

✕ Refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the attitudes to love and sex revealed in the play, and to consider how Shakespeare presents such relationships in the play.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** *Othello* is a play which, like *Romeo and Juliet*, is based around a central love relationship. Create a class word web (like a mind map) on the board, with the word 'love' in the centre and add words (synonyms, antonyms plus associations e.g. affection, loyalty, sex, hatred, passion) around it
 - For each word generated, see if students can think of an application/example in *Othello*. Add notes to the word web.
 - Does love have a greater amount of positive or of negative connotations in the play?
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Print **Student worksheet e)i Love, sex and relationships quotations** (best enlarged to A3) and spread them around the room on desks, gallery-style
 - Students circulate around the room and annotate each sheet about what the quotation reveals regarding views on love/sex/relationships
 - Encourage students to annotate on each other's points, extending ideas or suggesting alternative interpretations
 - Gather the quotations together at the front of the room, and look for themes/patterns/contrasts e.g. Iago's use of bestial imagery, fears of female sexuality etc.
 - Agree on the most important quotations/themes and stick those to the board/wall with blue-tack
 - Are there other quotations to add?
- Students should then copy/make notes/highlight in their texts so as to have their own notes
- What are the key ideas about love, sex and relationships in the play?
 - ✕ *Othello* > Themes in *Othello* > Passion and self-control; Jealousy; Men and women
 - ✕ *Othello* > Imagery and symbolism in *Othello* > Purity and impurity
 - ✕ *Othello* > Critical responses to *Othello* > Feminist interpretation
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Distribute **Student worksheet e)ii Love, sex and relationship connections** (enlarged to A3) to student groups. They should join up the characters with arrows (perhaps colour-coded?) and notes describing their relationships. Then discuss:
 - Which of the relationships in the play are...
 - Balanced?
 - Based on deception?
 - Based on self-interest?
 - Based on lust/sex?
 - Affected by jealousy or envy?
 - Realistic?
 - What conclusions can we draw about the presentation of relationships in the play?
 - ✕ *Othello* > Characterisation
 - ✕ *Othello* > Themes in *Othello* > Men and women
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Writing 'love letters'. Working in pairs, write letters between one of the following pairs of characters:
 - Othello and Desdemona
 - Iago and Emilia
 - Cassio and Bianca
 - Desdemona and Emilia
 - Roderigo and Desdemona

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Othello: (e) Love, sex and relationships

- Cassio and Desdemona
- Othello and Iago
- Students should choose a particular point in the story, and carefully consider the characters' feelings towards - and standing before - each other, as well as how the characters might interact with each other.

✕ [Othello > Characterisation](#)

✕ [Othello > Themes in *Othello* > Men and women](#)

❖ **Critical task:** Plan and/or write an essay addressing the following:

- 'The play suggests that the forces of love are no match for the darker passions of lust, greed, and resentment.' Assess the view that 'darker passions' are a stronger driving force than love in *Othello*.

✕ [Othello > Themes in *Othello* > Passion and self-control; Jealousy; Men and women](#)

❖ **Extension task:** Some critics (Dr Ernest Jones, J.I.M. Stewart, David Suchet) believe that Iago's resentment of Othello stems from his repressed homosexual feelings towards him.

- Research this view.
 - Do you find it a convincing interpretation?
 - Or are other reasons for Iago's resentment of Othello more believable?

✕ [Othello > Characterisation > Iago, the villain](#)