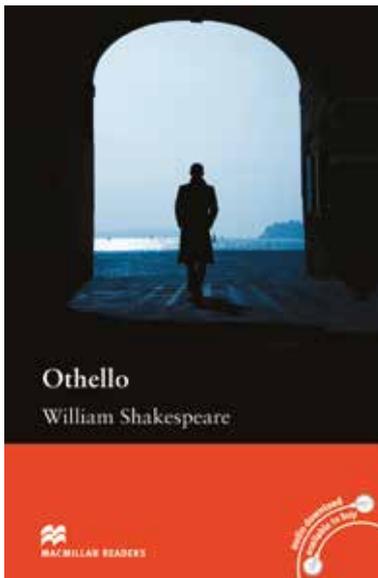


OTHELLO



by William Shakespeare



This lesson has been inspired by the Macmillan Readers adaption of William Shakespeare's original playscript. The language has been adapted to make it suitable for readers at Intermediate level. It also features extracts of key speeches from the original text along with explanatory notes, plus glossaries and exercises designed to reinforce understanding.

The book is available in print and as an eBook.

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SHAKESPEARE FOR LIFE

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OTHELLO



TEACHER'S NOTES

LESSON OVERVIEW

Level: Intermediate

Length: Approximately 40 minutes

Language focus: Expressions still used today that Shakespeare coined in the play *Othello*; expressing opinions

Learning objectives: In this lesson the students will be introduced to some of the themes and language of the play *Othello*, learn a variety of expressions from the play still used today and look at functional language for expressing opinion.

Students will have the opportunity to:

1. Learn about the background to and the story of *Othello*.
2. Look at phrases from the play still used today.
3. Learn a variety of set phrases for giving opinions.
4. Practise these phrases while discussing and debating themes related to *Othello*.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

- Language task including dictation activity
- Discussion task
- Additional activity



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1 ACTIVITY 1

Write the key themes from *Othello* on the board.

Key themes: Jealousy, racism, love, doubt, marriage and gender.

Ask students what they know/think about the story of *Othello* – which of the emotions listed on the board do they think Othello will feel?

SYNOPSIS

Read the synopsis to your class, or if the story is known, have students call out what they can remember to cover the main points of the story.

Othello is a respected general in the service of Venice. Iago is Othello's ambitious friend. Othello promotes Michael Cassio to the position of personal lieutenant and Iago becomes jealous. Iago begins an evil and malicious campaign against the hero. Othello runs away with Desdemona to marry her but Iago starts to plot against them. Othello becomes jealous and suspicious of Desdemona. He confides in Iago that he plans to poison Desdemona. There are several plots and murders, then Othello returns to his castle to kill his innocent wife. He eventually strangles her to death. Emilia tells Othello the truth about the scheming Iago. Othello wounds Iago, then kills himself and Iago kills Emilia (Desdemona's companion and Iago's wife).

Key characters: General Othello, Lieutenant Cassio, Iago, Desdemona, Emilia

Next explain that Othello is a Moor (a black person from North Africa). Ask students how that would change their understanding of the emotions/story.

1 LANGUAGE TASK 1: DICTATION

Dictate the following five sentences to your class:

- It's **neither here nor there**, I've made my decision.
- It's **a foregone conclusion**, everyone is going to vote to leave.
- I don't know what happened but he seemed to **vanish into thin air**.
- You can see he's upset, he wears **his heart on his sleeve**.
- Mobile **addiction** is a serious issue.

Ask your students in small groups to discuss the meaning of each sentence.

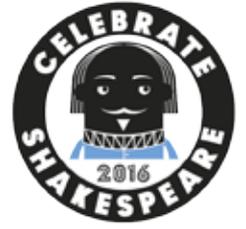
After a few minutes, hand out the student worksheet so your students can check their answers against the Macmillan Dictionary definitions.

Answer key: 1C, 2E, 3A, 4B, 5D



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LANGUAGE TASK 1: WRITING ACTIVITY

Refer your students to the language task. Initially, ask them to work in pairs to complete sentences with the starting phrases. Then ask your students to shout out any examples they wish to share and write these on the board.

2 DISCUSSION TASK:

Divide your students into three groups:

Team race

Team marriage

Team gender

In each group, ask students to get into pairs (A and B). Hand out the discussion cards for that team with questions for Student A and Student B. Students can choose one question from their card to ask their partner and vice versa.

Discussion card 1 - Race

Student A

1. What do think racism is?
2. Why are people racist?
3. Have you ever been the victim of racism?
4. Do you think racism is getting better or worse in your country?
5. Have you ever witnessed an act of racism? How did it make you feel?

Student B

1. How would you explain racism to a child?
2. Why do people discriminate against others in your country?
3. Which do you think is worse: racism, sexism or ageism?
4. What's the best way to prevent racism?
5. What punishments should there be for racists?

Discussion card 2 - Marriage

Student A

1. What is the right age to get married?
2. What's your opinion on arranged marriages?
3. Why are fewer and fewer people getting married nowadays?
4. Who has the best marriage you know of? Why?
5. Do you think people should agree on a marriage contract before they marry?

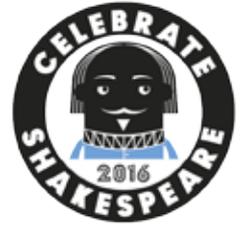
Student B

1. Are you married? If not, would you like to marry?
2. Is there anything scary about marriage?
3. What qualities would you look for in the person you wanted to marry?
4. Should people stay married even if they no longer love each other?
5. Do you think marriage changes people?



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Discussion card 3 - Gender

Student A

1. Who do you think works harder – men or women?
2. Are there different laws in your country depending on gender?
3. Are you happy with your gender?
4. Why do you think men are generally more aggressive than women?
5. Can people in your country change their gender?

Student B

1. Do you think it's okay for boys to play with girls' toys and vice-versa?
2. Do you think men and women communicate differently?
3. Are gender roles changing in your culture?
4. Do you think you live in a male-dominated society?
5. Do you think men or women are happier?

After they have completed their discussion in pairs, have each group come back together to discuss the questions they each asked. Were there any questions they all chose/avoided? Ask each group to think about why.

Extension activity: If time allows have the class exchange cards so they are asking questions on a different topic.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Pair students up – one is 'for/agree' the other 'against/disagree'. Next show (one by one) a series of statements:

1. Being proud of the country/culture you come from is a good thing.
2. It's better to get married when you are older.
3. Being 'married' is more important to a woman than a man.
4. Men are more jealous than women.
5. Women are always held back by men in business.

The 'for' student has to debate from the point of view of agreeing with the statement, the 'against' from the point of disagreeing with it. In pairs, they have three minutes to think up an argument for/against.

Give the students one minute to present their view, then open it up to whole-class debate.



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