Othello: Unit Overview

ENG3U, Grade 11 English (University), Unit 3. 16 classes of 75 minutes (about three and a half weeks).

The big question

How do jealousy, manipulation and prejudice destroy trust?

Students read Shakespeare's Othello act by act, tracking how Iago manipulates every character, how Othello's language and self-image collapse, and how race, gender and reputation shape the tragedy. Lessons combine close reading, performance and discussion: a manipulation tracker, an Act 3 social media feed, a structured academic controversy on race, a Venetian inquiry into who is to blame and a film pitch. The unit ends with a scene performance with a director's rationale and a timed literary essay. A full Reading Edition of the play and an Othello Companion with scene summaries and key passages are included.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**Before the Play**	1	What is this play about, and how will we read it?	R 1.1, R 1.5, OC 2.2	Context; anticipation guide; cast map; norms
2	**I Am Not What I Am**	1	Whose version of Othello do we hear first?	R 1.4, R 1.8, R 2.3	1.1; Iago's grievance; prejudice as a weapon
3	**The Senate**	1	How does Othello win his case?	R 1.6, R 2.3, OC 1.7	1.2–1.3; the defence; divided duty; the warning
4	**Motive Hunting**	1	Why does Iago do it?	R 1.4, R 1.8, OC 2.5	Three soliloquies; Coleridge; performance
5	**Reputation**	1	Is reputation who you are?	R 1.6, R 2.1, W 2.2	Act 2; Cassio's fall; Manipulation Tracker
6	**The Temptation, Part 1**	1	How does manipulation work?	R 1.4, R 2.3, OC 2.5	3.3; six tactics; Othello's shift
7	**The Temptation, Part 2**	1	How is Othello's self-image destroyed?	R 1.4, R 1.8, M 3.4	3.3; “Haply, for I am black”; the vow; Act 3 feed
8	**The Handkerchief**	1	How can an object hold a whole tragedy?	R 1.6, R 2.3, R 1.4	3.4–4.1; symbol web; language collapse
9	**Willow**	1	What do the women see that the men don't?	R 1.8, R 1.6, OC 2.2	4.2–4.3; Emilia's argument; three women
10	**Put Out the Light**	1	How should Othello be remembered?	R 1.4, R 1.7, OC 1.5	Act 5 (with care); final words; tragic hero debate

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11	**Reading Race**	1	Does the play challenge racism or repeat it?	R 1.8, R 1.5, OC 2.2	Evidence gallery; stage history; structured academic controversy
12	**Who's to Blame?**	1	Who is responsible for the tragedy?	OC 1.5, OC 2.3, R 1.6	The Venetian inquiry; case briefs; verdicts
13	**Othello on Screen**	1	How do productions interpret the play?	M 2.1, M 1.4, M 3.4	Clip comparison; adaptations; film pitch
14	**Director's Workshop**	1	How do I turn an interpretation into a performance?	OC 2.5, OC 2.6, W 1.4	Scene choice, cutting, blocking, rationale
15	**Performance Day**	1	Can I communicate my interpretation?	OC 2.3, OC 2.5, OC 2.6	Scene performances (summative 1); essay prompts
16	**Timed Essay**	1	Can I write a focused literary argument?	W 2.1, R 1.6, W 3.5	Timed essay (summative 2); anticipation guide reflection

Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Anticipation guide, cast map, Othello before Othello chart, motive hunt, Manipulation Tracker, tactic spotter, Act 3 feed, symbol web, three women chart, final words, controversy organizer, case brief, clip comparison
Assessment as learning	Performance self-assessment, anticipation guide reflection
Assessment of learning	Scene performance with director's rationale (Oral Communication and Writing) and a timed literary essay (Reading and Writing), with rubrics in the Summative Tasks file

Texts

Included in the Start Here folder:

- **Othello Reading Edition:** the complete play (public domain), formatted for class
- **Othello Companion:** a cast list, plain-language summaries of every scene and fifteen key passages

Othello contains racist language spoken by characters and depicts violence against women, including Desdemona's murder. Lessons build in discussion norms, let readers skip epithets, summarize rather than stage the murder, and include support resources in the teacher notes. Film clips (Lesson 13) should come from versions licensed through your school or board. Because line numbers vary by edition, lessons refer to act and scene only; the Folger Shakespeare Library offers a free online text with line numbers.

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What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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