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

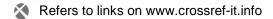
Othello: (e) Love, sex and relationships

- 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, gallerystyle
  - 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



- 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 >
    - 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