***Othello* -Scenes for Acting**

*1.1. 74-205* Iago and Roderigo awake Brabantio to tell him of Desdemona’s marriage.

* Iago
* Roderigo
* Brabantio/Director

*1.3. 50-201* Othello and Brabantio plead their cases to the Duke

* Duke
* Brabantio
* Othello
* First Senator/Director

*1.3. 343-447* Iago comforts Roderigo and performs his first soliloquy

* Iago [edit this to about 60 lines, keeping important info]
* Roderigo (Director)

*2.3. 14–136*      Iago pressures Cassio into drinking at the party, setting the scene for a fight that will lead to Cassio’s firing.

* Iago
* Cassio
* Montano/Director
* *(Gentlemen/Servants with Wine)- Extras*

*3.3 37-200* Desdemona pleads with Othello on Cassio’s behalf; Iago “warns” Othello of Cassio’s supposed treachery.

* Othello
* Desdemona
* Iago
* Director

*3.3. 224-377* Tortured by Iago, Othello feels ill. Desdemona helps him inside, dropping the handkerchief, which Emilia retrieves and gives to Iago.

* Othello
* Iago
* Emilia
* Desdemona /Director

*3.3.466-546* Othello seems certain of Desdemona’s guilt, while Iago swears his loyalty.

* Othello
* Iago
* Director

*4.1.219-322* Lodovico brings Othello orders from Venice, but is shocked at Othello’s abuse of Desdemona.

* Lodovico
* Othello
* Iago
* Desdemona/Director

*4.2.128-201* Emilia and Iago comfort Desdemona over Othello’s ill treatment.

* Emilia
* Desdemona
* Iago/Director

*4.3. 11-117* Desdemona prepares for bed, and discusses infidelity with Emilia

* Desdemona
* Emilia
* Director

*5.2.56-165* Desdemona begs for her life, but is smothered by Othello. The crime is discovered by Emilia.

* Othello
* Desdemona
* Emilia/Director

In a short amount of time, you will be a performer in a scene from ***Othello***. You will also be an *expert* concerning that scene. This will require consistent, cooperative group work. You will be required to provide a performance that will help the rest of the class. You will also display your mastery of the subject in front of a real audience.

***You will need:***

**Annotated script.** *You will each turn in a script that will contain:*

* Detailed notes on *every one* of your lines. What is your motivation? Are you lying or telling the truth? Do you understand all the Elizabethan language and terms? All the jokes and references? [Please *highlight your lines in the script*.]
* Notes on the other characters’ lines. You need to know what **they** mean when they speak, too. Students with small parts, make sure that you have *lots* of material on the other characters’ lines. Everyone will be asked questions at the end of their performance.
* Blocking. You will keep track of where the characters enter and exit, where they stand, and their actions and movements. Shakespeare included such a small amount of blocking that you will be able to employ a lot of creativity here. Work together to decide how the blocking will work- but remember- theater rarely works well as a democracy. **Ultimately, the director is responsible for the blocking.** Everyone should help by providing ideas, but it’s useful to have someone who has the final decision and will help keep things moving. Provide ONE diagram of your basic blocking, turned in by director. This can be shared by all members.

**Sample Format**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Blocking** : exits and entrances, placement on stage, gestures | **Lines** | **Notes** on motivation of character, with emotions, pacing and volume |
| *To herself-*[nods head]  *Walks over to Cassio*  *Takes Cassio’s hand and pats it to reassure him* | **Desdemona:**  O, that's an honest fellow.  Do not doubt, Cassio, But I will have my lord and you again  As friendly as you were. | Clueless- no irony in complimenting Iago.  Friendly and reassuring to Cassio—speak quietly but firmly |

**Opening Presentation:**

Who has the second smallest part in your scene? Congratulations. You are now the Presenter. You will introduce all the actors, making sure that the audience knows who is who. Also, you will let the audience know why this scene is important, and what to watch for. Your group will provide a written copy of the introductions with the scripts. Be sure that what you state here matches the performance- this is what will be considered under “Vision of the Scene” for directors’ scores.

**Performance:**

You will not need to memorize every line, but make sure that if you need notes, they are small and out of the way. ***The less dependent you are on reading, the better.*** Memorizing makes it much easier. Really. Trust me on this one. Costumes and props are great, but they are not the majority of your grade. Don’t worry about extras like that until you have everything else out of the way. You will be graded on a clear, dramatic presentation that does Shakespeare’s play justice.

One quick note on group work: You will need to take advantage of the time provided. I find it unlikely that everyone in your group will be able to meet and be productive outside class time. You are absolutely forbidden to tell me that you are going to goof off now and work some other time.

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Performance**

**Score for Director**  Director \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Blocking |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge of the Scene |  |  |  |  |  |
| Performance Overall |  |  |  |  |  |
| Management  of Group |  |  |  |  |  |

**Scores for Actors** Actor\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Clarity, Pacing & Volume |  |  |  |  |  |
| Body Language, Gestures, etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge of Character |  |  |  |  |  |
| Working in a Group |  |  |  |  |  |

**Total \_\_\_/20**

**Script**

Opening Presentation \_\_/5

Blocking \_\_/5

Notes \_\_/10 **Total \_\_\_/20**

**Blocking Sheet [You’ll need LOTS of these!]**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Blocking** : exits and entrances, placement on stage, gestures | **Act:**  **Scene,**  **Lines** | **Lines** | **Notes** on motivation of character, with emotions, pacing and volume |
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***Othello Project* -Scenes and Questions**

***1.1. 74-205* Iago and Roderigo awake Brabantio to tell him of Desdemona’s marriage.**

1. **Iago**

Iago uses racist comments to initially arouse Brabantio’s anger. Which lines indicate this? (A: “black ram tupping your ewe,” “the devil will make a grandsire of you,” “your daughter covered by a Barbary horse. You’ll have your nephews neigh at you”)

Why does Iago leave Roderigo and Brabantio? (A: to go to Othello and pretend as if he is loyal to him)

1. **Roderigo**

Besides the fact that Roderigo is shouting in the middle of the night, why would Brabantio jump to the conclusion that he is full of “supper and distempering drafts?”

(A: he has hung around the house so many times that he had to be commanded away, Brabantio didn’t think he was good enough for Desdemona, maybe he has shown poor social graces in the past)

1. **Brabantio/Director**

What reasons does Brabantio give for not believing his house has been robbed? (A: he is a Senator and has a huge, fine house with a large staff)

Does Brabantio have a high opinion of his daughter, Desdemona? What lines give you insight into this? (A: no, he says “never trust your daughters” and thinks she could fall for “magic spells”.)

**1.3. 50-201 Othello and Brabantio plead their cases to**

1. **Duke**

Does the Duke rush to reach a decision? Does he give everyone a fair chance to defend themselves? (A: no, he doesn’t rush to decisions because he wants “clear evidence” not just “accusations.” After hearing out Brabantio, he asks for Othello and then Desdemona to explain their sides of the story.)

1. **Brabantio**

How does Brabantio exaggerate the possible “theft” before he has even found proof? (A: he claims witchcraft and that this situation is more important than the war)

1. **Othello**

If Othello won’t win over the Duke with his words and fine story-telling, how does he convince them what he says is true? (A: his “fighting in battles” has proved his loyalty to the country)

Why does Othello love Desdemona and why does she love him? (A: he loves her because she “gave [him] for [his] pain a world of sighs” – she felt sympathy for him. She loves him for “the dangers [he] had passed” – she thought him courageous to overcome so many obstacles in life.)

1. **First Senator/Director**

What is the significance of the Turkish fleet attacking Cyprus? Is it merely a side plot? (A: shows how much Othello is needed by and respected in the military and possibly how he receives special treatment because of this; also, places the cast and plot on an isolated island to play out the twists and turns of the play)

**1.3. 343-447 Iago comforts Roderigo and performs his first soliloquy**

1. **Iago**

Iago is a master at appearing to be a person’s best friend and then bad-mouthing that same person the moment his or her back is turned. How does Iago do this to Roderigo in this scene? (A: Roderigo exits and Iago calls him a “fool” and an “idiot” that he only uses for “getting money” and getting “something useful out of him.”)

What reason does Iago give that Othello will leave Desdemona? What reason does he give that Desdemona will tire of Othello? (A: racial stereotype about Othello that “Moors are changeable in their wills.” Desdemona will become “sated with his body,” inferring that their racial differences will become too great or that his won’t be able to satisfy her sexually.)

1. **Roderigo (Director)**

Instead of killing himself, what does Roderigo plan to do? (A: sell his land, save money, and help Iago finance his plan)

Does Roderigo believe he has any control over love? Which lines indicate this? (A: No – “it is not in my virtue to amend it.” Yes - because he is now embarking on this plan with Iago to win her back.)

**2.3. 14–136      Iago pressures Cassio into drinking at the party, setting the scene for a fight that will lead to Cassio’s firing.**

1. **Iago**

Explain the line, “Now my sick fool Roderigo… To Desdemona hath tonight caroused potations pottle-deep” (52). What does it mean, and how does it aid your plan?

A- Roderigo is drunk as well, making him as violent and easy to manipulate as Cassio

1. **Cassio**

How are your comments about Desdemona extremely different from Iago’s?

A- While positive, they aren’t sexual at all.

1. **Montano/Director**

What is the purpose of Iago’s final comments to Montano? (125-136)

A- To further hurt Cassio’s reputation, insinuating that he’s an alcoholic

**3.3 37-200 Desdemona pleads with Othello on Cassio’s behalf; Iago “warns” Othello**

1. **Othello**

What is it about your view of Iago’s personality that makes his hesitance to speak especially troubling to you?

A: In lines 135-143

1. **Desdemona**

How do you explain to Othello that by doing what you ask, he is not doing you a favor?

A: In lines 85-92

1. **Iago**

According to you, what makes reputation, or “good name,” so especially precious?

A: In lines 182-190

1. **Director**

How is Iago’s conversation with Othello a perfect example of his methods of manipulating people?

(He uses the truth whenever possible, OR, he lets Othello think that he’s the one demanding the “information” that Iago wants to give him)

***3.3. 224-377* Tortured by Iago, Othello feels ill. Desdemona helps him inside, dropping the handkerchief, which Emilia retrieves and gives to Iago.**

1. **Othello**

What is the double meaning of your explanation to Desdemona that you have a pain upon your forehead?

A: (line 326) Hints at the horns of a cuckold

1. **Iago**

How do you use Othello’s different background from the Venetian noble Desdemona to help convince him of her infidelity?

A: In lines 234-237, 269-277

1. **Emilia**

What does your line, “I nothing but to please his fancy,” (343) say about your relationship with Iago?

1. **Desdemona /Director**

How is this scene a good example of how Emilia, ostensibly a minor character, has a huge impact on the plot of this play?

***3.3.466-546* Othello seems certain of Desdemona’s guilt, while Iago swears his loyalty.**

1. **Othello**

What has happened to his love for Desdemona?  What does he say to declare the turn?

 Iago says, “Patience, I say.  Your mind (perhaps) may change.”  (Line 513).  What is Othello’s reply?  What gesture and analogy does Othello make to emphasize it?

1. **Iago**

Give the two last pieces of “evidence” that he gives Othello.  Why does he vow his loyalty; To what purpose?

1. **Director**

Othello and Iago both make vows.  How does this play out?  What do they say do to indicate a vow?  What do their vows proclaim?

***4.1.219-322* Lodovico brings Othello orders from Venice, but is shocked at Othello.**

1. **Lodovico**

How does Lodovico feel after seeing Othello’s behavior here in Cyprus? Where in the script does he show this?

1. **Othello**

When Othello decides to kill Desdemona, he says “I’ll not expostulate with her lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again.” **(Line 223)** What does he mean by this?

Give me an example of a time where Othello describes Desdemona as being untrustworthy.

1. **Iago**

How has Iago’s manner of speech changed since he began poisoning Othello’s mind with thoughts of jealousy?

What does Iago’s last speech **(Line 315)** mean? How does this fit Iago’s personality?

1. **Desdemona/Director**

How do Othello’s actions in this scene show that the tragic ending of the play is becoming inevitable?

***4.2.128-201* Emilia and Iago comfort Desdemona over Othello’s ill treatment.**

1. **Emilia**

Emilia lists several things that Desdemona gave up by marrying Othello. What were they?

A: Line146

1. **Desdemona**

Consider the following lines:

*“Those that teach young babes/do it with gentle means and easy tasks*

*He might have chid me so, for, in good faith/I am a child to chiding”*

Based on these lines, does Desdemona feel to blame for Othello’s actions

(A- Somewhat, since she compares her situation to a child who does wrong without knowing better.)

1. **Iago/Director**

Why would you comfort Desdemona like this?

**4.3. 11-117 Desdemona prepares for bed, and discusses infidelity with Emilia**

1. **Desdemona**

What do those last lines mean? (116-117)

What do the lines “my love doth so approve him, that even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns…” (20-21) mean? (What is Desdemona feeling?)

1. **Emilia**

Emilia states that men and women are more similar than men really know. In what ways are they similar?

1. **Director**

How is Emilia much less naïve than Desdemona?

**5.2.56-165Desdemona begs for her life, but is smothered by Othello. The crime is discovered by Emilia.**

1. **Othello**

In the opening of this scene, you seem to be very aware that killing Desdemona is something you will never be able to undo. Can you show us a line that illustrates this? **(10ish)**

You do try to show Desdemona at least some kind of mercy. What is that?

1. **Desdemona**

Do you think Desdemona acted like a coward in this scene? Give me an example of a line that helped you make your decision.

1. **Emilia/Director**

Give me an example of Emilia standing up to Othello.

How does Emilia act as a kind of agent for the truth in this scene?