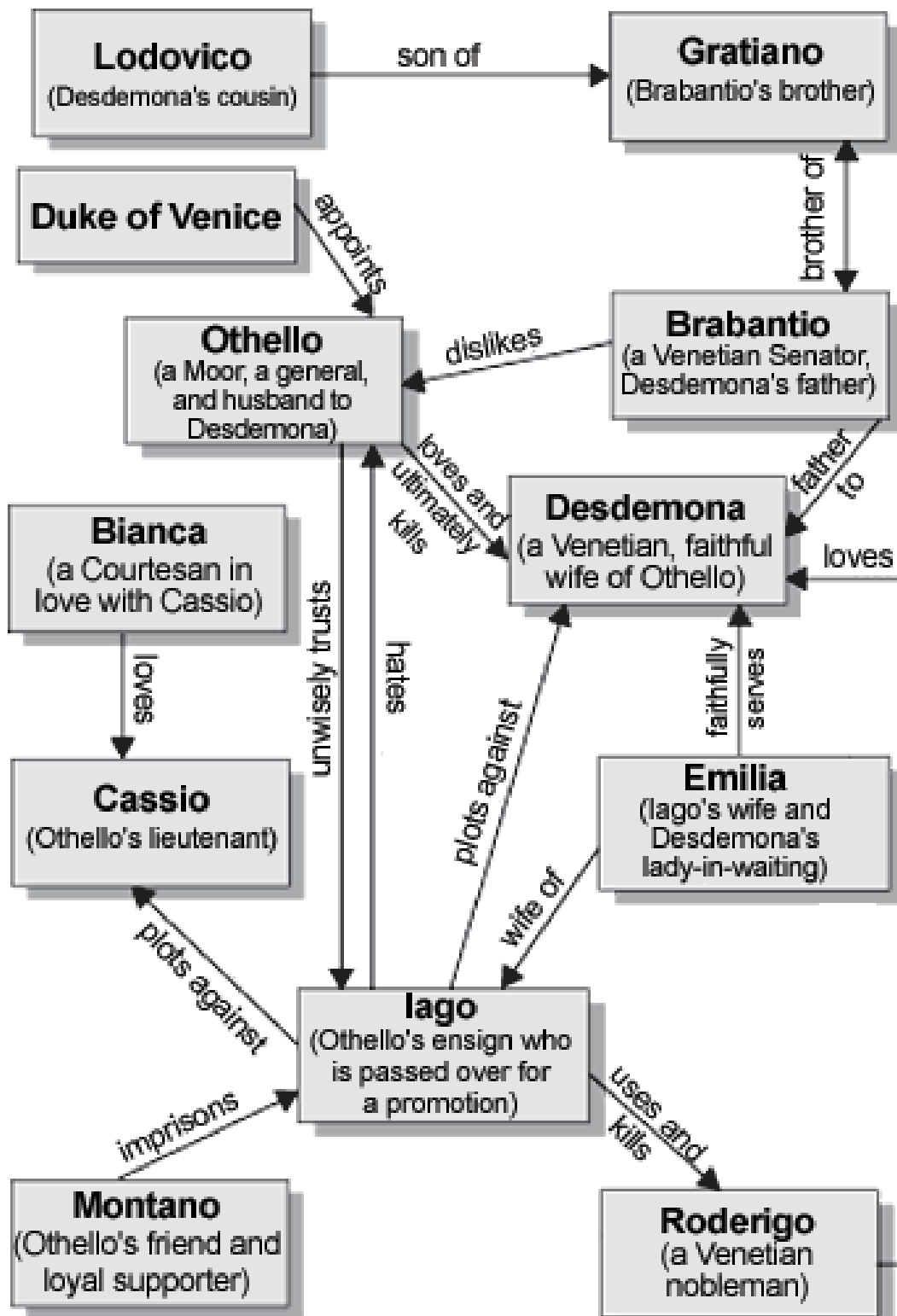




Othello

by William Shakespeare



Othello by Shakespeare: Introduction

Synopsis:

One of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies, *Othello* is concerned with the themes of jealousy and possessiveness, gullibility and blind passion, and the dangers that can arise from a failure to see beyond the surface appearances. Contrasting *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, which deal with the affairs of state and which echo with the universal human concerns, *Othello* is set in a quite private world and focuses on the passions and personal lives of its major figures, Othello and Desdemona.

Othello the play has often been described as a "tragedy of character". The plot of the play *Othello* is one of Shakespeare's most highly concentrated, tightly constructed tragedies, with no subplots and no humor to relieve the tension.

The main outline of the story of *Othello* relates to a novel, *The Moor of Venice*. The novel was written by a Sicilian novelist Giraldi Cinthio. As the date of the first performance of the drama goes to 1604, we can assume that it was written during the same year.

Othello is one of the most frequently enacted plays of Shakespeare, and its popularity is perhaps due to the universality of its theme: love and sexual jealousy, the conflict between love and hatred, and doubt and gullibility. The play exerts a 'relentless emotional grip' on its audience. Shakespeare has examined with great psychological complexity and depth the powerful feelings of love and hatred, jealousy and revenge. The intensity of the drama is heightened because all the minor characters and events are designed to highlight the protagonists and their actions. The play is so spellbinding because of the contradictions and tensions it contains: a black soldier marries the daughter of a white nobleman, an evil ensign corrupts a great soldier, and passionate love is turned to overwhelming jealousy. The play gives equal focus to the two main characters, Othello and Iago, in such a way that it becomes almost difficult to students and critics to determine who is primarily responsible for this great tragedy.

Outline:

The play is set primarily in Cyprus. However, the opening act takes place in Venice, providing us with an understanding of the authoritarian government controlled by the Venetian senators. Also, we begin to understand Othello's tenuous standing in Venice, as well as Desdemona's privileged background. The first scenes introduce the primary plot, beginning outside Brabantio's house with Iago already intent upon manipulation and trouble-making. He encourages Roderigo to rouse Brabantio, Desdemona's father, and tell him of her elopement with Othello. Iago makes the announcement as alarming and disruptive as possible. Both Iago and Roderigo reveal their motivation: Roderigo's passion for Desdemona and Iago's appetite for revenge on Othello for choosing Michael Cassio over him as his second in command. Although Brabantio and Othello had been friends, or at least amiable acquaintances, Brabantio's first thought is that his daughter would never have done this of her own free will—Othello must have used witchcraft and potions.

Othello Context

Historical Context:

The majority of the play takes place on the small island of Cyprus, just south of Greece. This island was annexed by Venice (Italy) in 1489 but conquered by the Turks in 1571. The play presents the wish-fulfillment of Western Europeans that a Venetian fleet had destroyed the Turks which actually did not occur in history.

Although today Venice is a well-known city in Italy, at the time of the play it was its own oligarchic city-state whose enormous wealth many came through trade predominately with the Turks (hence the importance of Cyprus). As a result people during Shakespeare's time viewed Venice as a place of luxury and culture.

During the 16th century European countries were beginning to expand their trade routes thus coming into contact with new cultures. One new culture was Mauretania, found in Northern Africa. As a result Europeans during Shakespeare's time referred to people from this area as Moors. Othello, the play's protagonist, is referred to as "the Moor" on a few occasions in the play suggesting where he can trace his lineage. This term is not meant to be negative or derogatory.

Iago, a central character in the play, is a Spanish name. During Shakespeare's time Spain was England's greatest enemy as they were their biggest competition in colonization.

Social Context

During the 16th century a person's job was a reflection of their character and reputation. As a result, being in the army was one of the more prestigious jobs. Depending on the rank one had in the army certain qualities and characteristics were associated with them.

During the 16th century the rules of dating and marriage were much different than today's practices. England was a patriarchal society. This meant that men made all of the decisions for the family members in their household. Women were expected to be subservient. As a result fathers would often choose whom and when their daughters would marry. Suitable partners were selected from men of common or higher social and economic rank. Age was not a factor. Instead, marriages were often treated as a business transaction, as a means for improving a family's status. Once a woman was married she was expected to obey her husband's choices and decisions. Thus, when Desdemona weds Othello without her father's knowledge or permission she breaks several social codes.

Othello, Characters:

Othello

The play's protagonist and hero. Othello is the highly respected general of the armies of Venice, although he is not a native of Venice but rather a Moor, or North African. He is an eloquent and powerful figure, respected by all those around him. In spite of his elevated status, Othello is nevertheless easy prey to insecurities because of his age, his life as a soldier, and his self-consciousness about being a racial and cultural outsider. He possesses a free and open nature that his ensign Iago exploits to twist Othello's love for his wife, Desdemona, into a powerful and destructive jealousy.

Desdemona

The daughter of the Venetian senator Brabantio. Desdemona and Othello are secretly married before the play begins. While in some ways stereotypically pure and meek, Desdemona is also determined and self-possessed. She is equally capable of defending her marriage, jesting bawdily with Iago, and responding with dignity to Othello's incomprehensible jealousy.

Iago

Othello's ensign (a senior position also known as "ancient" or "standard-bearer"), a twenty-eight-year-old military veteran from Venice. Iago is the villain of the play. Although he is obsessive, relentless, bold, and ingenious in his efforts to manipulate and deceive the other characters—particularly Othello—Iago's motivations are notoriously murky. At various points in the play, he claims to be motivated by different things: resentment that Othello passed him over for a promotion in favor of Michael Cassio; jealousy because he heard a rumor that Othello slept with Iago's wife, Emilia; suspicion that Cassio slept with Emilia too. Iago gives the impression that he's tossing out plausible motivations as he thinks of them, and that we'll never understand what really drives his villainy. He hates women and is obsessed with other people's sex lives.

Michael Cassio

Othello's lieutenant, or second-in-command. Cassio is highly educated but young and inexperienced in battle. Iago resents Cassio's high position and dismisses him as a bookkeeper. Truly devoted to Othello, Cassio is ashamed after being implicated in a drunken brawl on Cyprus and losing his place as lieutenant. Iago uses Cassio's youth, good looks, and flirtatious manner with women to play on Othello's insecurities about Desdemona's fidelity.

Emilia

Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant. A cynical, worldly woman, Emilia is deeply attached to her mistress and distrustful of her husband.

Roderigo

A jealous suitor of Desdemona. Young, rich, and foolish, Roderigo is convinced that if he gives Iago all of his money, Iago will help him win Desdemona's hand. Repeatedly frustrated as Othello marries Desdemona and then takes her to Cyprus, Roderigo is ultimately desperate enough to agree to help Iago kill Cassio after Iago points out that Cassio is another potential rival for Desdemona.

Bianca

A courtesan, or prostitute, in Cyprus. Bianca's favorite customer is Cassio, who teases her with promises of marriage but laughs at her behind her back.

Brabantio

Desdemona's father, a somewhat blustering and self-important Venetian senator. As a friend of Othello, Brabantio feels betrayed when the general marries his daughter in secret.

Duke of Venice

The official authority in Venice, the duke has great respect for Othello as a public and military servant. His primary role within the play is to make Othello tell his story of how he wooed Desdemona, and then to send Othello to Cyprus.

Montano

The governor of Cyprus before Othello. We see Montano first in Act Two, as he recounts the status of the war and awaits the Venetian ships.

Clown

Othello's servant. Although the clown appears only in two short scenes, his jokes reflect and distort the action and words of the main plots: his puns on the word "lie" in Act Three, scene 4, for example, anticipate Othello's confusion of two meanings of that word in Act Four, scene 1.

Chapter Abstract: Othello

Act 1, Scene 1

- The scene opens with Roderigo and Iago discussing the marriage of Othello to Desdemona.
- Roderigo is unhappy about the marriage because he loves Desdemona, and Iago is angry because Othello picked Cassio as his lieutenant instead of picking Iago.
- Roderigo and Iago tell Brabantio that his daughter has married Othello. He doesn't believe them at first, but then discovers she did not sleep in her bed.
- Brabantio emerges, shouting for Roderigo to help him capture Desdemona and Othello. He suggests that it would have been better if Roderigo had married her.

Act 1, Scene 2

- Othello speaks of his great love for Desdemona, claiming there is nothing for which he would be willing to give her up.
- Some messengers from the Duke arrive to summon Othello to a matter of business.
- Brabantio, Roderigo, and some other men arrive to arrest Othello. Brabantio accuses Othello of bewitching Desdemona into marrying him and is sure that the senate will agree with him.

Act 1, Scene 3

- The Duke and some of the senators enter, discussing the Turkish fleet they have spotted and its destination.
- Othello and Brabantio explain their sides to the story, and the Duke asks to hear Desdemona's version as well.
- While messengers are sent to bring Desdemona to the Duke, Othello tells how it was that he and Desdemona came to be together.
- Desdemona arrives and acknowledges that she freely married Othello and owes him all the duty a wife owes her husband; Desdemona's father disowns her.
- It is settled that Othello will leave at once for Cyprus on business and Iago will later come to Cyprus with Desdemona, who will be attended by Iago's own wife, Emilia.
- Roderigo is obviously upset by the turn of events. He had hoped Desdemona would be his, and now he declares that he wants to drown himself.

Act 2, Scene 1

- Montano, the governor of Cyprus, enters with some gentlemen. He speaks about storms at sea and learns that they have destroyed the Turkish fleet.
- Cassio enters. He is very worried about Othello, whom he has not seen since the ship was wrecked.
- Desdemona enters and Cassio praises her lavishly. She asks about her husband. Cassio tells her he has hope that Othello will survive.
- Finally, Othello arrives. He and Desdemona embrace. He is very happy to have reached shore, and he is doubly happy to find that she has arrived ahead of him.
- Iago puts thoughts into Roderigo's head about how Cassio seems to love Desdemona and how she appears to love him back.
- Iago instructs Roderigo to find a way to anger Cassio, so Iago can begin to discredit him in the eyes of Montano and others in Cyprus. Roderigo agrees to do this and exits.

Act 2, Scene 2

- In this very short scene, a messenger appears to announce that Othello has declared mass feasting and revelry.
- This feast is to be in celebration of the victory against the Turks, and also in honor of his marriage to Desdemona.

Act 2, Scene 3

- While on watch, Iago urges Cassio to have some wine. Cassio refuses, saying that he doesn't hold his alcohol well, and that he has already had enough for one night, but then he gives in.
- While he has the chance alone with Montano, Iago suggests that being drunk is not an infrequent occurrence with Cassio.

- Cassio returns in pursuit of Roderigo, clearly upset with the man. Montano stops him, and they fight. Iago tells Roderigo to go and spread the news around town that Cassio is mutinous.
- Othello is so offended by Cassio's supposed actions that he renounces his first officer immediately and puts Iago in charge of restoring order.
- Cassio hysterically cries that he and his reputation are lost. He declares what is left of himself to be "bestial."
- Iago suggests Cassio appeal to Desdemona, who has Othello's heart. Cassio agrees that this is a good strategy; he will talk to her in the morning.

Act 3, Scene 1

- Cassio brings in some musicians, perhaps to cheer himself. Othello's clown comes in and makes some rude comments about their music.
- Iago enters after the clown goes off. Cassio asks Iago if he might entreat Emilia to put in a good word for him with Desdemona.
- Emilia tells Cassio that Othello and Desdemona are already discussing the matter, and that Desdemona is pleading Cassio's case.

Act 3, Scene 2

- Othello gives Iago some papers to deliver to the senate while he examines the fortifications.
- The main effect of this scene is to get Othello out of the way so that Cassio can be alone with Desdemona.

Act 3, Scene 3

- The scene opens with Desdemona talking to Cassio; she is reassuring him that she will do everything she can to repair his reputation in Othello's eyes.
- Worn down by her constant pleas, Othello finally tells Desdemona to let Cassio come when he will.
- Iago tells Othello to watch out for Desdemona with Cassio because he has observed that Desdemona is good at deceiving. After all, she tricked her father when she married Othello.
- Othello tells Iago to keep a watch on Desdemona and to report back to him if he sees anything suspicious or spots any proof of her wantonness.
- Othello uses a headache as an excuse for his lateness. Desdemona takes out her handkerchief to offer him some comfort, and he pushes it away. It drops to the ground, and they go in to dinner.
- Emilia picks up the handkerchief from the floor, recognizing it as the first gift Othello ever presented to Desdemona and takes it to Iago who has been asking for it.
- Iago decides that he will use the handkerchief to activate Othello's mere suspicions by planting the handkerchief in Cassio's lodgings.
- Iago tells Othello that he had to share a bed with Cassio recently, and he claims that Cassio talked in his sleep about Desdemona.

- Othello vows to see Cassio and Desdemona dead. Iago promises to help him.

Act 3, Scene 4

- Othello pretends to have watery eyes and asks for Desdemona's handkerchief. When she offers him one, he says he wants the special one he gave her. She replies that she does not have it with her, and Othello leaves in a fury.
 - Desdemona is worried, but tries to rationalize Othello's behavior by his distraction with affairs of state. She also thinks it might be that he has already fallen out of love with her.
 - Bianca enters. Cassio is surprised to see her, and she is surprised to see him with a lady's handkerchief; he asks her to make a copy of it for him.
-

Act 4, Scene 1

- Othello and Iago discuss the straying handkerchief and the sins it might imply.
- Cassio enters, and Iago urges Cassio to leave, but to come back shortly to talk.
- When Cassio returns, he and Iago talk about Bianca while Othello overhears and thinks Cassio is laughing about being with Desdemona the prostitute.
- Bianca enters; she is angry at Cassio for giving her the handkerchief. She tells him to give it to a woman of easy virtue.
- Othello is furious that his precious gift to Desdemona has seemingly passed from her hands, to Cassio's, and then to Bianca's, who is a person of lower class and questionable morals.
- Finally, Othello arrives at the point where he is actually ready to kill Desdemona. He asks Iago for poison.
- Desdemona talks with Lodovico about the rift between Othello and Cassio. Othello gets so mad he slaps Desdemona, to the astonishment of everyone there.

Act 4, Scene 2

- Othello and Emilia are talking. He asks her if she has seen Desdemona with Cassio, or if she has left her mistress's side. Emilia says she has not.
- When Desdemona comes in, Othello finally accuses her outright of being unfaithful. She says over and over that she has been nothing but loyal to her husband. Othello clearly does not believe her.
- Desdemona tries to think of a way to assure Othello that her heart is entirely with him. She asks Emilia to make up her bed with her wedding sheets.
- Roderigo appears, angry with Iago for wasting his money and not arranging anything between him and Desdemona. Iago calms him down and convinces Roderigo to help him kill Cassio.

Act 4, Scene 3

- After dinner, Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, and Emilia go for a walk. Othello and Lodovico keep walking; Othello tells Desdemona to go to bed and dismiss Emilia.

- Desdemona relays the story of one of her mother's maids, who was disappointed in love. The maid sang a song called "Willow." Desdemona sings it now while Emilia helps ready her for bed.
- Desdemona asks Emilia if there really are women who cheat on their husbands. Emilia tells her that there are, and that she would do the same if the benefits were worth it.
- Emilia delivers a long speech about how it is the husbands' faults when their wives fall because husbands cheat and so teach their wives to do it.
- Desdemona says she uses the bad conduct of others not as an excuse to behave badly herself, but as a lesson to learn how to behave better.

Act 5, Scene 1

- Iago and Roderigo prepare to ambush Cassio. Iago hides, reassuring Roderigo that he will help out if Roderigo can't finish the job.
- Cassio enters; Roderigo tries to stab him, but misses. Cassio then draws on Roderigo and wounds him. Iago wounds Cassio in turn, and then disappears.
- Lodovico and Gratiano enter, hearing the cries of both wounded men, but they aren't sure what to do. They are worried they are being tricked.
- Roderigo cries out against Iago, and he stabs him, pretending not to know who it is. However, Roderigo, who knows the score now, curses Iago as he dies.
- Bianca enters, becoming somewhat overwrought at the sight of Cassio's wounds. Iago turns upon Bianca, implying to Lodovico and Gratiano that she might have something to do with this.

Act 5, Scene 2

- Othello stands at Desdemona's bedside. As she sleeps, he bends down and kisses her several times. He almost loses his resolve to kill her.
- When Desdemona awakes, she realizes Othello intends to kill her, and she begs for her life but Othello strangles her.
- Desdemona cries out as she is dying. Emilia rushes to her and asks who has committed this crime; Desdemona says she killed herself as she dies.
- Othello admits to everyone that he did kill Desdemona, but that Iago proved she had been intimate with Cassio. He raises the issue of the handkerchief, which makes Emilia even more distressed.
- Emilia informs them all how she found the handkerchief and gave it to Iago herself. Iago kills Emilia and runs out.
- Othello wounds Iago, but does not kill him. Iago sneers, but Othello tells him that to live is more painful than to die.
- Othello tells them all to spread the truth of what he did. After his speech, he stabs himself and dies.



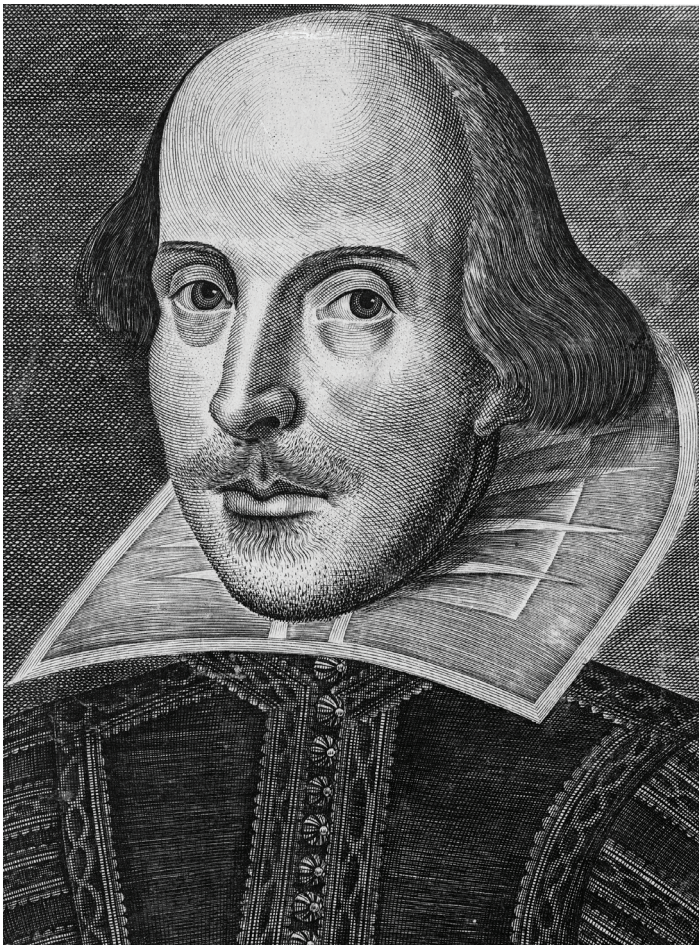
**GLOBE
EDUCATION**

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare is world famous. We know quite a lot about him but there is still much that remains a mystery. We don't know his date of birth. We don't know the date of his marriage. We even have very little idea of what he looked like. So what DO we know about William Shakespeare, the man?

When and where was Shakespeare born?

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, a market town in a farming area of the Midlands. About 1000 people lived there. Shakespeare was baptised on 26th April 1564, but we don't know his exact date of birth.



This engraving of William Shakespeare was engraved by Martin Droeshout in 1623. It is used on the title page of the First Folio collection of Shakespeare's plays, but may be more flattering than he really looked.

What was Shakespeare's family like?

William was born to prosperous parents. His mother, Mary, was the daughter of a local farmer. His father, John, was a glove-maker and wool trader with a large family house. When William was four years old, his father was elected Bailiff of Stratford – effectively the mayor.

But his early life wasn't easy. Although William was the third of eight children, he grew up as the oldest. His two older sisters both died very young. And William was lucky to survive. When he was just a baby, in 1564, plague killed about 200 people in Stratford – 1 in 5 of the population. Fortunately, William survived.

Where did Shakespeare go to school?

From the age of seven, boys like William went to grammar school. There was one in Stratford and it is still there today. But schooling was different then. The boys learned to read, speak and write in Latin. They also had to memorise and perform stories from history - useful skills for an actor and writer. Shakespeare probably left school aged fifteen.

When did Shakespeare marry?

In late 1582, we don't know the exact date, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway – a local farmer's daughter. William was only 18 years old. Most men at this time married in their mid- to late-20s. So why did William marry so young? The answer came six months later, when William's daughter, Susanna, was baptised.

What do we know of Shakespeare's family life?

The answer is... practically nothing. We know William and Anne had two more children, Hamnet and Judith, twins, born in 1585. Anne and the three children probably lived with William's parents at first. Later, they moved to New Place, a large house in Stratford. But it was a strange family life. Shakespeare spent most of his time 100 miles away, in London.

DID YOU KNOW?

Shakespeare, England's greatest writer, died on the day of England's patron saint – St George's Day – 23rd April.

Shakespeare may have been born on St. George's Day too. He was baptised on 26th April, so it is possible, but we really don't know.

What did Shakespeare do in London?

From about 1590 to 1613, Shakespeare lived mainly in London and by 1592 was a well-known actor there. He was also a playwright. His play, *Henry VI*, was performed at the Rose theatre in 1592. He went on to write, or co-write, about 40 plays. Shakespeare was also a poet and in 1609 published a book of 154 sonnets.

And Shakespeare was a businessman too. He was a sharer (part-owner) of a theatre company called *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*. And from 1599, he was part-owner of the Globe Theatre.

So, for about twenty years, he made money from acting, writing and running a theatre company.

When did Shakespeare die?

After 1613, Shakespeare spent more time at Stratford. Then, in January 1616, he made a will and died on 23rd April 1616. He is buried in Holy Trinity church in Stratford-upon-Avon.

FURTHER RESOURCES

National Portrait Gallery

This webpage has 92 images of Shakespeare. We can't be sure any show exactly what he looked like, but many share similar features.

www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person.php?LinkID=mp04051

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

This web page has 13 videos answering questions about Shakespeare's life.

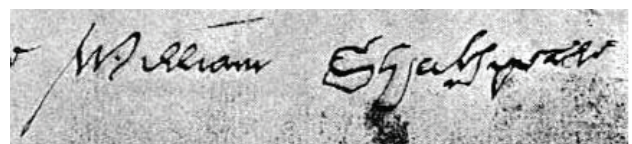
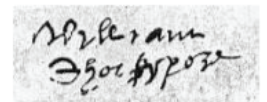
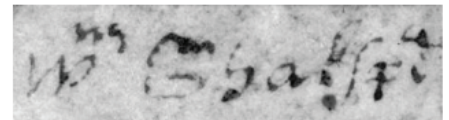
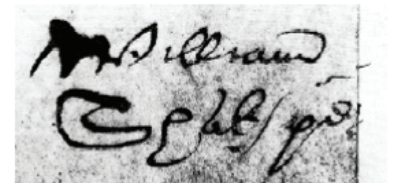
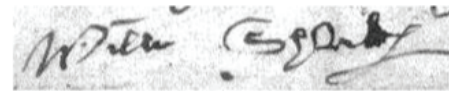
www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/about-shakespeare

SHAKESPEARE'S SIGNATURE


We have six surviving versions of Shakespeare's signature. They are all different. He wrote:

- Willm Shakp
- Wm Shakspe
- Willm Shakspere
- William Shaksper
- Willm Shakspere
- William Shakspere
- and William Shakespeare.

The last version, taken from his will in 1616 is the version we use today.



**INTRODUCTION to SHAKESPEARE'S
LANGUAGE & STYLE**



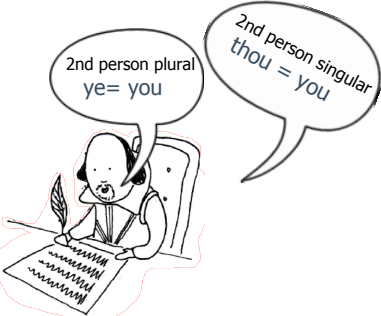
Introduction to Language and Style

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 2

TASK 1 PC hand-out

- Read the sentences aloud with a partner
- Take turns

Press speech balloons to listen



2nd person plural
ye = you

2nd person singular
thou = you

1. Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going.
2. Glamis thou art, and Cawdor;
and shalt be what thou art promis'd.
3. Are ye fantastical, or that indeed which outwardly ye show?

Note : After thou -st is added to the verb

Note : After thou -t is added to the verb to be


task 1

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 3

TASK 2 hand-out

- Read the sentences aloud with a partner
- Take turns

Press speech balloons



1. All hail Macbeth, hail to thee , Thane of Glamis.
2. Come let me clutch thee .
3. I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

task 2


MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 4

TASK 3 hand-out

- Read the sentences aloud with a partner
- Take turns

Press speech bubbles to listen

- When is thy used?
- When is thine used?



1. Is not thy master with him?
2. Wake Duncan with thy knocking.
3. Art thou afeared to be the same in thine own act and valour.
4. Lend me thine ears.
5. The kingdom shall be thine .

Thine is used: before vowel sounds and when it corresponds to yours

Thy is used:


task 3

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 5

hand-out

TASK 4

- Read the sentences aloud with a partner
- Take turns



1. I know not .
2. I think not of them.
3. 'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak.
4. I tak't, 'tis later, sir.
5. Ay, and a bold one.

Note : Shakespeare hardly ever uses to do in negations.

Note : It+is = 'Tis .


Note : Yes = Ay, No = Nay

task 4

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 6


hand-out

TASK 5

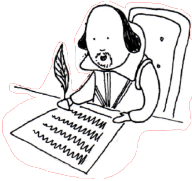
- Read the dialogue with a partner - take turns!
- Re-write the dialogue in Elizabethan English (go back to the rules if necessary) 

Mac: Are you sad today, Juliet?	
Juliet: You can say so.	
Mac: Are you sad because of me?	
Juliet: No, not because of you, Mac.	
Mac: You must tell me why you are sad.	
Juliet: Tell you?	
Mac: Yes, don't you know I am your friend?	
Juliet: It is because of your enemy Romeo.	
The Prince has banned Romeo from Verona.	

task 5


MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE		7
BOARD		
<p>TASK 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your Elizabethan English • Use eraser  to reveal the correct dialogue • Perform it! 		
Mac: Are you sad today, Juliet?	Art thou sad today, Juliet?	
Juliet: You can say so.	Thou canst say so.	
Mac: Are you sad because of me?	Art thou sad because of me?	
Juliet: No, not because of you, Mac.	No, not because of thee, Mac.	
Mac: You must tell me why you are sad.		
Juliet: Tell you?		
Mac: Yes, don't you know I am your friend?		
Juliet: It is because of your enemy Romeo.		
The Prince has banned him from Verona.		

task 6

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE		8
BOARD hand-out		
	<p>Poetry and prose come together in Shakespeare's plays, which allows him great scope to create individual characters and atmosphere.</p> <p>Poetry appears chiefly in the form of blank verse, which is unrhymed verse with 5 stresses in each line</p> <p>"If <u>Chance</u> will <u>have</u> me <u>King</u>, why <u>Chance</u> may <u>crown</u> me"</p> <p>also known as iambic pentameter</p> <p>Iamb = unstressed-stressed syllable, example: "hello" and "today".</p> <p>Pentameter = penta (from Greek=5) and meter: rhythmical pattern.</p>	

Language & Style

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 9

TASK 7 

- Underline the stressed syllables in the quotes
- In which lines do we find iambic pentameter?


1. O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth (from Julius Caesar)
2. But soft what light through yonder window breaks (from Romeo and Juliet)
3. Within my tent his bones tonight shall lie (from Julius Caesar)
4. Fair is foul and foul is fair (from Macbeth)
5. Then move not while my prayer's effect I take (from Romeo & Juliet)

task 7

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 10

BOARD hand-out

Shakespeare developed his own style mixing traditional end-stopped lines with run-on lines :



The Prince of Cumberland! - That's a step →
 On which I must fall down or else o'erleap, →
 For in my way it lies.

A variation is the heroic couplet, as we know it from the sonnet, 2 rhymed lines

Away, and mock the time with fairest **show**
 False face must hide what the false heart doth **know**

The heroic couplet usually comes at the end of a scene to sum up and make a point as the unexpected rhymes attract the attention of the listener.

language & style

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 11

BOARD hand-out

Imagery

Macbeth is rich in imagery, which conjure up mental pictures and stirs the imagination. This again gives us an insight into character. Certain images recur through the play, helping to create atmosphere.

Take note of the following recurring images:

- blood
- water
- darkness
- clothes
- sleep
- nature

Antithesis

Antithesis is the opposition of ideas, words or phrases against each other. Antithesis expresses conflict and may sometimes result in a paradox as you need to ask yourself how something can be both "fair" and "foul" at the same time. This calls for an explanation that you must find in the text.

Antitheses are found everywhere in Macbeth, but The Porter scene and Act 1, Scene 7 lines 1-28 are particularly rich.

imagery and antithesis

MACBETH LANGUAGE & STYLE 12

BOARD hand-out

Soliloquies

A soliloquy is a monologue delivered by a character who is alone on stage. This dramatic technique gives the audience access to the character's mind, revealing inner thoughts and feelings.

In Macbeth the soliloquies play an important role for our understanding of the characters.

Asides

An aside is also a monologue but the character is not alone on stage. This dramatic convention finds the character explicitly speaking to the audience while the other characters on stage are not able to hear it.

soliloquy and aside