Explain Iago’s implication of Bianca. Explain why you believe he chooses to implicate her.

8. Read the following speech, paying particular attention to the aside. What does Iago’s statement lead us to believe about him?
   **IAGO**: Kind gentlemen, let’s go see poor Cassio dress’d. Come, mistress, you must tell’s another tale. Emilia, run you to the citadel, And tell my lord and lady what hath happ’d! Will you go on? [Aside] This is the night That either makes me or fordoes me quite.
Scene ii

9. Read Othello’s speech at the beginning of scene. Explain Othello’s state of mind. How does his use of language compare with his use of language in Act Four? As he contemplates murdering Desdemona, with what does he compare taking her life? Explain the uses of diction as Shakespeare employs them in this speech.

   **OTHELLO:** It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
   Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
   It is the cause. Yet I’ll not shed her blood,
   Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
   And smooth as monumental alabaster.
   Yet she must die, else she’ll betray more men.
   Put out the light, and then put out the light.
   If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
   I can again thy former light restore,
   Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
   Thou cunning’st pattern of excelling nature,
   I know not where is that Promethean heat
   That can thy light relume. When I have pluck’d the rose,
   I cannot give it vital growth again,
   It must needs wither; I’ll smell it on the tree. [Kisses her.]
   O, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
   Justice to break her sword! One more, one more;
   Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
   And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
   So sweet was ne’er so fatal. I must weep,
   But they are cruel tears; this sorrow’s heavenly,
   It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

10. Why does Othello ask Desdemona if she prayed before she went to sleep?

11. How does Desdemona try to convince Othello not to kill her? What is the effect of her final conversation with Othello?

12. Explain the symbolism and recognition of the handkerchief in this final scene.

13. When Othello tells Desdemona of Cassio’s death, what is her reaction? How does Othello interpret this reaction?

14. Othello believes that he has killed Desdemona. Explain his reaction to her death.

   **OTHELLO:** Yes: ‘tis Emilia. By and by. She’s dead.
   ‘Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio’s death.
   The noise was here, Ha! no more moving?
   Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were’t good?
   I think she stirs again. No. What’s best to do?
   If she come in, she’ll sure speak to my wife:
   My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife.
   O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
   Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
   Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
   Should yawn at alteration.
15. Explain the events in the following lines from Act Five. Why does Desdemona say what she says?

EMILIA: Alas, what cry is that?
OTHELLO: That? what?
EMILIA: Out, and alas! That was my lady’s voice.
Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!
DESDEMONA: A guiltless death I die.
EMILIA: O, who hath done this deed?
DESDEMONA: Nobody; I myself. Farewell;
Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell! [Dies]

16. Why does Emilia repeat the phrase, “My husband!” three times?
17. How does Shakespeare reveal Iago’s duplicity after Desdemona’s murder?
18. How is Emilia’s fate parallel to Desdemona’s?
19. What is the implication behind Gratiano’s speech?

GRATIANO: Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father’s dead:
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain; did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

20. Explain the irony in Iago’s statement.

IAGO: Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:
From this time forth I never will speak word.

21. How does darkness function in the scene?
22. Explain the imagery in Othello’s final speech. What is he requesting? How does the imagery speak to Othello’s character?

OTHELLO: Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know’t.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought
Perplex’d in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban’d Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus.