Othello by William Shakespeare

Mastery and Retrieval Tasks Booklet

**Act 1, Scene 2**

**Act 1, Scene 3**

**Act 2, Scene 1**

For each of the following extracts you need to establish the following. What part of the story is told in the extract? Remember although this is an extract of a wider play it will have been chosen because it has a distinct narrative or dramatic arc.

1. What has happened earlier to instigate the events in the extract? What will happen as a result of the events in the extract? Answering these questions will help you position the extract in terms of its significance to the wider story.
2. Identify some dramatic method in the extract. Remember, it is entirely possible that this will be an implied stage direction. Get used to identifying these. What would be the impact of this happening on stage?
3. Pick four tragic aspects that are easily identifiable within the extract to shape your response around. Adapt these so they form topic sentences which include reference the tragic aspect and its significance within the extract.
4. **Select one of the scene and explore the dramatic significance of the scene.**

**Knowledge Test: Act 1, Scene 1 and 2**

1. The opening of ‘Othello’ begins with an argument between which 2 characters?

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1. What name does Iago call Cassio that implies he is not an experienced soldier?

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1. What does Iago’s first plot against Othello involve?

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1. What does Brabantio say to Roderigo about his suit of Desdemona?

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1. What is Brabantio wearing when he speaks with Roderigo?

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1. How does Brabantio assume that Othello has convinced Desdemona to marry him?

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1. What are Othello and Iago talking about the first time that Othello enters the stage?

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1. What does Othello think will ‘out tongue’ Brabantio’s complaints to the Duke?

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1. Why have Cassio and the officers come looking for Othello?

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1. Who is the only character who knew that Othello was marrying Desdemona?

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1. What is Othello’s response to Brabantio’s accusations of witchcraft and abuse?

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1. How does Brabantio think the Duke will react when he hears the story of Othello and Desdemona’s marriage?

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Extract 1

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| OTHELLO | Let him do his spite: | | |
|  | My services which I have done the signiory | | |  |
|  | Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,-- | | |  |
|  | Which, when I know that boasting is an honour, | | |  |  | |
|  | I shall promulgate--I fetch my life and being | | |  | 5 | |
|  | From men of royal siege, and my demerits | | |  |  | |
|  | May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune | | |  |  | |
|  | As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago, | | |  |  | |
|  | But that I love the gentle Desdemona, | | |  |  | |
|  | I would not my unhoused free condition | | |  | 10 | |
|  | Put into circumscription and confine | | |  |  | |
|  | For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yond? | | |  |  | |
| IAGO | Those are the raised father and his friends: | | |  |  | |
|  | You were best go in. | | |  |  | |
| OTHELLO | Not I I must be found: | | |  | 15 | |
|  | My parts, my title and my perfect soul | | |  |  | |
|  | Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they? | | |  |  | |
| IAGO | By Janus, I think no. | | |  |  | |
|  | *Enter CASSIO, and certain Officers with torches.* | | |  |  | |
| OTHELLO | The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant. | | |  |  | |
|  | The goodness of the night upon you, friends! | | |  | 20 | |
|  | What is the news? | | |  |  | |
| CASSIO | The duke does greet you, general, | | |  |  | |
|  | And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance, | | |  |  | |
|  | Even on the instant. | | |  |  | |
| OTHELLO | What is the matter, think you? | | |  | 25 | |
|  | This very night at one another's heels, | | |  |  | |
|  | And many of the consuls, raised and met, | | |  |  | |
|  | Are at the duke's already: you have been | | |  |  | |
|  | hotly call'd for; |  |  | | |
|  | When, being not at your lodging to be found, |  |  | | |
|  | The senate hath sent about three several guests |  |  | | |
|  | To search you out. |  |  | | |
| OTHELLO | 'Tis well I am found by you. |  |  | | |
|  | I will but spend a word here in the house, |  |  | | |
|  | And go with you. |  |  | | |
|  | *Exit* |  |  | | |
| CASSIO | Ancient, what makes he here? |  |  | | |
| IAGO | 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack: |  | 50 | | |
|  | If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever. |  |  | | |
| CASSIO | I do not understand. |  |  | | |
| IAGO | He's married. |  |  | | |
| CASSIO | To who? |  |  | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CASSIO | Something from Cyprus as I may divine: |
|  | It is a business of some heat: the galleys |  |  |
|  | Have sent a dozen sequent messengers |  |  |
|  | This very night at one another's heels, |  |  |
|  | And many of the consuls, raised and met, | 30 |  |
|  | Are at the duke's already: you have been |  |  |
|  | hotly call'd for; |  |  |
|  | When, being not at your lodging to be found, |  |  |
|  | The senate hath sent about three several guests |  |  |
|  | To search you out. |  |  |
| OTHELLO | 'Tis well I am found by you. | 35 |  |
|  | I will but spend a word here in the house, |  |  |
|  | And go with you. |  |  |
|  | *Exit* |  |  |
| CASSIO | Ancient, what makes he here? |  |  |
| IAGO | 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack: |  |  |
|  | If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever. | 40 |  |
| CASSIO | I do not understand. |  |  |
| IAGO | He's married. |  |  |
| CASSIO | To who? |  |  |
|  | *Re-enter OTHELLO.* |  |  |
| IAGO | Marry, to--Come, captain, will you go? |  |  |
| OTHELLO | Have with you. | 45 |  |
| CASSIO | Here comes another troop to seek for you. |  |  |
| IAGO | It is Brabantio. General, be advised; |  |  |
|  | He comes to bad intent. |  |  |
|  | *Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers with torches and weapons.* |  |  |

***Act 1 Scene 2***

**Knowledge Test: Act 1, Scene 3**

1. Where specifically is Scene 3 set? (Specific building rather than ‘Venice’)

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1. Why are the Duke and Senators meeting?

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1. What trickery is being referred to by the Senator’s words ‘false gaze’?

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1. What adjective do the Duke and the Senator both use as an epithet for Othello?

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1. What does Brabantio claim to the Duke that Othello has used to ‘steal’ Desdemona?

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1. What is the Duke’s reaction to Brabantio’s claims that Othello has stolen his child?

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1. Othello describes how before he met Desdemona he belonged in ‘the tented field’ in ‘feats of broil and battle.’ What does this tell us about his life before her?

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1. What is the Duke’s response to Brabantio’s repetition of his claims that Othello stole Desdemona with magic?

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1. What does Othello as the Duke and Senator to do to prove his honesty?

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1. While the Duke and Senators and Brabantio are waiting for Othello, what does Othello propose to do?

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1. How does Othello describe the way Desdemona listened to his stories?

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1. Othello says Desdemona fell in love with him for the dangers he had passed. What made him fall in love with her?

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1. What is the Duke’s response to Othello’s story?

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1. What comparison does Desdemona make about her love and respect for Othello?

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1. What does Othello originally request happens to Desdemona while he is in Cyprus?

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1. Who requests that Desdemona go to Cyprus so that she can ‘live’ with her husband?

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1. Who does Othello assign protection of Desdemona to on the voyage to Venice?

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1. What does Brabantio warn Othello before he leaves?

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1. What does Roderigo claim that he will do now he knows Desdemona loves another?

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1. What does Iago repeatedly instruct Roderigo to do?

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1. What motive does Iago give for hating the moor at the end of A1?

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1. What bit of Iago’s plan does he settle on at the end of Act 1?

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Extract 2

|  |  |  |
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| RODERIGO | Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on |  |
|  | the issue? |  |  |
| IAGO | Thou art sure of me:--go, make money:--I have told |  |  |
|  | thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I |  |  |
|  | hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no |  | 5 |
|  | less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge |  |  |
|  | against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost |  |  |
|  | thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many |  |  |
|  | events in the womb of time which will be delivered. |  |  |
|  | Traverse! go, provide thy money. We will have more |  | 10 |
|  | of this to-morrow. Adieu. |  |  |
| RODERIGO | Where shall we meet i' the morning? |  |  |
| IAGO | At my lodging. |  |  |
| RODERIGO | I'll be with thee betimes. |  |  |
| IAGO | Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo? |  | 15 |
| RODERIGO | What say you? |  |  |
| IAGO | No more of drowning, do you hear? |  |  |
| RODERIGO | I am changed: I'll go sell all my land. |  |  |
|  | *Exit*. |  |  |
| IAGO | Thus do I ever make my fool my purse: |  |  |
|  | For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane, |  | 20 |
|  | If I would time expend with such a snipe. |  |  |
|  | But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor: |  |  |
|  | And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets |  |  |
|  | He has done my office: I know not if't be true; |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | But I, for mere suspicion in that kind, |  | 25 |
|  | Will do as if for surety. He holds me well; |  |  |
|  | The better shall my purpose work on him. |  |  |
|  | Cassio's a proper man: let me see now: |  |  |
|  | To get his place and to plume up my will |  |  |
|  | In double knavery--How, how? Let's see:-- |  | 30 |
|  | After some time, to abuse Othello's ear |  |  |
|  | That he is too familiar with his wife. |  |  |
|  | He hath a person and a smooth dispose |  |  |
|  | To be suspected, framed to make women false. |  | 35 |
|  | The Moor is of a free and open nature, |  |  |
|  | That thinks men honest that but seem to be so, |  |  |
|  | And will as tenderly be led by the nose |  |  |
|  | As asses are. |  |  |
|  | I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night |  | 40 |
|  | Must bring this monstrous birth to the world’s light. |  |  |
|  | *Exit* |  |  |

***Act 1 Scene 3***

**Knowledge Test: Act 2, Scene 1 and 2**

1. Why can’t Montano see any boats at the start of Act 2 Scene 1?

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1. How does Shakespeare subvert expectations of a traditional tragedy at the start of Act 2 Scene 1?

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1. What is Montano’s view of Othello as a general?

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1. What adjective does Cassio use to describe Dedemona to Montano?

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1. What is Desdemona and Cassio’s first thought on arrival in Cyprus?

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1. How does Cassio irritate Iago when he arrives in Cyprus with Emilia and Desdemona?

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1. What do Desdemona and Iago banter over while waiting for Othello?

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1. What does Cassio do that makes Iago realise he is perfect for his plot to make Othello jealous?

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1. What does Othello say on first arrival that proves to be prophetic?

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1. Where does Othello send Iago when the rest of the party go to the castle?

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1. How does Roderigo react when Iago first tells him Cassio is in love with Desdemona?

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1. What reasons does Iago give for Desdemona falling in love with Othello?

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1. What features of Cassio’s does Iago say will make Othello jealous?

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1. How does Iago describe Cassio’s flaws?

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1. Why is Iago attracted to Desdemona?

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1. What ‘gnaws’ at Iago’s inwards like ‘a poisonous mineral’?

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1. What stage of the plan does Iago decide on at the end of Act 1 Scene 1?

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Extract 3

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CASSIO | Lo, where he comes! |  |  |
|  | *Enter OTHELLO and Attendants.* |  |  |
| OTHELLO | O my fair warrior! |  |  |
| DESDEMONA | My dear Othello! |  |  |
| OTHELLO | It gives me wonder great as my content |  |  |
|  | To see you here before me. O my soul's joy! |  | 5 |
|  | If after every tempest come such calms, |  |  |
|  | May the winds blow till they have waken'd death! |  |  |
|  | And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas |  |  |
|  | Olympus-high and duck again as low |  |  |  |
|  | As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die, |  | 10 |  |
|  | 'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear, |  |  |  |
|  | My soul hath her content so absolute |  |  |  |
|  | That not another comfort like to this |  |  |  |
|  | Succeeds in unknown fate. |  |  |  |
| DESDEMONA | The heavens forbid |  | 15 |  |
|  | But that our loves and comforts should increase, |  |  |  |
|  | Even as our days do grow! |  |  |  |
| OTHELLO | Amen to that, sweet powers! |  |  |  |
|  | I cannot speak enough of this content; |  |  |  |
|  | It stops me here; it is too much of joy: |  | 20 |  |
|  | And this, and this, the greatest discords be |  |  |  |
|  | [*Kissing her*.] |  |  |  |
|  | That e'er our hearts shall make! |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IAGO | [*Aside*] Oh, you are well-tun'd now! |  |  |
|  | But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, |  |  |
|  | As honest as I am. | 25 |  |
| OTHELLO | Come, let us to the castle. |  |  |
|  | News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks |  |  |
|  | are drown'd. |  |  |
|  | How does my old acquaintance of this isle? |  |  |
|  | Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus; |  |  |
|  | I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet, | 30 |  |
|  | I prattle out of fashion, and I dote |  |  |  |
|  | In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago, |  |  |  |
|  | Go to the bay and disembark my coffers: |  |  |  |
|  | Bring thou the master to the citadel; |  |  |  |
|  | He is a good one, and his worthiness | 35 |  |  |
|  | Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona, |  |  |  |
|  | Once more, well met at Cyprus. |  |  |  |
|  | *Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants.* |  |  |  |

***Act 2 Scene 1***