

Othello

Planning an Essay

You are going to work in a group to plan an essay on “Othello.” The question is below along with the rubric for the drama questions. While you should discuss your response as a group, **each individual should complete their own copy of the essay plan**. This can be used as a model in the future.

I am supplying you with the quotations for this essay. Along with the quotations, your plan should include:

- An introductory paragraph which answers the question, incorporating the title, author, words of the question, relevant techniques and a summary of the relevant parts of the play to the question.
- For each paragraph, a topic sentence making a clear point about how the quotation you are about to include is relevant to the question.
- Contextual information about the quotation including the Act and Scene it is taken from, who is speaking, what they are speaking about and the action that is taking place at the time.
- The quote itself, laid out as it appears in the text.
- **Detailed** analysis about the quotation including any relevant features of language but more importantly, **how** the quotation is relevant to the question and to the play as a whole (use words and phrases from the **Analysis and Evaluation** sheet I have given you).
- A concluding paragraph, incorporating the title, author, words of the question, relevant techniques and a summary of what you feel you have revealed throughout your essay.



Othello

SECTION A—DRAMA

Answers to questions on drama should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text and be supported by reference to appropriate dramatic techniques such as: conflict, characterisation, key scene(s), dialogue, climax, exposition, dénouement, structure, plot, setting, aspects of staging (such as lighting, music, stage set, stage directions . . .), soliloquy, monologue . . .

Choose a play in which a central character is heroic yet vulnerable.

NB 'Hook'

Show how the dramatist makes you aware of both qualities and discuss how they affect your response to the character's fate in the play as a whole.

NB 'Task'

Here is an example of the layout of a planned paragraph...

- Opening scenes, Othello = heroic character.
- Act 1 Scene 2, Iago advises Othello Brabantio seeking him out because of marriage. Iago advises Othello to hide - Othello believes nothing to hide.
- Othello = honour and dignity, background and past deeds.
- However, vulnerable because of unwavering faith in reputation.
- "My parts, my title, and my perfect soul / Shall manifest me rightly."
- Othello proud of services - believes he will be judged on merits.
- Word choice exudes self-confidence, "parts," "title," and "perfect soul."
- Flaw and vulnerability in Othello's character - arrogance, belief that men are judged on their actions and reputation.
- Key to Othello's fate - trust in outward appearance of Iago - fails to see reality.

This might end up looking like this...

From the opening scenes of the play, Othello is presented as an heroic character. In Act 1 Scene 2, Iago advises Othello that Brabantio is seeking him out having heard that Othello has secretly married his daughter Desdemona. Iago advises Othello to hide himself, but Othello believes he has nothing to hide. He presents himself as a man of honour and dignity, demanding to be respected for his background and his past deeds. However, a sense of vulnerability is also introduced through Othello's unwavering faith in reputation.

"My parts, my title, and my perfect soul / Shall manifest me rightly."

Othello is proud of the services he has provided for the Venetian state and believes that he will be judged on their merits. He recounts his past acts of heroism for the state. His word choice exudes self-confidence, referring to his "parts," "title," and "perfect soul." Ultimately this demonstrates a flaw and vulnerability in Othello's character, an arrogance and belief that men are judged, and can be judged on their actions and reputation. This is key to understanding Othello's eventual fate, as through his trust in the outward appearance of the duplicitous Iago he fails to identify his true motivations.