



Evolving Perspectives

Visual Prompt: What do you notice about the figures in this image of Othello and Desdemona? How would you characterize their relationship? How do you think the artist views them?

Unit Overview

In Units 1 and 2, you explored how your perception of a text could change when you examined it using a particular critical perspective. In this unit, you will deepen your understanding of critical perspectives as you apply Reader Response, Feminist, Marxist, Cultural, and Archetypal Criticism to scenes from a drama. William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* has inspired various critical interpretations over the centuries. The many interpretations are, in some ways, as compelling as the drama itself; thus, *Othello* offers the ideal opportunity for introducing Historical Criticism.

GOALS:

- To analyze multiple interpretations of a Shakespearean tragedy
- To examine critical perspectives as they apply to the drama
- To plan and perform dramatic interpretations of selected scenes
- To analyze the ways in which historical contexts have influenced performances of the play
- To analyze the use of meter and rhythm in poetry and in the play

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

- components
- unconventional
- complicate
- scenario
- rationale

Literary Terms

- dramatic irony
- verbal irony
- situational irony
- epithet
- Historical Criticism
- soliloquy
- aside

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*Texts not included in these materials.

Language and Writer’s Craft

- Rhythm and Meter (3.3)
- Determining the Meanings of Words (3.5)
- Language Change (3.8)



MY INDEPENDENT READING LIST

Previewing the Unit

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Close Reading, Marking the Text, Skimming/ Scanning, Graphic Organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Preview key ideas and vocabulary for the unit.
- Identify and analyze the skills and knowledge needed to complete Embedded Assessment 1 successfully.

Making Connections

Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, has been in continuous production for more than 400 years! In addition to its role as a drama, *Othello* was also the inspiration for two operas that have been in production since the early 1800s: one written by Gioachino Rossini and first performed in 1816, and a second written by Guiseppe Verdi and first performed in 1887. Ballets and other plays have also been derived from *Othello*. Shakespeare’s works continue to be relevant today because they speak to universal themes that are still present in many people’s lives. In this unit, you will read *Othello* and apply Historical Criticism to analyzing the drama and the characters.

Essential Questions

Based on your current knowledge, respond to the following Essential Questions.

1. What role does literature play in the examination of recurring social issues?
2. How can a dramatic performance reflect a critical perspective?

Developing Vocabulary

Look at the list of Literary Terms on the Contents page. Are any of them familiar to you? As you study the unit, use your Reader/Writer Notebook to capture definitions and to explore the meanings of these key terms. What other strategies can you use independently to gather vocabulary knowledge?

Unpacking Embedded Assessment 1

Closely read the following assignment for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing an Argument.

Your assignment is to construct an argumentative essay that defends the critical lens that you feel provides modern society with the most compelling view of literature (choose among Historical, Cultural, or Feminist for this assignment). You will support the claim with valid reasoning and with relevant and sufficient evidence from your reading and observations.

With your class, create a graphic organizer that includes the skills you must demonstrate and the knowledge you must possess to write an argument. Summarize the major elements in your Reader/Writer Notebook.



**INDEPENDENT
READING LINK**

Read and Discuss

The focus of this unit is the play *Othello* by William Shakespeare. For independent reading, you might choose novels or plays that connect to one or more themes from *Othello*, such as race, jealousy, or deceit. Make a plan for reading in which you decide which themes you want to explore, and discuss your plan with a group of peers. Offer suggestions to each other about the texts as well as ways to make your reading plans more effective.

Learning Targets

- Examine the requirements for a staged interpretation of a scene from *Othello*.
- Prepare and perform an oral interpretation of a scene from *Othello*.

All the World's a Stage

In Shakespeare's day, acting companies named themselves, sometimes honoring their patron. Shakespeare belonged first to the Lord Chamberlain's Men and later to the King's Men. In this unit, you will be working collaboratively with an acting company to analyze, interpret, and eventually perform a scene from *Othello*.

Choose a name for your acting company.

For the second Embedded Assessment, you and your acting group will stage an interpretation of a scene from *Othello*. Work with your acting company to make a preliminary scene choice from the list of suggested scenes on pages 182–183. Do not let gender dictate your casting choices. Also make preliminary decisions about the following roles within your acting company:

- **Director:** Leads the rehearsals, working collaboratively with the group. Assumes responsibility for all of the theatrical elements: a set diagram, a plan for lighting and sound, props, and a complete script of the scene. Writes and memorizes an engaging introduction to the performance and delivers it on performance day.
- **Dramaturge:** Conducts research to support the critical perspective the group is applying to the scene and answers questions about the scene. Writes and memorizes a concluding statement about the scene that explains how the group applied a critical perspective and how research supported the performance, and delivers it on performance day.
- **Actors:** Study the play, paying particular attention to their characters, and take notes. Collaborate with the director and the other actors to plan a performance. During the performance, use appropriate vocal delivery, facial expression, gestures and movement, props, and costumes to convey nuances of their characters.

Once you have come to an agreement, sign and turn in a contract to your teacher. Here is a template:

We, the _____ (name of acting company), **pledge to plan, rehearse, and perform** _____ (act and scene) **from William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello*.**

Cast:

(Name of student) **as** (name of character)

Director:

Dramaturge:

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Discussion Groups

My Notes

Creating Acting Companies

Scene	Description	Characters	First line and approximate length
Act I, Scene I	Iago and Roderigo awaken Brabantio and inform him that his daughter has eloped.	Iago Roderigo Brabantio	RODERIGO: Tush, never tell me! 206 lines (Companies could opt to do only part of the scene.)
Act I, Scene III Lines 197–335	Desdemona admits her love for Othello; the Duke dispatches them to Cyprus.	Duke Desdemona Othello First senator (only one line)	DUKE: I think this tale would win my daughter too. 139 lines
Act I, Scene III Lines 344–447	Iago continues to take advantage of Roderigo’s affection for Desdemona.	Roderigo Iago	RODERIGO: Iago— IAGO: What say’st thou, noble heart? 104 lines
Act II, Scene I Lines 197–307	Desdemona welcomes Othello to Cyprus; Iago convinces Roderigo to attack Cassio.	Othello Desdemona Iago Roderigo	OTHELLO: O my fair warrior! 111 lines
Act II, Scene III Lines 14–124	With Iago’s encouragement, Cassio gets drunk.	Cassio Iago Montano Gentleman (only one line, which could be given to Montano)	CASSIO: Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch. 111 lines
Act II, Scene III Lines 125–265	A drunken brawl ends with Othello demoting Cassio.	Iago Montano Cassio Roderigo	IAGO [<i>to Montano</i>]: You see this fellow that is gone before. 141 lines

My Notes

Scene	Description	Characters	First line and approximate length
Act III, Scene III Lines 1–99	Desdemona tries to convince Othello to reinstate Cassio.	Desdemona Emilia Cassio Othello Iago	DESDEMONA: Be thou assured, good Cassio ... 99 lines
Act III, Scene III Lines 100–240	Iago plants the seed of doubt in Othello’s mind.	Othello Iago	OTHELLO: Excellent wretch! 141 lines
Act III, Scene IV Lines 39–115	Othello demands to see the handkerchief, while Desdemona tries to change the subject by pleading Cassio’s case.	Othello Desdemona	OTHELLO: How do you, Desdemona? 77 lines
Act IV, Scene II Lines 128–201	Desdemona seeks advice from Iago, while Emilia curses the person who planted the thought of infidelity in Othello’s mind.	Iago Desdemona Emilia	IAGO: What is your pleasure, madam? 74 lines
Act IV, Scene III Lines 11–117	Desdemona and Emilia discuss infidelity.	Desdemona Emilia	EMILIA: How goes it now? 107 lines
Act V, Scene I Lines 1–151	Roderigo attacks Cassio.	Iago Roderigo Cassio Gratiano Lodovico Bianca Emilia	IAGO: Here, stand behind this bulk. 151 lines
Act V, Scene II Lines 131–301	Emilia tells Othello the truth.	Emilia Othello Desdemona Montano	OTHELLO: What’s the matter with thee now? 171 lines

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Graphic Organizer, Jigsaw

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Components are the parts that make up a whole. They can be steps in a process, ingredients in a recipe, or aspects of a critical perspective.

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast the development of a theme in song lyrics and poetry.
- Apply a critical perspective to the interpretation of a text.

Preview

In this activity, you will review the elements of Cultural Criticism and then apply them to an analysis of a song and a poem that address similar themes.

Cultural Criticism

1. Review the **components** of Cultural Criticism below. Use this critical perspective as your lens as you carefully consider two texts that follow.

Cultural Criticism examines how differing religious beliefs, ethnicities, class identifications, political beliefs, and individual viewpoints affect how texts are created and interpreted. What it means to be a part of—or excluded from—a specific group contributes to and affects our understanding of texts in relation to culture.

Some common assumptions in the use of Cultural Criticism are as follows:

- Ethnicity, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and so on are crucial components in formulating plausible interpretations of text.
- While the emphasis is on diversity of approach and subject matter, Cultural Criticism is not the only means of understanding ourselves and our art.
- An examination or exploration of the relationship between dominant cultures and the dominated is essential to understanding a text.

2. Listen to the song “The Right to Love,” which was written by Gene Lees and Lilo Schifrin in the 1960s. While you listen, follow along with the printed lyrics. After listening to the song, write a one-sentence summary of what the song is about. Then read the following poem.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the poem, underline words and phrases that connect to the song lyrics.
- Pause after each stanza to write questions you have about the lines from that stanza.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born to a prosperous Roman Catholic family in London at a time when anti-Catholic sentiment abounded, John Donne (1572–1631) had a promising career as a diplomat but spent most of his fortune on leisure and pleasure. He secretly married Anne More, much to the disapproval of her father, and she bore him 12 children and died with the last birth. In 1615, at the king’s order, he became an Anglican priest and was later dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral. His life was riddled with spiritual conflict, and Donne is best known as a metaphysical poet whose writings are laden with rich religious symbolism and metaphor.

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *components* contains the Latin prefix *com-*, which means “with” or “together.” The Latin root of *component* is *ponere*, which means “to place.” Related words include *comport*, *compose*, *composer*, and *composite*.

Poetry

THE
CANONIZATION

by John Donne

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love;

Or **chide** my palsy, or my gout;

My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune **flout**;

With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve;

5 Take you a course, get you a place,

Observe his Honour, or his Grace;

Or the king's real, or his stamp'd face

Contemplate; what you will, approve,

So you will let me love.

10 Alas! alas! who's injured by my love?

What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?

Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?

When did my colds a forward spring remove?

When did the heats which my veins fill

15 Add one more to the plaguy bill?

Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still

Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love.

Call's what you will, we are made such by love;

20 Call her one, me another fly,

We're **tapers** too, and at our own cost die,

And we in us find th' eagle and the dove.

The phoenix riddle hath more wit

By us; we two being one, are it;

25 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,

And if unfit for tomb or hearse

30 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;

And if no piece of chronicle we prove,

We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;

As well a well-wrought urn becomes

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

My Notes

chide: scold

flout: openly disregard

litigious: looking for a reason
to sue

tapers: candles

Cultural Criticism

canonized: recognized as holy

invoke: call upon for help

hermitage: building far from other ones

epitomize: function as the best example of

35 And by these hymns, all shall approve
Us **canonized** for love.

And thus **invoke** us, “You, whom reverend love
Made one another’s **hermitage**

You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;

40 Who did the whole world’s soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes;
So made such mirrors, and such spies,

That they did all to you **epitomize**—
Countries, towns, courts beg from above

45 A pattern of your love!”

Second Read

- Reread the poem to answer these text-dependent questions.
 - Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
3. **Key Ideas and Details:** What details in lines 1–9 of the poem indicate whom the speaker is addressing?

4. **Craft and Structure:** What clues show the meaning of “the plaguy bill” in line 15?

5. **Craft and Structure:** How does the speaker use rhetorical questions in lines 10–15 to make his point?

6. **Craft and Structure:** What images does Donne create in the lines “Call her one, me another fly, / We’re tapers too, and at our own cost die”?



WORD CONNECTIONS

Etymology

The word *canonization*, in the Catholic Church, refers to the act of declaring a person a saint. The term comes from the Late Latin *canon*, meaning “church law,” which later referred to a list of texts considered holy by the church. To *canonize* is to treat something as sacred or to worship, adore, or idolize it.

My Notes

7. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the theme of love develop over the course of the poem? According to lines 28–36, how will the canonization of the speaker and his love be achieved?

8. **Key Ideas and Details:** How is the “you” that the speaker addresses in the last nine lines of the poem different from “you” in the first nine lines? What evidence supports your answer?

My Notes

Check Your Understanding

Think about the song lyrics and the poem. How are the two texts similar in the kinds of relationships or situations the singer/speaker might be describing?

9. Now revisit the two texts using a Cultural Criticism lens. Work with discussion groups to respond to the questions in the following graphic organizer.

“The Right to Love”	Cultural Criticism Lens	“The Canonization”
	Who is the speaker? What is the situation? How might the speaker’s ethnicity, religious beliefs, or political beliefs affect the situation?	
	Is the point of view from the marginalized perspective or from the dominant perspective?	
	What does this literary work add to our understanding of human experience in the time and place in which it is set, including the ways individual identity shapes and is shaped by cultural institutions?	
	How might this work be received differently by today’s audience than it was by the audience of the time it was written?	

Cultural Criticism

My Notes

Language and Writer's Craft: Rhythm and Meter

Meter refers to a repeating pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in spoken or written language. By placing an emphasis on certain syllables, an author is able to create rhythm. Look at these lines from the poem “The Canonization” by John Donne:

Alas! Alas! Who's injured by my love?
 ...
 Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?
 When did my colds a forward spring remove?

These lines consist of a number of **metrical feet**, which in this case contain one unstressed and one stressed syllable. This pattern of unstressed-stressed creates **iambic meter**, the most common rhythm in English verse. Some say it sounds like a heartbeat:

da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM

Much of *Othello* is written in **blank verse**, which is iambic pentameter (10 syllables to a line) that does not rhyme. Mark up the lines spoken by Othello below to show meter. Write a symbol like this (~) over each unstressed syllable and one like this (') over each stressed syllable.

She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used.
 Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

Notice how the slight variations in the rhythm prevent the lines from becoming too singsong, even though most of the lines are in iambic pentameter.

PRACTICE Revisit a section of John Donne's poem of interest to you and mark the text to identify the meter.

Writing to Sources: Explanatory Text

Write a comparative analysis paragraph that examines the rhythm and meter in the song lyrics and the poem. Be sure to:

- Identify the rhythm and meter in the song lyrics and in the poem.
- Support analysis with textual support and integrate quotations seamlessly.
- Use a formal, academic tone that uses third-person point of view.

Building a Plot and Bringing It to Life: Irony

ACTIVITY
3.4

Learning Targets

- Interpret a scenario considering characters' background and motivations.
- Create and stage an interpretive performance that incorporates multiple forms of irony.

Analyzing Plot and Themes

1. Although it is likely you have not encountered Shakespeare's *Othello* in your previous English classes, the plot and the themes it brings to light will not be brand-new. Jump into the timeless story of an **unconventional** marriage and the issues that **complicate** it by visualizing the **scenario** and the outcome assigned to you by your teacher.

Scenario	Character 1 tells Character 2 that his or her romantic partner is cheating on him or her. Character 1 then produces "evidence." However, the story is untrue; Character 1 is lying.
Outcome A	Character 2 does not believe the story and turns on Character 1.
Outcome B	Character 2 considers the story as a possibility but then decides it is not true after much investigation.
Outcome C	Character 2 believes the story, is filled with jealousy, and wants revenge.

2. Review the definitions of the types of **irony** in the box on the right. How is irony—**dramatic, verbal, or situational**—a part of your plot? How can you make it a significant aspect of your presentation?
3. Give the characters names and traits that seem fitting and that may explain why they find themselves in this situation. Consider the motivations of each character. Your identification of character backgrounds and motivations is an important aspect of the subtext of this scene.
4. Include dialogue that conveys the scenario and its outcome.
5. Determine the physical evidence that will serve as "proof" of cheating. Be imaginative about the prop your character uses as the "evidence."
6. Be sure to incorporate forms of irony (verbal, situational, and dramatic) to create an effect. Dramatic irony particularly applies; make sure that your audience knows that the story is not true.
7. In addition to subtext and irony, consider other literary elements you may want to highlight in the performance (for example, sophisticated use of point of view may enhance the audience's understanding of a character).
8. Think about the way your delivery of lines or the way you stand or move on stage will enhance the performance.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Visualizing, Drafting, Drama Games, Rehearsing

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Something **unconventional** does not follow the accepted ways of acting in a situation. Interracial marriages were uncommon in Shakespeare's time.

To **complicate** something is to make it more complex, such as by making a situation more difficult. It can also mean to add detail to make something richer or more elaborate.

The word **scenario** refers to a hypothetical situation or specific possibility. As used here, it indicates the outline of a dramatic scene.

Literary Terms

Dramatic irony is a situation in which the audience knows more about the circumstances or future events in a story than the characters within it; as a result, the audience can see a discrepancy between characters' perceptions and the reality they face.

Verbal irony occurs when a character says one thing but means something completely different.

Situational irony is like a surprise ending—your audience expects one thing to happen, but something completely different takes place.

Building a Plot and Bringing It to Life: Irony

My Notes

9. Rehearse and present the scenario to your classmates. Use the chart below to take notes on the performances you view.

Performance Notes

Check Your Understanding

What did you learn about the role of irony in a plot, about writing dialogue, and about performing a short scene?

Explanatory Writing Prompt

With your group, write an essay to analyze how one of the other groups conveyed irony and subtext in their performance. Be sure to:

- Identify the group and give a brief summary of its performance.
- Include specific examples from the performance that convey irony and subtext.
- Use a coherent organizational structure and make connections between specific words, images, and the ideas conveyed.

Viewing a Cast of Characters Through a Marxist Lens

ACTIVITY
3.5

Learning Targets

- Use a Marxist critical lens to analyze the relationships among a cast of characters.
- Plan and construct an explanatory essay closely analyzing character relationships and conflict.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Revisiting Prior Work, Close Reading, Graphic Organizer, Drafting

Cast of Characters

1. Revisit your response to Essential Question 2 from Activity 3.1. In the last activity, you staged a scene. It is likely that you considered your personal experiences or observations to help you formulate the who, what, how, and why of that scene as it would occur today. Which critical perspective informed your interpretation of that scenario? Share your ideas with a partner.
2. Examine the list of characters from the play *Othello*, shown below. Based on their descriptions, what relationships exist among these characters? If needed, use reference materials to look up the specific meaning of various titles. Discuss how the character descriptions provide information about how society is organized in the play. With your discussion group members, create a graphic organizer that illustrates these relationships.

Othello

Cast of Characters

- **Othello**, a Moorish general in the Venetian army
- **Desdemona**, a Venetian lady, Othello's wife, Brabantio's daughter
- **Brabantio**, a Venetian senator, Desdemona's father
- **Iago**, Othello's standard-bearer, or "ancient"
- **Emilia**, Iago's wife, Desdemona's attendant
- **Cassio**, Othello's second-in-command, or lieutenant
- **Roderigo**, a Venetian gentleman
- **Duke of Venice**
- **Lodovico and Gratiano**, Venetian gentlemen, kinsmen to Brabantio
- **Venetian senators**
- **Montano**, an official in Cyprus
- **Bianca**, a woman in Cyprus, in love with Cassio
- **Clown**, a comic servant to Othello and Desdemona
- **Gentlemen of Cyprus**
- **Sailors**
- **Servants, Attendants, Officers, Messengers, Herald, Musicians, Torchbearers**

3. When viewing characters (or a scene) in terms of the organization of society, you are viewing the work from a **Marxist critical perspective**. Examine the organizational structure of Venetian society in *Othello* and use the cast descriptions to infer meaning.

Check Your Understanding

How might ideas of Marxist Criticism emerge or present conflict in the play?

My Notes

Viewing a Cast of Characters Through a Marxist Lens



INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Discuss

Discuss with peers how a Marxist critical perspective would or would not illuminate your independent reading text. Give examples from your text and then discuss with a peer which critical perspectives might offer a useful way to analyze your reading.

My Notes

Language and Writer's Craft: Determining the Meaning of Words

When you are reading a text and come across a word you do not know, there are several ways to determine the word's meaning.

Example: What does the word *decorum* mean in the following text?

In their tragedies they acted with appropriate decorum; in these they caused tears not only by their speaking but also by their action.

One way to figure out the meaning of the word is to use **patterns of word changes** that indicate different meanings. You might already be familiar with the words *decor* or *decorate*. You might also recognize that *-um* is a suffix that is usually used with noun forms. By using these clues, you may be able to tell the meaning of *decorum*.

Another way to determine a word's meaning is to look for **context clues**. What meanings and connotations do the surrounding words and sentences provide? Here, the words *appropriate* and *action* provide strong context clues.

Sometimes you need to use a dictionary to be sure you understand a word's **denotation** (definition) and its **connotations** (associations). If you look up the definition of *decorum*, you will learn that it means "correct behavior." You can also research a word's **etymology** (history) to learn how it has evolved. *Decorum* was originally a theater term regarding the appropriateness of part of an artistic performance within the larger artwork.

PRACTICE Read the following text. What does the word *implored* mean?

After explaining that the missing handkerchief had been a precious gift from his dying mother, Othello **implored** Desdemona to tell him where it could be.

First, jot notes based on context clues and your knowledge of word parts and changes. Then look up the word in a dictionary and record its definition.

Explanatory Writing Prompt

Write a paragraph that explains how ideas of Marxist Criticism emerge or present conflict among characters in the play. Use the skills you just reviewed to make sure you understand the meaning of any difficult words. Be sure to:

- Begin with a topic sentence summarizing your understanding the ways that Marxist Criticism emerges or presents conflict in the play.
- Use precise, accurate language to explain the topic.
- Use a dictionary or other reference materials to clarify the meanings of unknown words.

A Father's Reaction: Performing and Defending an Interpretation

ACTIVITY
3.6

Learning Targets

- Compare interpretations of a text from different critical perspectives.
- Defend the most effective interpretation with a rationale.

Preview

In this activity, you will read Act I, Scene I (lines 178-206) from *Othello* and annotate the scene for a performance. Then you will perform the scene with your acting company and provide **rationale** for your interpretation.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the scene, underline words and phrases that indicate Brabantio's emotional state.
- Add notes about what theatrical elements (e.g., costumes, props, lighting, set design, etc.) a director might use to convey the emotion of the scene.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

British poet and playwright William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is perhaps the most famous writer of all time. Shakespeare began his theatrical life as an actor and writer. He eventually started an acting troupe and opened his own theatre, The Globe, in London. Shakespeare was a favorite playwright of many royals and noblemen, yet his work was also beloved by the common man. After his death, speculation grew as to whether or not one man could have written such eloquent and varied works. Nevertheless, Shakespeare has remained one of the most widely read, published, and studied authors of all time.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Marking the Text, Close Reading, Rehearsal, Drama Games, Graphic Organizer, Drafting

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

A **rationale** is an explanation. A rationale can tell why a particular interpretation of a play is effective.



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The Latin root *notare*, meaning “note” or “mark,” and the prefix *ad-*, meaning “to,” form the base of the word **annotate**. A related noun is formed by adding the suffix *-tion*. Words from the same root include *notary*, *notable*, and *notation*.

Drama

FROM THE TRAGEDY OF OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

BRABANTIO: It is too true an evil. Gone she is;

And what's to become of my despised time

Is naught but bitterness.

—Now, Roderigo,

My Notes

A Father's Reaction: Performing and Defending an Interpretation

My Notes

GRAMMAR & USAGE Complex Sentences

Even though the English of Shakespeare's day is somewhat different from the language we use today, much of the sentence structure remains the same.

Note Roderigo's sentence, "I think I can discover him, if you please to get good guard and go along with me."

This is a **complex sentence**, meaning that it begins with an independent clause (*I think I can discover him*) and ends with a dependent clause (*if you please to get good guard and go along with me*). This subordinate clause is introduced by the conjunction *if*, and since it modifies the verb *discover* it can be considered an adverbial clause. An adverbial clause gives details about the verb.

Find another complex sentence from *Othello* and annotate it for independent clause, dependent clause, conjunction, and adverbial clause where appropriate.

Where didst thou see her?—O, unhappy girl!—

With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—

How didst thou know 'twas she?—O, she deceives me

Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more tapers.

Raise all my kindred.—Are they married, think you?

RODERIGO: Truly I think they are.

BRABANTIO: O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds

By what you see them act.—Is there not charms

By which the property of youth and maidhood

May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,

Of some such thing?

RODERIGO: Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRABANTIO: Call up my brother.—O, would you had had her!—

Some one way, some another.—Do you know where we may

apprehend her and the Moor?

RODERIGO: I think I can discover him, if you please

To get good guard and go along with me.

BRABANTIO: Pray you lead on. At every house I'll call.

I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho!

And raise some special officers of night.—

On, good Roderigo. I will deserve your pains.

Second Read

- Reread the drama to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Key Ideas and Details:** What evidence in Brabantio's first speech shows how he is feeling?

A Father's Reaction: Performing and Defending an Interpretation

My Notes

RODERIGO: Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO: O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds

By what you see them act.—Is there not charms

By which the property of youth and maidhood

May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,

Of some such thing?

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Some one way, some another.—Do you know

Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

RODERIGO: I think I can discover him, if you please

To get good guard and go along with me.

BRABANTIO: Pray you lead on. At every house I'll call.

I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho!

And raise some special officers of night.—

On, good Roderigo. I will deserve your pains.

7. Choose one of Brabantio's reactions, and with your acting company, rehearse and perform the lines for another company. Provide—and receive—feedback regarding your company's performance and how it conveys the chosen emotion in the scene.

Check Your Understanding

Think about the decisions your acting company made about how to convey the scene onstage. Explain the rationale—or reasons—behind those decisions.



INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Connect

As you read the texts you have chosen, think about the conflicts that arise between characters. Choose one strong example of a conflict. If possible, choose an excerpt that includes dialogue. Mark up the text as you would a dramatic scene for a performance. Then share your observations and marked-up text with a peer, comparing it to what you have read in *Othello*.

The Moor: Character Analysis Through a Cultural Lens

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Think-Pair-Share, Graphic Organizer, Quickwrite

Literary Terms

An **epithet** is a descriptive word or phrase used in place of or along with a name. For instance, Shakespeare is sometimes simply called “the Bard.” Detroit is known as “Motor City.” Alexander III of Macedon is commonly called “Alexander the Great.”

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze elements of character and critical perspectives.
- Apply both of those components in a character sketch.

Preview

In this activity, you will closely analyze elements of characterization in Act I of *Othello*. Then you will write a character sketch that applies a critical perspective to your analysis of *Othello*.

Reading the Play: Act I

1. Whether endearing or irritating, the way others refer to us says a great deal about our culture—its values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations. The use of **epithets** such as “so-and-so’s daughter” or a “quarterback on team X” can reveal a culture’s attitudes about family legacy or social expectations. With a partner, think of a few additional examples of epithets.
2. Throughout the first scene, no character uses Othello’s name, although all three characters refer to him several times. Collect all the terms, or epithets, used to describe Othello in Act I, Scene I. Decide what each speaker is suggesting about Othello, and whether each term is complimentary or derogatory. Also, decide what the descriptive terms tell you about the speaker in each case. Use the graphic organizer on the following page to record your ideas.



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WORD CONNECTIONS

Word Relationships

A *derogatory* term conveys a lack of respect for a person or thing. Its synonym *belittling* describes making someone feel small, and to be *contemptuous* is to treat a person with hate or scorn. *Complimentary* is an antonym that describes speaking well about someone.

Reference to Othello	Who is speaking? (line number)	What does the reference suggest about Othello?	What does the reference suggest about the speaker?
Example: "his Moorship's"	Iago (line 35)	He's compared to royalty.	Iago uses verbal irony here; we know he doesn't truly think of Othello as royalty.

The Moor: Character Analysis Through a Cultural Lens

3. As you read Act I, Scene II, make note of Othello’s responses to the accusation(s) against him.

Accusation	Accuser	Othello’s Response	What does Othello’s response indicate about him?

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Dashes

This sketch shows an example of how a writer can use **dashes** to amplify a point or to explain. Notice the writer’s use of dashes in this sentence to offer an explanation:

Brabantio is unable to conceive of anything—aside from spells and witchcraft—that could move his dear Desdemona ...

Commas, parentheses, or colons can provide a similar effect, but here dashes slow the reader down enough to understand what the writer means by “anything.”

Try revising another sentence from this sketch that uses dashes by replacing them with commas, parentheses, or a colon. Consider how your revision changes the way you read the sentence.

Check Your Understanding

Most characters are referred to by their names by other characters. What cultural motivations may be influencing how characters refer to Othello in Act I?

Explanatory Writing Prompt

Create a character sketch of Othello that describes his persona from the perspective of Cultural Criticism. Think about the observations you made as you read the play. As a model for your writing, use the following character sketch of Brabantio, Desdemona’s father. Be sure to:

- Include the best details and textual evidence about Othello that describe his persona.
- Use dashes correctly if they are part of an explanatory element from the text.
- Use precise language to show how you apply the perspective of Cultural Criticism in your character sketch.

Brabantio, Desdemona’s father in William Shakespeare’s Othello, is a statesman and respected member of Venetian society. He disapproves of his daughter’s marriage to the Moor. Brabantio is unable to conceive of anything—aside from spells and witchcraft—that could move his dear Desdemona to commit this “treason of the blood” (I.i.191). In spite of his having placed a great deal of trust in Othello—enough to honor Othello with frequent visits to his own home—Brabantio laments that “[Desdemona] is abused, stol’n from me, and corrupted” (I.iii.73). His view of his daughter as his property and of the valiant military man as an outlandish choice for his daughter’s hand in marriage shows Brabantio to be a nobleman who shares prejudices common in his culture. His inability to accept or honor the choices of others may help explain his grief at his daughter’s elopement.

A Husband's Response: Defending a Critical Perspective

ACTIVITY
3.8

Learning Targets

- Apply a critical perspective to a monologue in order to infer the critical perspective of a director.
- Evaluate the more effective interpretation of a text.

Preview

In this activity, you will read a monologue and then view two filmed versions of the monologue.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the monologue, use **SOAPSTone** to guide your analysis and add annotations to the My Notes area.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Drama

FROM ACT I, SCENE III

- 1 Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes
That I have passed.
- 5 I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment that he **bade** me tell it.
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hairbreadth scapes i' th' **imminent** deadly breach;
- 10 Of being taken by the insolent foe
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence
And portance¹ in my travel's history:
Wherein of antres² vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven
- 15 It was my hint to speak—such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi³ and men whose heads

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Activating Prior Knowledge,
Close Reading, SOAPSTone,
Oral Reading, Graphic
Organizer, Jigsaw, Drafting

My Notes

bade: told to

wherein: in which

imminent: about to happen

¹ **portance:** bearing or carriage; figuratively, behavior

² **antres:** caves

³ **Anthropophagi:** Greek word meaning “cannibals”

A Husband's Response: Defending a Critical Perspective

My Notes

pliant: flexible

dilate: expand

beguile: charm

Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:

20 But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:

Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse. Which I observing,
Took once a **pliant** hour, and found good means

25 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart

That I would all my pilgrimage **dilate**,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently. I did consent,
And often did **beguile** her of her tears,

30 When I did speak of some distressful stroke

That my youth suffered. 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.

35 She wished she had not heard it; yet she wished

That heaven had made her such a man. She thank'd me;
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. Upon this hint I spake.

40 She loved me for the dangers I had passed,

And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.
Here comes the lady: let her witness it.

Second Read

- Reread the monologue to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

1. **Craft and Structure:** What tone does Othello take to defend himself? What words and phrases at the beginning of the speech contribute to this tone?

A Husband's Response: Defending a Critical Perspective

My Notes

5. As you view different interpretations of Othello's speech, take notes on the following elements of the scene. Consider the critical perspective apparent in each interpretation.

Film version 1	Film version 2
Delivery of lines	
Actions/gestures/facial expressions	
Interactions among characters	
Props/costumes	
Set	
Cinematic/theatrical elements	

A Historical Look at the Moor

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Sketching, Paraphrasing, Marking the Text, Socratic Seminar

My Notes

Literary Terms

Using **Historical Criticism**, the reader recognizes the significance of historical information in interpreting literature. This perspective assumes that texts both influence and are influenced by the times in which they were created.

Learning Targets

- Analyze a work of literary criticism for its presentation of a character type.
- Participate in a Socratic Seminar to defend or challenge a position about Othello’s character from the perspective of Historical Criticism.

Preview

In this activity, you will learn about Historical Criticism and then read and closely analyze an excerpt from a book of literary criticism.

Historical Criticism

1. Previously, you learned about critical theories and used them to understand and interpret various texts. Review the critical perspectives with a partner, taking turns to identify and define the perspectives until you have reviewed all those you have studied. In your Reader/Writer Notebook, sketch a picture suitable to represent each critical perspective.

2. Another critical perspective is **Historical Criticism**. Read the description below:

Historical Criticism considers the time period in which a work was created and how that time period may have influenced the work. For example, an interpretation of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe may be enhanced by an understanding of the effects of colonialism in present-day African life. Likewise, an interpretation of *The Crucible*, which is set in 17th-century New England, may be enhanced by an understanding of political developments in the 1950s, when Arthur Miller wrote the play. Some common assumptions in the use of Historical criticism are as follows:

- A text cannot be separated from its historical context, which is a web of social, cultural, personal, and political factors.
- An understanding of a text is enhanced by the study of cultural norms and of artifacts such as diaries, films, paintings, and letters in existence when the text was created.

Historical Criticism suggests that we examine how the historical context in which a text is created or set might influence the text’s themes, characters, events, ideas, and structure. With drama, the time period in which a drama is reimagined and performed adds another layer of interpretation of historical significance. For instance, producing *Othello*, a drama about an interracial marriage, in South Africa before apartheid was abolished was an act of social, cultural, and historical significance.

Historical performances of *Othello* give modern audiences a peek into the minds of people in generations past and inspire us to imagine how future generations might perform and receive this tragedy.

3. Add Historical Criticism to your list of critical theories from the previous page. On that page or on separate paper, sketch an illustration appropriate to the focus of Historical Criticism.

Check Your Understanding

Paraphrase each of the two basic assumptions of Historical Criticism.

A Historical Look at the Moor

GRAMMAR & USAGE Modifiers

A **free modifier** is a phrase or clause that modifies the main clause. Pay attention to the bolded part of the following sentence, which is a free modifier: *But under the pressure of dramatic experience that character will often move closer to the context of the observer's world, exhibiting the same needs, frustrations, and perceptions that shape 'our' experience.*

Notice how this **participial phrase** modifies the subject, "character."

Find another example of a free modifier in this text, and diagram how it modifies the subject.

superiority: being better than others

titillation: excitement

proWess: great skill

insidious: sneakily harmful

My Notes

and its people, in most instances seeing the familiar world set in a different perspective leads to an expansion of imaginative experience.

Chunk 2

4 Yet the representation of the Moor could also lead the dramatist and the audience beyond a comfortable sense of **superiority** or the superficial **titillation** provided by a darkly alien villain. The Moor could become a dramatic symbol of the many stereotypes and masks that divide society and alienate the individual. The process by which a character is reduced to a type and the consequences of that reduction became a central dramatic issue. The representation of the Moor, whether motivated by a desire to make theatrical capital of a famous event, such as the Battle of Alcazar, or by a desire to discover and explore difference, opened up the question of what resulted from the contact between different cultures, religions, and races.

5 Dramatic interest also seemed naturally to focus on the question of the kind of power the isolated individual sought within a society of others. Power could mean destroying or mastering that society, controlling its women and tricking its men into acts of blind self-destruction. Or power could be sought in ways acceptable to society, as was the case for Othello, who could seem "fair" both within his dark exterior and within the Venetian state because of his military **proWess**. Audiences and dramatists were drawn to the Moor as a type because the character provided a way to examine some of the most difficult questions of division and alienation. The audience that witnessed the struggle for self-control and the **insidious** powers that transform Othello would confront the destructiveness of its own collective perceptions of race, religion, and cultural difference. In this case, the audience would engage in an exchange of something other than a coin for the sight of a dead Indian; the living character required that the audience engage in an emotional and intellectual exchange. And that giving, which is the life of theater, certainly drew the audience into some understanding of the tragic divisions within their own world as mirrored in the story of a character such as Othello, the Moor of Venice.

6 Our imaginative journey into the dramatic world of these plays fosters respect for the willingness and ability of Renaissance dramatists to do more than trade in dead stereotypes. Most of the plays created for their audience a complex dramatic encounter with the Moor. The audience identified the otherness of the type and to the extent that individual members of that audience saw difference as essential to human experience, they were connected to the outsider. Working within the conventions of Western theater and poetry, the dramatist could use the open stage of Shakespeare's age to explore inner perspectives and challenge easy assumptions about difference and inferiority. The poet-dramatist was provided with a further connection between the Moor, or the alien, and the role of the artist within society.

Chunk 3

7 Shakespeare more than any other dramatist of the English Renaissance used theater to create an important political perspective that framed the encounter between different cultures. On the Moor he focused the problems that any state would face when it moved from a relatively closed condition to the open expansion that generates contact and conflict with other civilizations. Around the Moor he built those conflicts which test a society's sense of the natural rightness of its particular cultural traditions. He saw that with the kind of political expansion that characterized Renaissance Venice and ancient Rome came the problem of absorbing the outsider and the fear of being absorbed. The opposition between Roman reason and the darkly feminine otherness and fertility of Egypt is but one variation on this conflict between

different **conceptions** of power and order. Shakespeare could also identify with a Moor of military virtù who is fearful of the erotic femininity of Venice, a European city as exotic for him as Alexandria was for the Romans. For the modern, cosmopolitan state that thrives on the exchange of goods and images with other nations and cultures, this conflict persists in the struggle between a closed national identity and the need for intercourse with others.

8 ... Shakespeare wrote for a society that saw its contact with other people increase, while it struggled to define for itself the kind of government and religion it would have. Traditional definitions of Western norms and of the others who deviated from those norms provided a groundwork for curiosity, or a base of operations for exploration and **exploitation**. But the ground was and always is shifting as experience and traditional values interact. What may have seemed strange turns out to be familiar, as when Clem finds that courts in Morocco and England are much the same; and what is native may, upon closer examination, turn out to be more monstrous than the strangest alien. As we have seen with Tamburlaine,¹ an outsider who became a projection of new political ambition, the imaginative contact with the outsider became a way of dramatizing the need to create new categories. The Moor's difference was something established by tradition, and the Moor was a sign of **spatial** distance, a creature from a distant place. But for the English Renaissance stage the Moor could also be identified with the newness of discovery, exploration, and trade. This experience, real or theatrical, might confirm or challenge the tradition. Since the Moor was often portrayed as isolated and in rebellion against Western society, the type might conveniently channel opposition to traditional structures. If the old definitions fixed the character in safe inferiority, the new experience created an emotionally and intellectually charged encounter with a figure who required the audience to reflect on and to question its own values.

9 The plays certainly trade in what were, and still are, trusted assumptions about the Moor, Islam, and cultural difference. And they also draw upon our fascination with how another culture can make the familiar world seem strange. It is unsettling and also exciting to feel the ground of assumptions shift, as is the case in travel, when the norm is not your norm, when dress, speech, food, and the details of life reflect a difference that places you at the margin, reduced to a sign of **deviation** from the norm. That sense of disorientation was projected into an Eleazar² who speaks of the finger of scorn pointed at him, or Othello who fears the accusing gesture that will destroy his reputation. What is most disturbing for the outsider is the sense that the secret, unwritten codes are being used to degrade one's true image. As a group, sharing language, a national and racial identity, and an inherited set of theatrical conventions, the audience would have been like those Venetians or Spaniards who share a culture the Moor can never understand. And yet the individual spectator might retain a sense of separateness and know what it is like to be the object of open scorn, or what is worse, to feel the unspoken isolation of one who is reduced to a mere sign of the abnormal.

conceptions: ideas

GRAMMAR & USAGE Compound Sentences

Compound sentences have two or more independent clauses that show connections between ideas. When D'Amico writes, "Through this kind of experience some prejudices may be confirmed, while in other ways spectators may come to see themselves and their world differently," he creates a compound sentence. In this case, a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*while*) join the two clauses to create a contrast. Independent clauses can also be joined by a colon or semicolon, or by a comma and a conjunctive adverb (i.e. *also*, *finally*, *then*).

Find and annotate two more examples of compound sentences in the text, and rewrite them using different ways to join the two independent clauses for different effects.

exploitation: using for your own benefit

spatial: relating to space

deviation: difference from the expected

My Notes

¹ **Tamburlaine:** a character who had high political aspirations, from the play of the same name by Christopher Marlowe.

² **Eleazar:** a villainous Moor in an English Renaissance drama called *Lust's Dominion*.

A Historical Look at the Moor



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *cosmopolitan* contains the Greek prefix *cosmo-*, meaning “world” or “universe.” Someone who is *cosmopolitan* is not bound by any local or national customs or prejudices. Other words beginning with this prefix include *cosmonaut*, *cosmology*, and *cosmopolis*.

My Notes

Second Read

- Reread the literary criticism to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

Chunk 1

4. **Key Ideas and Details:** What historical connection does the author focus on in chunk 1? How are the two cultures connected? What differences separate them?

5. **Key Ideas and Details:** What two images of Moroccans does the author give in the first paragraph? Which of these ideas do other descriptions in chunk 1 support? Which is Othello?

6. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 3, what two points does the author make about stereotypes in theatrical presentations? How can stereotypes lead to a richer theater experience?

Chunk 2

7. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the author introduce and develop a central idea in paragraph 4?

8. **Craft and Structure:** What clues to the meaning of “dead stereotype” does the author provide at the end of paragraph 5? Does Othello fit this description?

Friendly Banter or Pointed Comments? Feminist Criticism

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Revisiting Prior Work, Double-Entry Journal

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze a scene’s portrayal of women.
- Explain various interpretations based on differing critical perspectives.

Revisiting Feminist Criticism

1. **Quickwrite:** How much of your identity is shaped by your gender? In your response, you may consider the kinds of expectations placed upon you because of your gender.

2. Review the Feminist Critical Perspective. In what light has Desdemona’s character been cast in Act I of *Othello*?

Reading the Play: Act II, Scene I

3. As you read or listen to Act II, Scene I, pay attention to the ways women are referred to in the text. When you encounter a character’s perception of women in lines 108–179, record the quotation and your response in the following double-entry journal. Include the line numbers.

Quotation	Response

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Activating Prior Knowledge, Close Reading, Rereading, Rehearsing

Literary Terms

A **soliloquy** is a long speech delivered by a character alone on the stage. The audience hears the character’s internal thoughts.

An **aside** is a short speech spoken by an actor directly to the audience and unheard by other actors on stage.

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze a character’s speech in relation to the play as a whole.
- Determine the staging, blocking, and delivery of a speech.

Dramatic Conventions

1. Revisit the definition of dramatic irony from Activity 3.4. How is dramatic irony already evident in *Othello*?
2. What do you recall about the dramatic conventions known as **soliloquys** and monologues from your previous study of plays?

Both are speeches given by an actor on stage. Soliloquys are generally longer and are spoken while the actor is alone on stage, whereas monologues may be delivered while other actors are also present. Asides, like monologues and soliloquys, allow a character to reveal his or her thoughts to the audience. An **aside**, however, is usually a brief piece of dialogue spoken while others are on stage (like a monologue) but clearly not being heard by the other actors. The following are ways in which an aside can be used as a dramatic convention:

- directly to the audience, or to the camera (if filmed)
- as if the character is simply talking to himself
- as a voice-over, while the actor appears to be lost in thought

Reading the Play: Act II

3. With your acting company, conduct a close reading of one of Iago’s asides or soliloquies. Take notes on your discussion about the meaning of the speech as well as the importance of the speech in the play as a whole. Choose one of the following scenes:

Scene A: Act II, Scene I, lines 182–193 (“He takes her by the palm ...”)

Scene B: Act II, Scene III, lines 49–66 (“If I can fasten but one cup ...”)

Scene C: Act II, Scene III, lines 356–382 (“And what’s he, then, that says ...”)

- Set the scene: what has happened before this speech?
- Summarize the speech. Paraphrase challenging sections of the speech to clarify meaning.
- How does the speech advance the plot of the drama?
- What does the speech reveal about Iago’s character?

WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The word *soliloquy* comes from the Latin for “talking to oneself,” from *solus* (“alone”) and *loqui* (“speak”). Other words from *solus* include *sole*, *solitary*, and *desolate*, and *loqui* forms words such as *eloquence* and *ventriloquist*.

Emilia's Secret: Defending an Interpretation

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Discussion Groups

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Compare and contrast multiple interpretations of a scene.
- Craft an argumentative essay that evaluates an interpretation of a scene.

Reading the Play: Act III

1. Often, trials are won or lost and defendants pronounced innocent or guilty on the basis of seemingly innocuous objects. A handkerchief takes on that kind of significance in *Othello*. As you read Act III, trace each reference to the handkerchief with sticky notes. Then create a graphic organizer in the following space to explore the significance of the handkerchief to the various characters (Othello, Desdemona, Emilia, Iago, Cassio, and Bianca) and to the plot of the play through the end of Act III. Include line numbers as textual support. Use the following space for your graphic organizer.

2. In Act III, Scene III, appear the critical stage directions “[*The handkerchief falls, unnoticed.*]” Emilia, who is nearby when the handkerchief falls, picks it up and then gives it to her “wayward” husband. Why would she give Iago Desdemona’s first gift from Othello, knowing how dear it is to Desdemona? Brainstorm a list by taking turns sharing possible reasons in your discussion group.
3. How would you use the handkerchief as a prop in this scene in your production of *Othello*?



INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Respond

Think about your independent reading. Identify an object, idea, or part of the scenery in a section of the text that appears other places in the text, and trace each reference to it with a sticky note. Then create a graphic organizer like the one you used for Act III of *Othello* to explore the significance of the object, idea, or scenery to the characters in the text and to the plot so far in your reading. Share your work with a group.

Film Study

4. To understand Emilia’s deception, it is important to make sense of the nature of the relationship between Emilia and Iago. Directors and actors have presented a number of interpretations of the characters’ relationship. As you watch two of these interpretations, take notes in the following charts.

Film Version 1 – Director:

Emilia	Iago
Delivery of lines (pace, volume, emphasis, tone of voice, etc.)	
Actions/gestures/ facial expressions	
What is the nature of this relationship?	
How can you tell?	
In this interpretation, why does Emilia give Iago the handkerchief?	

My Notes

Emilia's Secret: Defending an Interpretation

My Notes

Film Version 2—Director:

Emilia	Iago
Delivery of lines (pace, volume, emphasis, tone of voice, etc.)	
Actions/gestures/facial expressions	
What is the nature of this relationship?	
How can you tell?	
In this interpretation, why does Emilia give Iago the handkerchief?	

Check Your Understanding

With a partner or small group, briefly discuss which of the two scenes presents a more plausible explanation for Emilia's deception. Use evidence from the play and the films during your discussion.

Writing to Sources: Argument

Write an argumentative paragraph about which film version presents the more plausible explanation of Emilia's deception. Be sure to:

- Identify the film version and director in your claim.
- Follow a cohesive argumentative structure (including counterclaim) with supporting evidence.
- Provide a conclusion that supports your claim.

Demystifying Emilia: Questioning Through a Critical Lens

ACTIVITY
3.13

Learning Targets

- Adopt a critical lens to gather evidence about and question a character in a text.
- Use an outline or graphic organizer to plan an argumentative essay.

Reading the Play: Act III

1. Many characters are caught in the throes of a difficult choice between two loyalties. In Act I we hear Desdemona lament her divided loyalties between her father, “To you I am bound for life and education” (I.iii.210) and her husband, “And so much duty as my mother show’d to you, preferring you before her father, so much I challenge that I may profess due to the Moor” (I.iii. 215–218). Though Emilia is a minor character in *Othello* and her marriage to the antagonist Iago secondary to that of Othello and Desdemona, the drama unfolds around and in some ways because of her.

Where does Emilia’s loyalty lie—to her honest lady, Desdemona, or to her husband, Iago? Explore Emilia’s conflicts, her possible choices, and their results in a discussion.

2. Preview the following graphic organizer, and then read closely the short scene assigned to your group. What does the scene reveal about Emilia? You may begin to make your determinations about this character by questioning the text. How is she characterized? What is her relationship to other characters? What are her motivations? Use the graphic organizer for your notes.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Close Reading, Discussion Groups, Graphic Organizer, Questioning the Text

My Notes

Demystifying Emilia: Questioning Through a Critical Lens

Scene	What the Scene Reveals About Emilia	Textual Evidence
<p>Act III, Scene I, lines 46–64, Emilia & Cassio</p> <p>(Begins with EMILIA: Good morrow ... and goes to the end of Scene I)</p>		
<p>Act III, Scene III, lines 344–368, Emilia & Iago</p> <p>(Begins with IAGO: How now? What do you here alone? and ends when Emilia exits)</p>		
<p>Act III, Scene IV, lines 23–34, Emilia & Desdemona</p> <p>(Begins with DESDEMONA: Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia? and ends when Othello enters)</p>		

3. You are working toward writing an argumentative essay for Embedded Assessment 1 that requires you to support a critical perspective. One of the ways to ensure you differentiate one mode of criticism from another is to ask questions geared toward the different lenses. With a partner, choose one critical perspective (Archetypal, Marxist, Feminist, Reader Response, Cultural, or Historical). Draft one literal, one interpretive, and one universal question through that lens. When you have checked your work with another group, repeat the process for a different critical perspective, this time on your own.

My Notes

Act/Scene/Lines:

Levels of Questions	Critical Perspective 1: _____	Critical Perspective 2: _____
Literal		
Interpretive		
Universal		

Check Your Understanding

Create an outline for an argumentative essay supporting the critical perspective that provides the best lens for understanding Emilia. Use the scene and questions from the graphic organizer to guide your planning.

Staging Iago's Lies: Blocking for Effect

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Revisiting Prior Work, Graphic Organizer, Sketching, Summarizing, Drama Games, Drafting

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Apply a critical interpretation to the staging of a scene.
- Make informed decisions about blocking to convey a particular effect on the audience.

Reading the Play: Act IV

1. Revisit Activity 3.4, "Building a Plot and Bringing It to Life." Now that you are reading *Othello*, you should understand that the scenario and outcomes in the earlier activity were based on the play. Discuss your scenario with your acting company and take notes on connections between it and Shakespeare's play.

Scenario: Character 1 tells Character 2 that his or her girlfriend is cheating on him or her. Character 1 then produces "evidence." The story is untrue.

Outcomes	How my acting company (or another company in my class) presented the outcome	How <i>Othello</i> , the play, presents the situation
<p><i>Outcome A</i> Character 2 does not believe the story.</p>		
<p><i>Outcome B</i> Character 2 considers the story as a possibility but then decides it is untrue.</p>		
<p><i>Outcome C</i> Character 2 is filled with jealousy and wants revenge.</p>		

Staging Iago's Lies: Blocking for Effect

My Notes

6. You will view two versions of this scene: one a filmed version and the other a stage production. What is the difference between a film version and a stage production on film?

- What advantages might a film version have?
- What advantages might a stage version have?

Film version— Director: Miller, Parke, or Welles	How is it presented?	What is the effect?
Dialogue between Iago and Othello, up to the trance		
The trance		
Dialogue between Iago and Cassio, observed by Othello		
Dialogue between Cassio and Bianca, observed by Othello		
Dialogue between Othello and Iago, after Cassio and Bianca exit		
Othello striking Desdemona		

One Scene, Many Perspectives

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Graphic Organizer, Rehearsing, Oral Interpretation

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Stage one scene through multiple critical perspectives.
- Apply the most effective interpretation to the staging of the scene.

Reading the Play: Act IV

1. By now you have read through Act IV, Scene III, including Othello’s confrontation with Emilia and Desdemona about his wife’s meeting with Cassio. Choose a memorable or revealing quotation from Scene II or III. Share the quote and your commentary with your acting company.
2. Examine this scene through each critical perspective.

Critical Perspective	How does this perspective apply to this scene?
<i>Archetypal criticism</i> might suggest that an archetype such as the temptress (a woman who uses her power—intellect, magic, or beauty—to make men weak) is essential to understanding this scene.	
<i>Feminist criticism</i> might suggest that the male-female power relationships that come into play in this scene are the most important influence on our understanding of it.	
<i>Marxist criticism</i> might suggest that we must examine the issues of class or social standing in order to fully understand this scene.	
<i>Reader response criticism</i> might suggest that what you bring to the scene will determine its significance.	
<i>Cultural criticism</i> might suggest that we must consider such issues as ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual identity, and so on to understand this scene.	
<i>Historical criticism</i> might suggest that the historical context plays a significant role in a modern reader’s understanding the scene.	

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3. Your teacher will assign you one of the critical perspectives from the list above. With your acting company, determine how the interpretation of Act IV, Scene II, lines 1–110 from this perspective would translate into staging this scene. Record your ideas below.

Vocal Delivery (rate, volume, pitch of voice, and the general tone this character should convey):

Othello

Emilia

Desdemona

Staging (gestures, mannerisms, and the image you want each character to convey):

Othello

Emilia

Desdemona

Blocking (the position of the actors on stage in relation to one another, the set, props, and so forth): Illustrate your plan for blocking in the margins or on separate paper.

4. Assign roles and rehearse the scene according to your notes. Choose one individual to play the role of director to guide speaking and moving and to ensure that actors are conveying the assigned interpretation. Rehearse your scene before presenting it to the class.

Check Your Understanding

After viewing multiple presentations of the scene through various particular critical perspectives, discuss which performance provides the best insight into the play. What specific elements of the performance help you develop new understandings?

Explanatory Writing Prompt

Write an explanatory paragraph about the critical lens that provides the most interesting perspective for the scene. Explain how interpreting the scene through this lens gives you a deeper understanding of the scene. Be sure to:

- Include a thesis statement about which presentation you think provides the most interesting lens.
- Use an objective tone and formal style of writing.
- Include relevant evidence from the staged interpretations to support your opinion.

My Notes

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INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Respond

Think about the reading you are doing independently. Jot a few notes in your Reader/Writer Notebook about which critical perspective best illuminates your reading, and why.

“Talk You of Killing?” Defending a Perspective

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Predicting, Close Reading, Visualizing, Graphic Organizer, Drafting

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Analyze a film scene for theatrical elements.
- Defend one interpretation and the corresponding critical perspective in an essay.

Reading the Play: Act V

1. **Quickwrite** It is no surprise that a Shakespearean tragedy ends ... tragically. Now that you have read Act V, Scene I, predict the action in the final scene. Will Othello learn the truth? Will Iago be brought to justice? How will the conflict ultimately be resolved?
2. Act V, Scene II of *Othello* is the climax of the tragedy. As you read Desdemona’s last conversation with her husband, visualize the set, costumes, actions, lighting, and music. Make notes in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

Film Study

3. Your class will watch two versions of the final act of *Othello*. As you view two versions of the film, take notes in the following graphic organizer.

Theatrical Elements:	Film Version 1 Director: Year:	Film Version 2 Director: Year:
The set		
Othello’s costume		
Desdemona’s costume		
Othello’s actions		
Desdemona’s actions		
Lighting		
Music		
Critical perspective reflected in the film		

Evaluating an Essay: Rubric Creation

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Quickwrite, Revisiting Prior Work, Close Reading, Graphic Organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Closely read the assessment, including its standards for argumentation and sample argumentative essays.
- Collaboratively construct a rubric that effectively evaluates content, structure, and style.

Revisiting Prior Work

1. **Quickwrite** Review some of the essays you wrote earlier in the year. What kind of feedback did you receive? Write some of the comments about your writing in the following space.

2. While usually relying on the teacher to assess written work, one of the resources that you may not have considered is your own ability to assess your writing. The process of writing is ongoing, and getting in the habit of writing—and revising—and rewriting—and editing—will strengthen your ability to make an effective argument.

In order to create a standard for evaluating your writing, you need to be fully aware of the criteria. With your acting company or discussion group, closely read the Assignment and Steps for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing an Argument. Identify the key categories in column 1 that, according to the Assignment and Steps, need to be mastered in this assessment.

Key Categories			

How to Write an Argument

3. The requirements for argumentative writing are fairly specific. Read the following descriptions. Do you need to add anything to your “key categories”?

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Marking the Text, Skimming/ Scanning, Questioning the Text, Summarizing, Paraphrasing

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Trace critical perspectives in a critical essay.
- In an argumentative essay, apply one’s own perspective to a contemporary staging of *Othello*.

Preview

In this activity, you will read closely a critical essay that traces multiple interpretations of *Othello* over time.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read the essay, underline words and phrases that help answer the guiding question, “How has the lead character of Othello been portrayed throughout history?”
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sylvan Barnet (1926–2016) was a professor of English and former director of writing at Tufts University. A prolific writer of college English textbooks, his texts on writing and anthologies remain leaders in the field.

Essay

OTHELLO

on Stage and Screen

by Sylvan Barnet

1 The earliest mention of a performance of *Othello*, in an account of 1604, reports only that the play was acted before James I at Whitehall Palace. Next come two references to performances in 1610, one telling us that it was acted at the Globe in April, the other telling us that it was acted in September at Oxford. The reference to the Oxford production is especially valuable, since it provides one of the very few glimpses we have of early seventeenth-century acting and of an audience’s response to a performance. The relevant passage, in Latin, may be translated thus:

In their tragedies they acted with appropriate decorum; in these they caused tears not only by their speaking, but also by their action. Indeed Desdemona, although greatly successful throughout, moved us especially when at last, lying on her bed, killed by her husband, she implored the pity of the spectators in her death with her face alone.

2 This may not seem like much, but it is more than we have for all but a few of Shakespeare’s other plays, and it is especially valuable as a reminder that the Renaissance boy actors—a boy played Desdemona—were highly skilled performers.

3 There are only a few additional references to performances in the first half of the seventeenth century, but a very large number of rather general references to the play (as opposed to specific performances) allows us to conclude that the play must have been popular on the stage. From 1642 to 1660 the theaters were closed by act of Parliament, but when the theaters reopened in 1660, *Othello* was staged almost immediately. Samuel Pepys saw it in 1660:

To the Cockpit to see *The Moor of Venice*, which was well done. [Nathaniel] Burt acted the Moor: by the same token, a very pretty lady that sat by me called out, to see Desdemona smothered.

4 He saw it again in 1669, this time with less pleasure:

To the King's playhouse, and there in an upper box ... did see *The Moor of Venice*: but ill acted in most parts; [Michael] Mohun which did a little surprise me not acting Iago's part by much so well as [Walter] Clun used to do ... nor, indeed, Burt doing the Moor's so well as I once thought he did.

5 During this period, the great interpreter of the title role was Thomas Betterton, who performed it from 1684 to 1709. Although he was the leading Othello of the period and was much praised, the only informative contemporary account of his performance in the role tells us little more than that his

aspect was serious, **venerable**, and majestic. ... His voice was low and grumbling, though he could lime it by an artful climax, which enforced attention. ... He kept this passion under, and showed it most.

6 Betterton's successor as Othello was James Quin, who played the part from 1722 to 1751. Wearing a white wig and the white uniform (including white gloves) of a British officer, he was said to have presented an impressive appearance, but his acting was characterized as statuesque, even stiff, lacking in tenderness, pathos, fire, and any suggestion of inner pain. Quin was eclipsed in 1745 by David Garrick, whose Othello was quite different: the complaint now was that this Othello lacked dignity. The accusation was not merely a glance at Garrick's relatively short stature (he sought to compensate for his height by adding a turban to the costume of an officer in the British army), or even at his bold restoration of the fainting episode (4.1.45), which had been cut by his predecessors. Rather, it was directed at Garrick's violent gestures, which suggested to one critic that Othello seemed afflicted with St. Vitus' dance. Garrick defended his interpretation by arguing that Shakespeare

had shown us white men jealous in other pieces, but that their jealousy had limits, and was not so terrible. ... [In] Othello he had wished to paint that passion in all its violence, and that is why he chose an African in whose being circulated fire instead of blood, and whose true or imaginary character could excuse all boldness of expression and all exaggerations of passion.

7 Garrick's rival, Quin, was not convinced. Of Garrick's Othello, Quin said: "Othello! ... psha! no such thing. There was a little black boy ... fretting and fuming about the stage; but I saw no Othello."

8 A reader can scarcely overlook the racism in these remarks, and something should be said about attitudes toward Moors. There is no doubt that most Elizabethans regarded Moors as vengeful—largely because they were not Christians. That Moors were black—the color of the devil—was thought to be a visible sign of their capacity for

My Notes

venerable: worthy of respect

Othello Through Time

My Notes

endless evil. (In fact, Shakespeare specifies that Othello is a Christian, and this is only one of several ways in which Othello departs from the stereotype.) Othello's physical blackness, by the way, seems not to have been doubted until the early nineteenth century. Certainly Quin and Garrick played him in blackface, and presumably so did their predecessor Betterton. And there is no doubt that on the Elizabethan stage Othello was very black. The only contemporary illustration of a scene from Shakespeare shows another of Shakespeare's Moors, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, as having an inky complexion. But in the early nineteenth century one finds expressions of distinct discomfort at the thought that Othello is black rather than, say, bronzed, or (to use an even loftier metaphor) golden. Even the best critics were not exempt from the racist thinking of their times. Thus, in 1808 Charles Lamb, picking up Desdemona's assertion that she judged Othello by his mind rather than by his color, argued that although we can share her view when we read the play, we cannot do so when we see a black Othello on the stage:

She sees Othello's color in his mind. But upon the stage, when the imagination is no longer the ruling faculty, but we are left to our poor unassisted senses, I appeal to every one that has seen Othello played, whether he did not, on the contrary, sink Othello's mind in his color; whether he did not find something extremely revolting in the courtship and wedded caresses of Othello and Desdemona, and whether the actual sight of the thing did not over-weigh all that beautiful compromise which we make in reading. ...

9 At about the time that Lamb offered his comment on Othello, Lamb's friend Coleridge made some notes to the effect that Shakespeare could not possibly have thought of Othello as a black:

Can we suppose [Shakespeare] so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous *negro* plead royal birth? Were negroes then known but as slaves; on the contrary, were not the Moors the warriors? ... No doubt Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind; yet, as we are constituted, and most surely as an English audience was disposed in the beginning of the seventeenth century, it would be something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro. It would argue a disproportionateness, a want of balance in Desdemona, which Shakespeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated.

10 Given Coleridge's certainty that Othello could not possibly have been black, it is well to reiterate that the Elizabethans thought of Moors as black. True, there are a few references in Elizabethan literature to "tawny" Moors, but there is no evidence that the Elizabethans distinguished between tawny and black Moors, and in any case, if they did, various passages in *Othello* indicate that the protagonist is surely a black Moor. Admittedly, most of the references to Othello's Negroid features are made by persons hostile to him—Roderigo calls him "the thick-lips" (1.1.63), for instance, and Iago speaks of him as "an old black ram" (1.1.85)—but Othello himself says that his name "is now begrimed and black / As mine own face" (3.3.384–5). Of course "black" is sometimes used in the sense of brunette, but there really cannot be any doubt that Othello is black in the most obvious modern sense, and to call him tawny or golden or bronzed, or to conceive of him as something of an Arab chieftain, is to go against the text of the play.

11 When Spranger Barry, the actor who displaced Garrick as Othello in the middle of the eighteenth century (he was said to have not only the passion of Garrick but also the majesty that in Quin was merely stiffness), the question of color seems not to have come up, nor did it come up when the role in effect belonged to John Philip Kemble, the chief Othello at the turn of the eighteenth century (he played his first Othello in 1785, his

Othello Through Time

My Notes

lithe: moving easily
bluffness: honesty

15 In America, Edwin Booth (son of Junius Brutus Booth) acted Othello almost annually from 1826 to 1871. From time to time he changed his performance, sometimes working in the violent style associated with Tommaso Salvini, hurling his Iago to the ground, but sometimes he played with restraint—occasionally he even omitted striking Desdemona at IV.i.240—and he was especially praised for his tender passion. Most critics, however, preferred his Iago, which seemed genial, sincere, and terrifyingly evil; he was widely regarded as the greatest Iago of the later nineteenth century. (Among the performers with whom he alternated the roles of Othello and Iago were Henry Irving and James O’Neill, Eugene O’Neill’s father; and he played Iago to Salvini’s Othello. Here is his advice on how to play Iago:

Don’t *act* the villain, don’t *look* it or *speak* it (by scowling and growling, I mean), but *think* it all the time. Be genial, sometimes jovial, always gentlemanly. Quick in motion as in thought; **lithe** and sinuous as a snake. A certain **bluffness** (which my temperament does not afford) should be added to preserve the military flavor of the character; in this particular I fail utterly, my Iago lacks the soldierly quality.

16 Henry Irving played Othello only in 1876 and 1881. Although he had already achieved success in the roles of Hamlet, Macbeth, and Lear, his Othello did not find equal favor. It was not especially violent, but it was said to lack dignity (apparently there was much lifting up of hands and shuffling of feet), and after the attempt in 1881 Irving decided to drop the role. Still, some things about the 1881 performance should be mentioned. The makeup was very black, the costume exotic (a white jeweled turban, an amber robe), and the killing of Desdemona very solemn—until Desdemona tried to escape, at which point he flung her on the bed. The play ended with Othello’s suicide, the curtain descending as he fell at Gratiano’s feet. Iago (played by Booth) stood by, smiling malignantly.

17 By common consent the greatest Othello of the later nineteenth century was Tommaso Salvini, who acted in Italian—even when in England or the United States, with the rest of the company speaking English. Some Victorians regarded Salvini as too savage, too volcanic, too terrifying to arouse pity—he seized Iago by the throat and hurled him to the floor, and put his foot on Iago’s neck, and of course he did not hesitate to strike Desdemona—but most audiences were deeply moved as well as terrified by his performance. We are told that especially in the first three acts, where some of the love play seemed almost to be high comedy, his Othello was “delightful” and “delicate.” Still, the overall effect was that of enormous energy, though not of mere barbarism. Henry James was among Salvini’s greatest admirers:

It is impossible to imagine anything more living, more tragic, more suggestive of a tortured soul and of generous, beneficent strength changed to a purpose of destruction. With its tremendous force, it is magnificently quiet, and from the beginning to the end has not a touch of rant or crudity.

18 Actors of note who played Othello or Iago in the early twentieth century include Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Oscar Asche, and Beerbohm Tree, but none of these was widely regarded as great. Indeed, the standard opinion is that the twentieth century did not have a great Othello until Paul Robeson, an African American, played the role in 1943. But Robeson was not primarily an actor. As a college student at Rutgers he distinguished himself not to theatrics but in athletics (all-American end in football in 1918, and letters in several varsity sports) and in scholarship (Phi Beta Kappa). He next prepared for a career in the law, taking a law degree at Columbia University, but while at Columbia in 1921 he performed in his first amateur production. He soon began to appear in some professional productions, including *Showboat*, where his singing of

“Ol’ Man River” led to a career as a concert singer, especially of spirituals and work songs, though he returned to the stage to play Othello in 1930 in England, in 1942 in Cambridge, Boston, and Princeton, in 1943 in New York, and in 1959 at Stratford-upon-Avon. Observers agree that the 1959 performance was poor; Robeson had been weakened by an attack of bronchitis, his political beliefs had been shaken (earlier he had praised Stalin, but now the crimes of the Stalin era were evident), and, perhaps worst of all, the director’s presence was too strongly felt, for instance in a distracting fog that supposedly was the result of the storm at Cyprus. Many scenes were so dark that spectators could not see the actors’ faces, and there seems no reason to doubt the accuracy of those reviewers who accused the director of obliterating the principal actors.

19 Robeson’s first Othello—indeed, his first performance in a play by Shakespeare, in 1930—was much more enthusiastically received. The London *Morning Post* said: “There has been no Othello on our stage for forty years to compare with his dignity, simplicity, and true passion.” But not all of the reviewers were entirely pleased. James Agate, the leading theater critic of the period, said that Robeson lacked the majesty that Shakespeare insists on early in the play, for instance in such lines as

I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege, (I.ii.20–21)
and
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter, (82–83)
and
Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will
rust them. (58)

20 The majesty displayed in such passages, Agate said, tells us how Othello must behave when he puts down Cassio’s drunken brawl, but according to Agate, Robeson (despite his height—six feet, three inches) lacked this majesty. Thus, when Robeson’s Othello said “Silence that dreadful bell! It frights the isle/From her propriety” (II.iii.174–75), he showed personal annoyance rather than the “passion for decorum” (Agate’s words) that the line reveals. Agate found Robeson best in the third and fourth acts, where he captured the jealousy of the part, but weak (lacking in dignity) in the last act, where he failed to perform the murder with a solemn sense of sacrifice.

21 Despite the reservations of Agate and others, there was some talk of bringing the production to the United States, but nothing came of it, doubtless because of uncertainty about how American audiences (and perhaps performers?) would respond to a company that mixed whites and blacks. In 1938 Margaret Webster again raised the topic, but she was discouraged by the Americans with whom she talked. It was acceptable for a black actor—a real black man, not a white man in blackface—to kiss a white girl in England, but not in the United States. Fortunately, however, Webster later persuaded the Theatre Guild to invite Robeson to do *Othello* in the United States in 1942, if not on Broadway at least as summer stock, with José Ferrer as Iago and Uta Hagen as Desdemona. The production was enthusiastically received, but Robeson’s concert commitments prevented it from going to New York until the fall of 1943. When it did open in New York, the reviews were highly favorable, but some of them contained reservations about Robeson’s ability to speak blank verse and to catch the grandeur of the role. In any case, the production was an enormous success, running for 296 continuous performances. The previous record for a New York *Othello* had been 57.



WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The verb *obliterate* originates from the Latin root *littera*, meaning “letter,” combined with the prefix *ob-*, meaning “against” or “in the way of.” *Obliterating* something means removing it or obscuring it so it cannot be seen or understood. Other words from *littera* include *literature*, *alliteration*, *literal*, and *letter*.

My Notes

Othello Through Time

My Notes

22 Robeson inevitably was asked to discuss his conception of the role; equally inevitably, he said different things at different times, and perhaps sometimes said what reporters wanted to hear—or perhaps the reporters heard only what they wanted to hear. Sometimes he was reported as saying that the matter of color is secondary, but on other occasions he is reported as saying: “The problem [of *Othello*] is the problem of my own people. It is a tragedy of racial conflict, a tragedy of honor, rather than of jealousy.”

23 Until Robeson, black actors in the United States were in effect limited to performing in all-black companies. With Robeson, a black actor played Othello with an otherwise white company. His appearance as Othello in 1943 was an important anticipation of the gains black actors were to make in later decades. Earle Hyman, Moses Gunn, Paul Winfield, William Marshall, and James Earl Jones are among the black actors who have played impressive Othellos in mixed-race companies. More important, however, as the careers of these actors show, a black may now also play a role other than Othello, as Ira Aldridge did a hundred and fifty years ago, though he had to cross the Atlantic to do it.

24 Before looking at Laurence Olivier’s Othello in 1964, mention should be made of Olivier’s Iago in a production of 1937, directed by Tyrone Guthrie at the Old Vic. Olivier and Guthrie talked to Ernest Jones, friend of Sigmund Freud, and came away with the idea that Iago’s hatred for Othello was in fact based on a subconscious love for Othello. That Iago protests “I hate the Moor” means nothing, for he is unaware of his true emotions. Ralph Richardson was Othello in this production, but Guthrie and Olivier decided not to shock him (remember, this was 1937) by any such unconventional idea, and so, the story goes, Richardson could never quite understand what Olivier was making out of the role. (What Olivier apparently made out of it was something like this: Iago is manic because he cannot face his true feelings.) The critics, like Richardson and the general public, were in the dark, and the production was poorly reviewed. Guthrie himself later called the production “a ghastly, boring hash,” and Olivier has said that he no longer subscribes to Jones’s interpretation.

25 In 1964 Olivier played Othello, with Frank Finlay as Iago, and Maggie Smith as Desdemona, in a production directed by John Dexter. (This production was later filmed, and most of what is true of the stage production is true also of the film.) Far from suggesting that Othello was some sort of desert chief, Olivier emphasized the Negroid aspects, or at least the white man’s stock ideas of Negroid aspects. Thus, Othello’s skin was very dark, his lips were red and sensuous, and his lilting voice had something of a West Indian accent. He rolled his eyes a good deal, and he walked (barefooted and adorned with ankle bracelets) with a sensuous sway. More important (worse, some viewers felt), was the idea behind this Othello, which was indebted to some thoughts by T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. For Eliot (in an essay called “Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca,” first published in 1927) and for Leavis (in an essay first published in a journal in 1937 but more readily available, in reprinted form, in Leavis’s *The Common Pursuit*), Othello is not so much a heroic figure—the noble Moor who gains our sympathy despite the terrible deed he performs—as a **fatuous** simpleton, a man given to egotistical self-dramatizing. The playbill included some passages from Leavis’s essay, which the director in effect summarized when he told the cast that

Othello is a pompous, word-spinning, arrogant black general. . . . The important thing is not to accept him at his own valuation. . . . He isn’t just a righteous man who’s been wronged. He’s a man too proud to think he could ever be capable of anything as base as jealousy. When he learns he can be jealous, his character changes. The knowledge destroys him, and he goes berserk.

fatuous: foolish

26 Thus, Olivier delivered “Farewell the tranquil mind” (3.3.345)—a speech customarily delivered reflectively—in a frenzy. It’s probably fair to say that the gist of the idea underlying this production is fairly odd: Othello is a barbarian with a thin veneer of civilization. Thus, the early speeches were delivered with easy confidence because Othello had no understanding of how simple and how volatile he really was. The change from civilized man to barbarian was marked by Othello tearing off a crucifix he wore, an effective enough bit of business but one at odds with two aspects of the end of Shakespeare’s play: Othello (who just before he kills Desdemona is careful to urge her to make her peace with God; “I would not kill thy soul” (5.2.32) murders Desdemona partly because he believes she has been false to the highest ideals. Second, when he comes to understand the horror of his action he executes justice upon himself. Still, although much in the conception could be faulted, it was widely agreed that Olivier’s acting was a triumph—a triumph won, among other things, at the expense of an **unprepossessing** Iago and a **negligible** Desdemona.

27 The film with Olivier (1965), directed by Stuart Burge, was made in a sound studio, using sets that were essentially those of the stage production—even for scenes set out-of-doors—but it was not simply a filmed version of what a spectator sitting in the third row center would have seen. For instance, because close-ups are used for all of Iago’s soliloquies, Iago becomes considerably more prominent in the film than he was on the stage.

28 Olivier said that the backgrounds in the film were minimal because he was concerned with “offering as little visual distraction as possible from the intentions of Shakespeare—or our performance of them.” For a film of the opposite sort, a film that does not hesitate to introduce impressive visual effects not specified in the text, one should look at Orson Welles’s *Othello*, a black and white film begun in 1951 and completed and released in 1955, with Welles in the title role. The film was shot on location, chiefly in Morocco and Venice, but what especially strikes a viewer is not that the camera gives us a strong sense of the real world, but that the camera leads us into a strange, shadowy world of unfamiliar and puzzling appearance. The film begins with Welles reading a passage from Shakespeare’s source while we see a shot of the face of the dead Othello. The camera rises above the bier, which is carried by pallbearers, and we then see Desdemona’s body, also being borne to the grave. We see the two funeral processions converge, and then we see Iago, in chains, thrust into a cage and hoisted above the crowd. From above—Iago’s viewpoint—we look down on the bodies of Othello and Desdemona. All of this is presented before we see the credits for the film. The film ends with a dissolve from the dying Othello to a shot of the funeral procession and then to shots of the fortress at Cyprus, the cage, and Venetian buildings and ships. Between this highly cinematic beginning and ending, other liberties are taken with the text. The murder of Roderigo, for instance, is set in a steamy bathhouse. Welles had intended to shoot the scene in a street, but because he had run out of money and didn’t have costumes, he set it in a steam bath, where a few towels were all the clothing that was needed. In short, Welles’s *Othello* is not for the Shakespeare purist (too much is cut and too much is added), but it is imaginative and it often works. Admirers will want to see also *Filming “Othello,”* a film memoir (1978) in which Welles and others discuss the work.

My Notes

unprepossessing: unappealing
negligible: unimportant

Othello Through Time

My Notes

29 The BBC television version of *Othello*, directed by Jonathan Miller and released in 1981, is, like Olivier's film, somewhat in the Eliot-Leavis tradition. In the introduction to the printed text of the BBC version, Miller says that the play does not set forth "the spectacle of a person of grandeur falling." Rather,

what's interesting is that it's not the fall of the great but the disintegration of the ordinary, of the representative character. It's the very ordinariness of Othello that makes the story intolerable.

30 Miller is insistent, too, that the play is not about race. "I do not see the play as being about color but as being about jealousy—which is something we are all vulnerable to." In line with this emphasis on the ordinary, Othello (Anthony Hopkins) is relatively unheroic, though he is scarcely as commonplace as Miller suggests, since he is full of energy and rage. More successful is Iago (Bob Hoskins), a bullet-headed hood who delights in Othello's anguish. The sets, in order to reduce any sense of heroism or romance, are emphatically domestic; no effort was made to take advantage of the camera's ability to record expansive space. Interestingly, however, the domestic images on the screen are by no means ordinary; notably beautiful, they often remind us of Vermeer.

31 During the course of this survey it has been easy to notice racist implications in the remarks of certain actors and critics. And it was racism, of course, that kept blacks from acting in *Othello* and in other plays) along with whites. One point that has not been raised till now is this: Does it matter if a black plays Othello? When Robeson played the part, some theatergoers found that the play made more sense than ever before, partly because Robeson (whatever his limitations as an actor) was a black. Others found that it was distracting for a black to play the part; it brought into the world of *Othello* irrelevant issues of twentieth-century America. Jonathan Miller, holding the second position, puts it thus:

When a black actor does the part, it offsets the play, puts it out of balance. It makes it a play about blackness, which it is not. ... The trouble is, the play was hijacked for political purposes.

32 Many things can be said against this view, for instance that when the white actor Olivier played Othello he expended so much energy impersonating a black that a spectator was far more conscious of the performer's blackness than one is of, say, James Earl Jones's. In any case, Miller has not said the last word on this topic, which will continue to be debated.

Bibliographic Note: For a modern edition of *Othello* prefaced with a long stage history, and equipped with abundant footnotes telling how various actors delivered particular lines, see Julie Hankey, *Othello* (1987), a volume in a series entitled Plays in Performance.

33 For a survey of *Othello* on the stage, see Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of "Othello"* (1961); for a brief study of five recent productions (including Robeson in 1943, Olivier in 1964, and the BBC television version of 1981), see Martin L. Wine, "*Othello*": *Text and Performance* (1984). Errol Hill's *Shakespeare in Sable* (1984), a history of black actors of Shakespeare, contains much information about *Othello*. Other items especially relevant to the productions discussed above include: Arthur Colby Sprague, *Shakespearian Players and Performances* (1953), for Kean's Othello and Edwin Booth's Iago; Daniel J. Watermeier, "Edwin Booth's Iago," *Theatre History Studies* 6 (1986): 32–55; Kenneth Tynan, ed., "*Othello*" by William Shakespeare: *The National Theatre Production* (1966), on Olivier; *The BBC TV Shakespeare: "Othello"* (1981), on the version directed by Jonathan Miller. On Robeson, see Susan Spector, "Margaret Webster's *Othello*," *Theatre History Studies* 6 (1968): 93–108. For film versions, see Jack J. Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (1977), and, for Welles's film only, see Michael MacLiammoir, *Put Money in Thy Purse* (1952).

Othello Through Time

My Notes

6. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraphs 11 and 12, which actors are associated with the “romantic” and “classical” acting styles? What details show how their styles affect the portrayals of Othello?

7. **Key Ideas and Details:** Based on Edwin Booth’s advice on how to play Iago in paragraph 15, why was his Iago more “terrifyingly evil” than others’?

8. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 16, the author says that “some things about the 1881 performance should be mentioned.” What are they? Why are they noteworthy?

9. **Craft and Structure:** Based on context clues and word parts, what is the meaning of *malignantly* at the end of paragraph 16?

10. **Key Ideas and Details:** How did the circumstances in which black actors portrayed Othello change over time?

11. **Key Ideas and Details:** In paragraph 20, how do Agate’s criticisms of Robeson’s performance suggest a critical lens?

Othello Through Time

My Notes

Working from the Text

16. Through today’s critical lens of Cultural Criticism, do you think the answers to “Does it matter if a black plays Othello?” (paragraph 31) would be different? Why or why not?

17. You have explored multiple Critical perspectives in the framework of a historical view of *Othello*. Answer the following two questions in a quickwrite and then with your discussion group or acting company.

- Which critical perspective offers a lens most applicable to a modern audience? Why?
- How will you present the character of Othello in light of this critical perspective?

Check Your Understanding

Sylvan Barnet’s review pointed out that observers of one production noted “the director’s presence was too strongly felt.” What is the proper role of a director in a performance? How can you use this information to guide your staging of a scene from *Othello*?



Independent Reading Checkpoint

Review your independent reading. What have you learned and observed about reading from different critical perspectives? For each of your texts, which critical perspective offers the lens most applicable to a modern audience? Why? How might you present the main character of each text in light of this critical perspective?

ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to construct an argumentative essay that defends the critical lens that you feel provides modern society with the most compelling view of literature (choose among Historical, Cultural, or Feminist for this assignment). You will support the claim with valid reasoning and with relevant and sufficient evidence from your reading and observations.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to plan ideas and structure.

- How will you evaluate the different critical perspectives and select the one you feel works best?
- How will you go about collecting textual evidence that supports your position?
- What sorts of tools will you use to record your ideas and structure the essay (for instance, an outline, a graphic organizer)?

Drafting: Select evidence to support your claim and to acknowledge and address counterclaims.

- How can you state your claim as a single thesis statement so that it functions as the controlling idea of your argument?
- How will you use the evidence you selected to support your claims and clarify your thinking?
- Will you consider addressing counterclaims that would be in opposition to your position?
- How can you conclude your work in a way that follows naturally from the argument presented while avoiding unnecessary repetition?

Evaluating and Revising: Get feedback from peers and revise to improve structure, transitions, and coherence.

- How will you make sure that the evidence you include clearly and consistently supports your position?
- How will you make sure you avoid oversimplifying the critical perspective you are supporting or oversimplifying competing perspectives (for instance, “from a Feminist critical perspective, all men are bad”)?
- What kinds of feedback from peers and the Scoring Guide can you use to guide your revision?

Checking and Editing for Publication: Make your work the best it can be.

- How will you ensure that your essay maintains an academic, formal tone; that it seamlessly embeds quotations within the text; and that it uses varied syntax?
- How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy?
- What sort of outside resources can help you to check your draft?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:

- How were you able to consider your audience when crafting your argument, anticipating what information they would need, and what potential questions or objections they might have?

Writing an Argument

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asserts a strong position and includes apt, specific references to support the argument offers an insightful and thorough analysis of the chosen critical perspective demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of the perspective. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a sustained, competent position supported by specific references that advance the argument offers a reasonable analysis of the chosen critical perspective demonstrates an adequate understanding of the complexity of the perspective. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> struggles to articulate a convincing position, often relying on summary or paraphrase instead of specific evidence offers a less-than-thorough understanding of the task and an inadequate treatment of the chosen critical perspective overlooks or understates the complexity of the perspective. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not articulate a convincing position, often relying on summary or paraphrase instead of specific evidence offers a weak understanding of the task and an inadequate treatment of the chosen critical perspective does not address the complexity of the perspective.
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is organized exceptionally, so that ideas move smoothly uses transitions effectively to enhance the essay's coherence. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has an organization that is clear and easy to follow includes transitions that help readers move between ideas. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is difficult to follow and may jump too rapidly between ideas lacks transitions between ideas. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is confusing and difficult to follow, moving back and forth among different ideas lacks transitions between ideas.
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and other stylistic devices that are notable and appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience demonstrates command of standard English conventions, with few or no errors. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and stylistic devices that are appropriate for the subject, purpose, and audience contains few errors in standard writing conventions; minor errors do not interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and stylistic devices ineffectively for the subject, purpose, and audience contains errors in standard writing conventions that seriously interfere with meaning. 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction, syntax, and stylistic devices inappropriately for the subject, purpose, and audience contains numerous errors in standard writing conventions that seriously interfere with meaning.

Staging a Performance

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Close Reading, Marking the Text, Quickwrite, Skimming/Scanning, Summarizing

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Determine the theme of a play from its dramatic structure.
- Apply theatrical elements to a performance to reveal theme and reflect a critical perspective.

Staging a Dramatic Scene

1. What do you know about the dramatic structure of a play? Share your ideas about this term with a partner.
2. How would you map the events of *Othello*? Think back to the events that took us from *Othello*, the outsider yet noble husband, to the triumph of “honest Iago” to the tragic ending. Plot the key events with your acting company. Be prepared to share your visual with the class.

Digging In—The 3 × 3

Knowing what happens in a literary work is where the real fun begins. What is the author trying to say through the dramatic structure? Sometimes, determining the theme of a work is easier when you simplify your understanding of the plot. Suppose you were to wrap up the plot of *Othello* in as few as nine words (three 3-word sentences). For *Romeo and Juliet*, a literal 3 × 3 might look like this:

Montague loves Capulet.
Feud complicates love.
Miscommunication brings death.

In order to derive theme from the literal events, let’s substitute thematic ideas for the specific ones in the previous 3 × 3.

Adolescents defy boundaries.
Emotions go unchecked.
Interference complicates reality.

Our “literary 3 × 3” now leads us to some general truths about life. What is Shakespeare saying about the unchecked emotions of adolescence? Or of the unchecked emotions of adults engaged in an ancient quarrel? Could we also safely infer from the text that adults’ interference in the lives of young people invites—rather than prevents—complications that are a natural part of growing up?

3. Work with your acting company to “wrap up” the dramatic structure of *Othello* in a literal 3 × 3.
4. Write your class’s combined “best” below.



INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Discuss

Write literal and thematic three-word sentences about a work you are reading during independent reading. Share your sentences with a peer. How are your sentences similar? How are they different? Can you change any words to make your three-word sentences clearer?

Staging a Performance

My Notes

10. As an acting company, come to an agreement about the critical perspective that offers the most engaging interpretation of the scene for a staged performance.

11. Now it's time to consider how to make each character's vocal delivery, the set, staging, and blocking of the scene reflect the critical perspective in a performance. Use the graphic organizer on the following to plan your presentation. Use the additional rows for other categories/characters.

Scene:

Connection to Theme:

Critical Perspective:

	Description of Desired Effect	Steps to Take to Create This Effect (How will the character deliver lines? What kind of lighting/music will create the effect? How will the movement on stage enhance the effect?)
The set		
Character 1		
Character 2		
Character 3		
Character 4		
Lighting		
Music		
Blocking		
Props		
Other		

Staging a Performance

My Notes

Make Final Preparations

12. Print your script, and annotate the scene for your vocal delivery, gestures, and movement. Rehearse your scene, and accept constructive criticism from your director to help you convey a convincing performance. Be sure to keep in mind the critical perspective you are applying to the scene, and adjust your character's performance to reflect the appropriate role in light of that interpretation.

Check Your Understanding

Review the Assignment, Steps, and Scoring Guide from Embedded Assessment 2 with your acting company. Discuss which components of the assignment may need further preparation. How will you work together as a group to complete any remaining steps?

Playbill: *Othello*

My Notes

7. Your group is responsible for creating a playbill to accompany your performance of *Othello*. Your playbill should enhance your performance and your audience's understanding of the critical perspective that informs your interpretation. Imitate the playbills you viewed in class to guide your content and structure.

As you design your playbill, be sure to:

- Include a creative design with the artwork, graphics, and advertisements presented.
- Adhere to the message and literary theory pursued through the staged performance.
- Use a computer program to produce a visually appealing and technically sound publication.

8. Sketch a plan for the playbill's design in the space below. Share the responsibilities of designing the playbill by listing all of its components and then assigning an individual to each task.



Independent Reading Checkpoint

Review your independent reading. Suppose you were going to design a playbill for one of the plays or novels. What kind of information about your novel or play would you include? What creative design would you make? Which actors might you choose as performers? Share your ideas with a group.

ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to interpret a scene from *Othello* using one of the critical perspectives you have studied and then plan, rehearse, and perform the scene.

Planning and Prewriting: Take time to plan ideas and the structure of your scene.

- How will you determine which one of the critical perspectives will best apply to your scene?
- How can your acting company bring to life the critical perspective you've chosen?
- How will you divide the various tasks between group members?

Drafting: Create all elements needed for an effective performance.

- How can you integrate theatrical elements into your scene?
- What changes do you need to make to your scene (delete or change lines, alter the setting or gender of characters) in order to apply your selected critical perspective?
- How can you ensure that the group works successfully to maintain its purpose and achieve its goals?

Evaluating and Revising: Obtain feedback and revise to make your work the best it can be.

- How can you use practice and rehearsal to prepare and evaluate your presentation (videotape a rehearsal, ask another group to provide feedback)?
- How can you use the Scoring Guide as a resource to evaluate your draft?

Checking and Editing for Performance: Polish your written materials and your vocal delivery.

- How will you check for grammatical and technical accuracy in your written materials?
- Are you prepared to provide feedback to other acting companies as well as to accept constructive criticism for your own performance?

Reflection

After completing this Embedded Assessment, think about how you went about accomplishing this assignment, and respond to the following:

- The goal of applying a critical perspective to a text is to bring out a new, deeper understanding of the work. How did you manage the challenge of making changes to your scene in order to highlight the chosen critical perspectives without completely altering the scene's original meaning?

Staging an Interpretation

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reveals an insightful analysis and mature understanding of the scene insightfully interprets the scene and applies the critical perspective clearly communicates the intended effect to the audience includes a reflection showing a thorough analysis of the entire process. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates clear analysis and understanding of the scene plausibly interprets the scene and applies the critical perspective communicates the intended effect to the audience includes a reflection demonstrating adequate analysis of the process. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reveals a limited analysis and understanding of the scene interprets the scene and applies the critical perspective with limited success inadequately communicates the intended effect to the audience includes a reflection demonstrating inadequate analysis of the process. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reveals little analysis or understanding of the scene attempts to interpret the scene but does not successfully apply a critical perspective does not communicate the intended effect to the audience does not include a reflection analyzing the process.
Structure	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a polished performance that skillfully uses theatrical elements and effective vocal delivery demonstrates equal sharing of responsibility. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a good performance that uses adequate theatrical elements and vocal delivery demonstrates mostly balanced sharing of responsibility. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides a disorganized performance with theatrical elements and vocal delivery that detract from the quality of the scene demonstrates an unequal division of responsibilities. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offers a confusing and disorganized scene with no theatrical elements and vocal delivery that detracts from the performance demonstrates an unequal division of responsibilities.
Use of Language	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes written materials that demonstrate a mature style that advances the group's ideas demonstrates command of oral and written English, with few or no errors. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes written materials that demonstrate a style that adequately supports the group's ideas demonstrates good usage of oral and written English, with few errors. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes written materials that demonstrate a limited style that ineffectively supports the group's ideas attempts to use appropriate oral and written language but has errors that interfere with meaning. 	<p>The interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes little or no written materials to support the group's ideas uses inappropriate oral and written language and with serious errors that interfere with meaning.