

AP English/ENG 201 Dual Credit
Othello Summer Reading Discussion Questions

NOTES

Othello by William Shakespeare – ISBN: 978-0-7434-7755-0

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Johnson via e-mail: joyjohnson@concordiaprepschool.org.

Discussion Questions

Select **TEN** questions and respond in paragraph form. (The rest will be discussed in class in conjunction with additional discussion points.) Make sure to incorporate direct quotes from the text in your answers, citing the lines you quote. Submit your TYPED summer reading responses to Turnitin.com on the first day of class.

Quoting the Text

Just like when quoting passages from a novel, stand-alone quotes from a play are not allowed. Respond, use textual support to back up your statement by first introducing the quote, and then comment on the quote after the citation. NOTE: Shorter phrases/passages work better—no need for block quotes for this assignment—and remember to cite the act, scene, and line number (not the page number).

Refer to final pages for examples of how to quote Shakespeare.

*****A word of warning!!*****

Please DO NOT include the question in your response. This creates a false positive when you upload in Turnitin.com (which means the instructor must investigate if you have in fact plagiarized). Failure to comply will cost you points on your summer reading.

1. What is Brabantio's attitude toward Roderigo's wooing of Desdemona before and after he learns of her marriage to Othello? What does this reversal tell us about Othello's stature in Venetian society?
2. What appears to be the basis of attraction between Othello and Desdemona? Are these "deep enough" to achieve a lasting marriage?
3. What reasons do Desdemona and Othello give for their going to Cyprus with him? Which spouse shows greater self-insight?
4. What piece of advice to Roderigo does Iago repeat most insistently? Why?
5. Iago says he suspects both Othello and Casio of adultery with Emilia. How is this connected with the view of women that he expresses to Desdemona in some couplets?
6. What is ironical about Iago's statement, "I do love Cassio well and would do much / To cure him of this evil?"
7. As Othello inquires about the brawl during the night watch, his passion almost takes over from his "best judgment." What is the reason for his near-loss of control?

8. What is Iago's explanation of Desdemona's choosing a husband so unlike her in "clime, complexion, and degree," and what is the effect of his explanation on Othello?
9. What meanings does the handkerchief have to Othello?
10. Othello suggests one means of killing Desdemona and Iago another; which method does Othello accept and why?
11. Under what circumstances, and why, does Othello strike Desdemona?
12. When Othello questions Emilia about Desdemona's chastity, does Emilia base her defense of Desdemona mainly on evidence or on faith?
13. How do you account for Othello's reaction to Desdemona's question, "Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?"
14. How do Desdemona and Emilia differ in their views of adultery?
15. How do you account for Iago's badgering of Bianca?
16. "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul. / Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars. / It is the cause." What does Othello mean by "the cause" and why does he repeat the phrase three times?
17. "Put out the light, and then put out the light." How does Othello go on to distinguish between the two kinds of light?
18. Why does Othello smother Desdemona without allowing her time to "say one prayer?"
19. What is the point of Iago's statement to Othello, "I bleed, sir, but not killed?"
20. In his final speech, what is Othello's point in mentioning the incident in Aleppo?

How to Quote Shakespeare

Here is a quick guide on how to quote Shakespeare according to the standards set by the Modern Language Association (MLA). <http://drmarkwomack.com/mla-style/how-to-quote/quote-shakespeare/>

Formatting References

Italicize the titles of plays.

Hamlet or *Othello*.

Place a parenthetical reference after each quotation containing its act, scene, and line numbers separated by periods. Do *not* use page numbers. Cite line-number ranges under 100 like this: 34–37. Above 100, repeat only the last two digits of the second number: 211–12 (but of course, 397–405 and 96–102). Place a dash [–], not a hyphen [-], between the range numbers.

Twelfth Night (1.5.268–76).

Use Arabic numerals for all reference numbers. (Some older texts used roman numerals for act and scene references—like this: III.viii.7–34—but modern scholars use Arabic numerals.) You may refer to a scene in the text with the act and scene numbers—in Arabic numerals—separated by a period. Otherwise, spell it out.

In 3.1, Hamlet delivers his most famous soliloquy.

In Act 3, scene 1, Hamlet delivers his most famous soliloquy.

Question marks, exclamation points, and commas *always* go inside quotation marks, period *always* appear after the citation (unless a block quote):

“Commas,” says Mrs. Johnson, “*always* go inside quotation marks!” (3.2.15).

Quoting Prose

If a prose quotation runs four lines or less, put it in quotation marks and incorporate it in the text.

The immensely obese Falstaff tells the Prince, “When I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle’s talon in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman’s thumb ring” (2.4.325–27).

Format prose quotations that run more than four lines as block quotations. Start on a new line and set the quotation one inch in from the left margin. Do *not* add quotation marks. A colon generally introduces a block quotation.

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedick reflects on what he has overheard Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio say:

This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured. They say I will

bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. (2.3.217–24)

Quoting Verse

If quoting all or part of a single line of verse, put it in quotation marks within the text.

Berowne's pyrotechnic line "Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile" is a textbook example of antanaclasis (1.1.77).

Two or three lines may be incorporated in the same way, using a slash with a space on each side [/] to separate them.

Claudius alludes to the story of Cain and Abel when describing his crime: "It hath the primal eldest curse upon't, / A brother's murder" (3.3.37–38).

Verse quotations of more than three lines should be set apart as block quotations. Start a new line and set each line one inch in from the left margin, adding no quotation marks not appearing in the original. If the quotation starts in the middle of a line of verse, reproduce it that way, do not shift it to the left margin.

Jaques begins his famous speech by comparing the world to a theatre:

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. (2.7.138–42)

He then proceeds to enumerate and analyze these ages.

If quoting dialogue between two or more characters in a play, set the quotation off from your text as described above. Begin each part of the dialogue with the appropriate character's name indented one inch from the left margin and written in all capital letters. Follow the name with a period, and start the quotation. Indent all subsequent lines in the character's speech an additional quarter inch. When the dialogue shifts to another character, start a new line indented one inch from the left margin. Maintain this pattern throughout the entire quotation.

A short time later, Lear's daughters try to dismiss all of their father's servants:

GONERIL. Hear me, my lord.
 What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five
 To follow in a house where twice so many
 Have command to tend you?
REGAN. What need one?
LEAR. O, reason not the need! (2.4.254–58)