

Getting started with Othello

1. When was it written?
2. What other text is thought to have been Shakespeare's inspiration for the play?
3. The play is set in Venice and Cyprus.
 - a. Find out what you can about Venice in the 17th century.
 - i. What sort of place was it? What sort of people inhabited the city? How were Venetian women viewed? What was the source of Venice's prosperity?
4. Othello is referred to as being a 'Moor'. Find out what you can about this title.
5. There were some black people in Elizabethan England. Elizabeth gave them the right to settle in gratitude for their help in quelling the Spanish. How were they viewed by the general population?
6. What is a 'domestic tragedy'?
7. Who was Niccolò Machiavelli?
8. What is 'courtly love'?
9. What is a 'cuckold' and why might it have been very significant for men in Shakespeare's time?
10. How were daughters of a respected family *supposed* to behave at this time?
 - a. What was expected of them?
 - b. What were their expectations of marriage?
 - c. What were a father's **duties** towards his daughter?

You will need to read 'Othello' by September. The Oxford World Classics edition has a brilliant notes section and is currently £5.99 on Amazon!

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Othello-Oxford-Shakespeare-Venice-Classics/dp/0199535876>

