



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

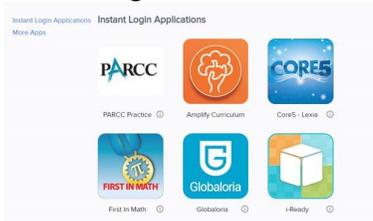
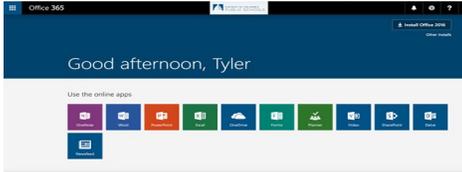
# Distance Learning Plan



## English IV Weeks 4 and 5

## Student Log in for Digital Platforms and Content

Every student in the District of Columbia Public Schools has access to digital platforms, content, and tools. Below are the resources available and how to log in. Contact your teacher or designated technology representative at your school if you do not know your student log in credentials.

Digital Platform	Description	How do I log in?
	<p>Clever is the platform that puts blended learning digital content on one dashboard and one login.</p> 	<p><i>Go to:</i> <a href="https://clever.com/in/dcpsk12">https://clever.com/in/dcpsk12</a></p> <p><i>Username/password:</i> your student credentials</p> <p><i>Select:</i> your digital content</p>
	<p>Microsoft Office 365 includes online versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and other applications for preparing future ready learners. Students can access applications anywhere on any device.</p> 	<p><i>Go to:</i> <a href="portal.office.com">portal.office.com</a></p> <p><i>Username/password:</i> your student credentials</p>
	 <p><b>Download the Office 365 Apps on your smartphone!</b></p> <p>Access your documents and assignments on the go! (Word, Powepoint, Teams, Forms, Excel, OneNote, OneDrive)</p>	<p><i>Go to:</i> your app store <i>Search:</i> for the Office 365 app <i>Install:</i> the app <i>Sign in:</i> with your student credentials</p>
	 <p><b>Download the Canvas Student App on your smartphone!</b></p> <p>Canvas is the learning management system for accessing DCPS online courses.</p>	<p><i>Go to:</i> <a href="https://dcps.instructure.com">dcps.instructure.com</a> <i>Username/password:</i> your student credentials <i>Select:</i> your course</p>

## Secondary ELA Distance Learning

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Dear Students and Families,

We hope you are safe and healthy while you are out of school and learning from home! With the extended Distance Learning timeline, content in these units will be new, addressing content that you would have engaged with in your face-to-face learning environments at your schools, with your teachers and other students. We've used those experiences to design similar learning experiences for you while you're at home. This content will be new, as will be some of the routines. Take your time and be patient with yourself, but above all, persevere.

*This learning experience is guided by our partnership with the esteemed Folger Shakespeare Library. You may have performed Shakespeare in ENG I (Romeo and Juliet) or ENG II (Hamlet), or this may be your first time. Typically, Shakespeare and these experiences, are used in a collaborative space with your teacher and fellow students, however, we believe that experiencing Shakespeare and his language is essential, so we have a creative opportunity for you to engage with his language through distance learning. experience with Shakespeare's language is a foundational experience.*

The Folger Method consists of 8 Foundational Principles and centers around your engagement with the language of Shakespeare. Here is a note from the Folger about their approach and beliefs:

*"The language is what enables you and your classmates to discover amazing things in the texts, the world, and yourselves. We believe that you and your classmates deserve Shakespeare's original language and the opportunity to have honest conversations about the hard questions raised in the plays. Every single student can learn this way, and every teacher can teach this way. Use our tools to read closely, interrogate actively, and make meaning from texts. Even though you'll likely have lots of wonderings while you read, embrace the questions. Shakespeare has something to say to everybody, and everybody has something to say back to Shakespeare. The future of the humanities—and our world—depends on the insights and contributions of all our students. When you learn this way, these things improve:*

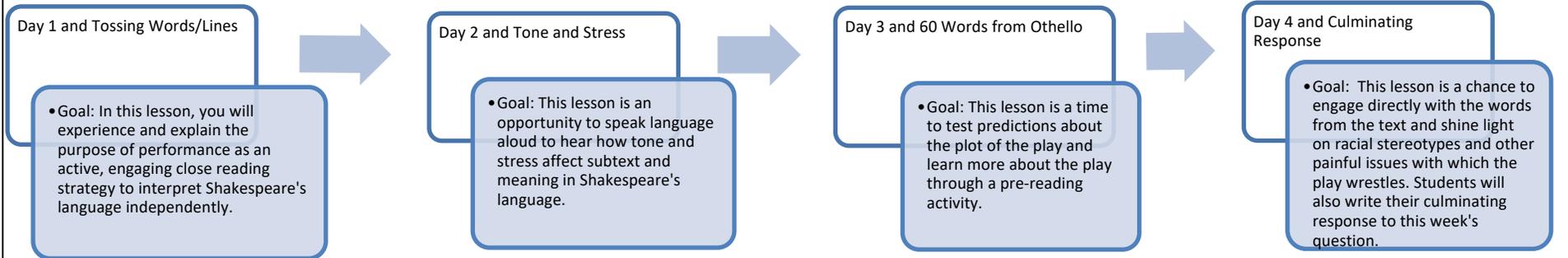
- *your ability to read closely,*
- *your ability to cite evidence from the text,*
- *your confidence in tackling the next challenge."*

By engaging in Shakespeare's words in an active and experiential way, you will really come to own the lines and deepen your readings and interpretations of the text. Don't be afraid to read and reread the words aloud. The reading in this week's assignment is intentionally designed for you to read smaller amounts of text multiple times.

We recommend that you spend 40-60 minutes per day working on these tasks, as we've outlined in the Daily Sequence and Goals below, but you can decide how best to organize your work and spread it out across the week.

Have fun!

### Daily Sequence and Goals



### Distance Learning Week: 4

ENG IV	Unit 4	Power and Performance	
<p><b>Description:</b> This is the time for you to develop and test your predictions about the plot of <i>Othello</i>- and to learn the story of the play before they even read a whole scene. This unit is adapted from Folger materials as a pre-reading activity that includes opportunities for you to read the language independently, with a family member, or through a platform with your class and paves the way for a focus on understanding and enjoying Shakespeare's words.</p>		<p><b>Culminating Question:</b> How are speaking and embodying the language of Shakespeare different from sitting quietly and reading it? What new insights or feelings did you gain as a result of this experience? What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them? As a community confronting difficult questions and painful language about race, identity, and power, what commitments do we make?</p> <p>Write a well-organized response in which you explain how specific language supports your reflection on your experience this week and your commitments moving forward.</p>	
Addressed CCSS:	Reading - <a href="#">RL.12.1</a> , <a href="#">RL.12.4</a> , <a href="#">RL.12.5</a> ,	Writing - <a href="#">W.12.2</a>	Speaking & Listening <a href="#">SL.12.4</a> , <a href="#">SL.12.6</a> Language - <a href="#">L.12.4</a>
Text(s): <i>Othello</i>			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<p><b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience and explain the purpose of embodying the language of a text and the usefulness of performance as an active, engaging close reading strategy.</li> <li>• Interpret Shakespeare's language without any explanation or "translation" from a teacher or another source.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make inferences about <i>Othello</i> and know that words are the key to studying Shakespeare and that they can understand and play with Shakespeare's original language.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize the plot of <i>Othello</i>, make connections to its big ideas, and explain how experiencing Shakespeare's language impacts understanding about the text by performing a short version of <i>Othello</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning Objectives:</b> You will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the language of race in <i>Othello</i> and make commitments to engaging in conversations about race, identity, and power by gathering textual evidence and writing a culminating response.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. Tossing Words and Lines</li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. 60 Words from <i>Othello</i></li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. A Snapshot of <i>Othello</i></li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up Quick Write</li> <li>2. Evidence Collection Chart</li> <li>3. Culminating Question Response</li> </ol>

**Task List for Power and Performance**

**Directions:** The tasks listed below should be completed during the course of this week.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Done</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 1		
Tossing Words and Lines	Practice	50 (total)	Day 1		
Reflection Round	Practice	25 (total)	Day 1		
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 2		
Reflection Round	Practice	25 (total)	Day 2		
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 3		
60 Words from <i>Othello</i>	Practice	50 (total)	Day 3		
Reflection on A Snapshot of <i>Othello</i>	Practice	25 (total)	Day 3		
Warm Up Quick Write	Practice	25 (total)	Day 4		
Evidence Collection Chart	Assessment	50 (total)	Day 4		
Culminating Question Response	Assessment	100 (total)	Day 4		

## Day 1

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to....

- Experience and explain the purpose of embodying the language of a text and the usefulness of performance as an active, engaging close reading strategy.
- Interpret Shakespeare’s language without any explanation or “translation” from a teacher or another source.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Tossing Words and Lines
3. Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- Tossing Words and Lines
- Reflection Round

## Warm Up

**Directions:** Read the letter on page 2 that begins “Dear Students and Families.” What experiences do you have with Shakespeare previously? What are you nervous about? Excited about? Explain in 7-10 sentences below.

# Tossing Words and Lines

**\*FOLGER ESSENTIAL PRACTICE\***

*At this stage, what matters most is not correctness but rather comfort and confidence with Shakespeare's words. Starting with a single word is the least intimidating way to begin a Shakespeare unit.*

**Directions:** There are three ways to engage with this activity, depending on the scenario that best fits your learning environment this week. Read each scenario (left hand column) and follow the corresponding directions.

**Note:** If you are saying the words and enjoying their sounds, you're on target! You can determine and clarify important word meanings later. Do not worry about pronunciation at this point!

**Materials:**

- Find a bean bag, rolled-up socks, a small stuffed animal for "tossing the words (lines) in action"
- Cut word cards and line cards out and place them in a basket, bowl or cup
- Find and hold or stand in front of a mirror

**Process for Tossing Words:**

1. Place all cut words in the basket, bowl or cup
2. Stand in a room that has enough space for moving/walking and a mirror (so you can watch yourself saying the words)
3. Draw one word at a time from the basket, bowl or cup and read it silently to yourself *while holding a bean bag, rolled-up socks, or small stuffed animal.*
4. Toss the bean bag, rolled-up socks, or stuffed animal and "toss" (read, speak aloud) the word! *The goal is to become familiar with each word individually.*
5. Repeat this process for about 6-7 minutes until every word has been "tossed" multiple times.
6. When you've finished "tossing words", answer the reflection questions and make inferences and predictions on the handout.

**Are you doing this activity by yourself?**

**Process for Tossing Lines:**

1. Cut individual lines and place in a basket, bowl or cup.
2. Draw one line at a time from that basket, bowl or cup and read it silently, making it your own. *Walk around the room as you rehearse the line to yourself.*
3. When you're ready, you can begin "tossing lines", shouting each line aloud as you toss the bean bag, rolled-up sock, or stuffed animal. Repeat each line a few times before moving to another line until you "toss" all of the lines.
4. When you're finished "tossing lines", answer the reflection questions and make inferences and predictions on the handout.

**Materials:**

1. Same as above

**Are you doing this activity with someone in your family?**

**Process for Tossing Words and Lines:**

1. Place all cut words in the basket, bowl or cup
2. Form a "circle" of at least 2 people. Taking turns, each person should draw a word or a line from the basket, bowl or cup and read it silently without sharing it.
3. Taking turns, each person "tosses" a word or line while throwing the bean bag, rolled-up sock or stuffed animal to the other person in the circle.
4. Continue tossing words and lines to one another for about 6-7 minutes until everyone has several times to say their words or lines.
5. When you're finished "tossing words" and "tossing lines", as a group, answer the reflection questions and make inferences and predictions on the handout.

**Materials:**

- Same as above
- Log in to Teams (created and shared by your teacher)

**Are you doing this activity with your teacher/class online?**

**Process for Tossing Words and Lines:**

1. Place all cut words in the basket, bowl or cup
2. Stand in a room that has enough space for moving/walking and where you can easily see your computer/Teams
3. Take turns with the other students on Teams, drawing one word at a time from the basket, bowl or cup and read it silently to yourself *while holding a bean bag, rolled-up socks, or small stuffed animal.*
4. Toss the bean bag, rolled-up socks, or stuffed animal and "toss" (read, speak aloud) the word or line to another student on Teams! *The goal is to become familiar with each word individually.*
5. Taking turns, repeat this process for about 6-7 minutes until every word or line has been "tossed" multiple times.
6. When you've finished "tossing words" and "tossing lines", as a group, answer the reflection questions and make inferences and predictions on the handout.

## “Tossing Words” Reflection

**Directions:** After “tossing words”, respond to the following reflection and prediction questions.

Reflection/Prediction Questions	Tossing Words
How did it feel to say the words out loud?	
What do you think your word might mean? What is its tone?	
What did the physical movement add?	
Think ahead: why might it be important to speak and act out Shakespeare’s language?	
What kind of world or story do you think we’re about to enter? What makes you say that?	



# Tossing Words and Lines , Cut Cards

**Directions:** cut the words and lines below into individual cards and add to a cup or basket. Follow the directions on the “Tossing Words” and “Tossing Lines” pages.

## Cut Words

Good	Heaven	Time	Light	Men
Come	Iago	Handkerchief	True	Place
Love	Moor	Pray	Hand	Sweet
Know	Speak	Never	Nothing	Other
Say	Man	Look	World	Fair
Think	See	Wife	Done	Help
Go	Give	Indeed	Hear	Husband
General	Honest	Soul	Matter	Light
Night	Lieutenant	Heart	Take	Tell
				Faith

## Cut Lines

I am not what I am.	My lord, you know I love you.
What profane wretch art thou?	Men should be what they seem.
Though I do hate him as I do hell pains.	Why did I marry?
Let him do his spite.	I nothing but to please his fantasy.
Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!	Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her, damn her!
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.	No, my heart is turned to stone.
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.	I am sorry that I am deceived in him.
Let her have your voice.	Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.
Drown thyself? Drown cats and blind puppies.	All things shall be well.
O heavy ignorance!	Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?
Desdemona is directly in love with him.	Whate'er you be, I am obedient.
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.	It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
Iago is most honest.	For she had eyes and chose me.
But men are men; the best sometimes forget.	You told a lie, an odious, damnèd lie!
I love thee, But nevermore be officer of mine.	Let husbands know their wives have sense like them.
My reputation, Iago, my reputation!	
How poor are they that have not patience!	This is the night that either makes me or fordoes me quite.
I would not put a thief in my mouth to steal my brains.	

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## “Tossing Lines” Reflection

**Directions:** After “tossing lines”, respond to the following reflection and prediction questions.

Reflection/Prediction Questions	Tossing Lines
What did you notice about the lines you said/heard?	
Build on the predictions you made about the world you are about to enter when you read and learn more about <i>Othello</i> .	
What new information about the setting, conflicts, characters, mood, story, and big ideas can we glean from these lines?	
What kind of text are we about to read? How can you tell?	

### After Reading:

#### Reflection Round

**Directions:** Complete the following three sentences to demonstrate learning from today. Reference specific words and phrases in your responses.

1. I noticed...
  
2. I discovered...
  
3. I predict...

Day 2

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to...

- Make inferences about *Othello* and know that words are the key to studying Shakespeare and that they can understand and play with Shakespeare's original language.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. 60 Words from *Othello*
3. Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- 60 Words from *Othello*
- Reflection Round

Warm Up

**Directions:** Read the questions. Study the image. Then, record your thoughts in the box to the right.



Why are words the most important aspect of studying Shakespeare? Use evidence from our reading yesterday in your response.

## 60 Words from *Othello*

**\*FOLGER ESSENTIAL PRACTICE\***

*At this stage, what matters most is not correctness but rather comfort and confidence with Shakespeare's words. Starting with a single word is the least intimidating way to begin a Shakespeare unit. You are about to read some key words from Othello, the play you are about to read. Unlike yesterday's activities, which were more light-hearted, this exercise shines a light on painful issues with which the play wrestles.*

**Directions:** There are three ways to engage with this activity, depending on the scenario that best fits your learning environment this week. Read each scenario (left hand column) and follow the corresponding directions.

**Materials:**

- 60 Words from *Othello*
- Find and hold or stand in front of a mirror

**Are you doing this activity by yourself?**

**Process:**

1. Standing next to a mirror so that you can watch yourself read the words, review the list of 60 words.
2. Read the entire list of words aloud, one at a time. *Don't worry about pronunciation.*
3. After you read the list in its entirety, complete the "First Read Reflection" below.
4. Then, read the list a second time and complete the "Second Read Reflection". *Focus your notes/reflections on these 60 words.*
5. Make predictions about what will happen in Othello—using 5-10 words from this list.

**Materials:**

- 60 Words from *Othello*

**Are you doing this activity with someone in your family?**

**Process:**

1. Find at least one other family member and share the list of 60 words. Standing next to each other explain that you are about to read some key words from the play you are about to read.
2. Quickly and loudly take turns reading the words, one at a time. Don't worry about pronunciation. Keep going around until all 60 words have been read.
3. After you read the list in its entirety, complete the "First Read Reflection" below.
4. Then, read the list a second time and complete the "Second Read Reflection". *Focus your notes/reflections/discussion on these 60 words.*
5. Make predictions about what will happen in Othello—using 5-10 words from this list.

**Materials:**

- 60 Words from *Othello*
- Log in to Teams (created and shared by your teacher)

**Are you doing this activity with your teacher/class online?**

**Process:**

1. Join your class on teams and review the list of 60 words.
2. Quickly and loudly take turns each reading one word at a time until all 60 words have been read aloud. *Don't worry about pronunciation.*
3. After the first read, complete the "First Read Reflection" below.
4. Then, read the list a second time as a class, each taking a turn to read aloud, and complete the "Second Read Reflection" below. *Focus your notes/reflections/discussion on these 60 words.*
5. Make predictions about what will happen in Othello—using 5-10 words from this list.

## Reflection

**Directions:** After each round of reading 60 Words from *Othello*, complete the reflection prompts below.

Reflection/Prediction Questions	Reflection
<p><u>First Read Reflection:</u> What did these words make you feel? Why? Cite specific words.</p>	
<p><u>Second Read Reflection:</u> What do you notice about these words? What do they reveal about the world we are entering? What makes you say that?</p>	
<p>Make predictions about what will happen in <i>Othello</i>—using 5-10 words from this list.</p>	

## 60 Words from *Othello*

**\*FOLGER ESSENTIAL PRACTICE\***

*At this stage, what matters most is not correctness but rather comfort and confidence with Shakespeare's words. Starting with a single word is the least intimidating way to begin a Shakespeare unit.*

**Directions:** Read each word aloud, becoming familiar and comfortable with each word

Angry	Exquisite	Spirits	Beggar
Devil	Beast	Honest	Kisses
Magic	Villain	Tempt	Pure
Savage	Guilty	Thick-lips	Handsome
Thief	Cunning	Madness	Betrayed
Charms	Witchcraft	Passion	Slime
Abuse	Complexion	Slander	Cruel
Black	Poison	Unbookish	Stubborn
Baboon	Foreign	Deceived	Ugly
Barbarian	Wrath	Serpent	Vice
Ambition	Monstrous	Hell	Frowns
Fantastical	Remorse	Shame	Turban
Defective	Horror	Love	Charmer
Lusty	Ignorance	Scorn	Exquisite
Jealous	Slave	Ignorant	

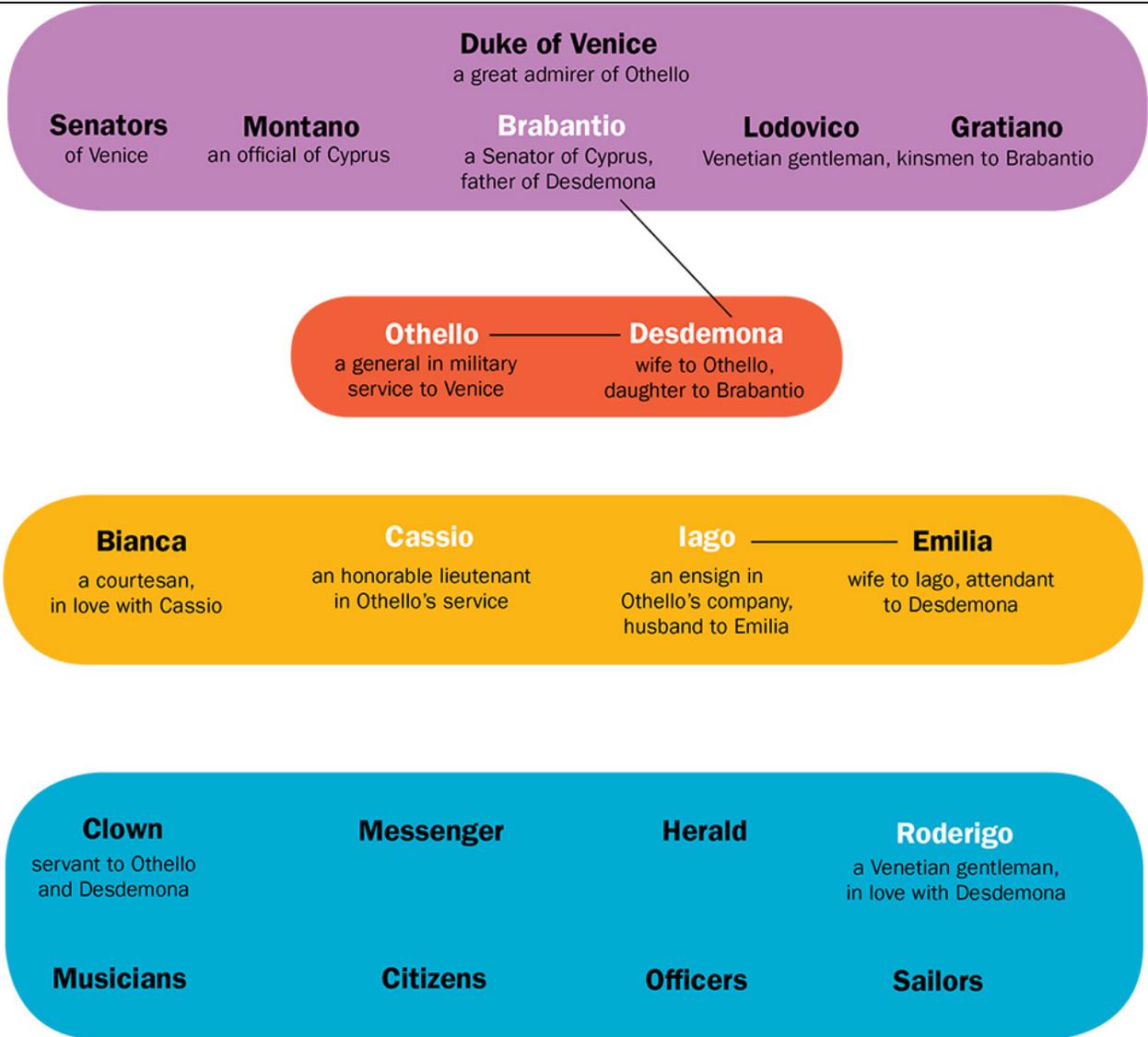


**After Reading:**

**Reflection Round**

**Directions:** Review the character map below and then jot your reflections using the stems below:

- *I noticed...*
- *I discovered...*
- *I predict...*



CHARACTER KEY  
Main Characters in **white**  
Secondary Characters in **black**

## Day 3

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to....

- Summarize the plot of *Othello*, make connections to its big ideas, and explain how experiencing Shakespeare's language impacts understanding about the text by performing a short version of *Othello*.

**Agenda:**

- Warm Up
- A Snapshot of *Othello*
- Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- A Snapshot of *Othello*
- Reflection Round

**Before Reading:**

## Warm Up

**Directions:** How are speaking and embodying the language of Shakespeare different from sitting quietly and reading it? Jot 5 sentences to explain.

## “A Snapshot of *Othello*”

*Remember, at this stage, what matters most is not correctness but rather comfort and confidence with Shakespeare’s words. Today we will move from digging into a single word or line to moving into an abbreviated version of the play.*

**Directions:** There are three ways to engage with this activity, depending on the scenario that best fits your learning environment this week. Read each scenario (left hand column) and follow the corresponding directions.

**Materials:**

- Narrator’s Script for “A Snapshot of *Othello*”
- Collect a number of household objects to form an “acting company” (chairs, bottles, tables, blankets, etc.)

**Are you doing this activity by yourself?**

**Process**

1. Familiarize yourself with the script and lines from the play by reading over it. The plain text is the narrator’s part. The bold lines should be spoken by each member of the “acting company.”
2. Form an acting company by assigning lines to particular objects in your home.
3. Assign each member of the acting company a role and set the appropriate lines beside the objects.
4. As a first step (the “rehearsal”), everyone (“all objects/ acting companies”) should read all of the lines together (chorally) and figure out an action that goes with each line. (You don’t need to know anything about the play.)
5. After rehearsal is over, the play begins: read the narrative and the line numbers. When line numbers are called, run to the object and read the line.
6. At the end of the production, make sure you clap wildly!

**Materials:**

- Narrator’s Script for “A Snapshot of *Othello*”
- Collect a number of household objects and family members to form an “acting company” (chairs, bottles, tables, blankets, etc.)

**Are you doing this activity with someone in your family?**

**Process**

1. Familiarize yourself with the script and lines from the play by reading over it. The plain text is the narrator’s part. The bold lines should be spoken by each member of the “acting company.”
2. Form an acting company by asking friends or family members to join you for this activity.
3. Assign each member (“acting company”) a line or multiple lines and allow them 3-4 minutes to rehearse their assigned lines.
4. As a first step (the “rehearsal”), everyone (“all acting companies”) should read all of the lines together (chorally) and figure out an action that goes with each line. (You don’t need to know anything about the play.)
5. After the rehearsal, begin the play. One person should read aloud the narrative and each line number. When line numbers are called, the appropriate member of the acting companies run up on “stage” and perform their lines.
6. At the end of the production, make sure you clap wildly!

**Materials:**

- Narrator’s Script for “A Snapshot of *Othello*”
- Collect a number of household objects and family members to form an “acting company” (chairs, bottles, tables, blankets, etc.)
- Log in to Teams (created and shared by your teacher)

**Are you doing this activity with your teacher/class online?**

**Process:**

- Cut up the lines from the play.
- Form an acting company by asking friends or family members to join you for this activity.
- Assign each member (“acting company”) a line or multiple lines and allow them 3-4 minutes to rehearse their assigned lines.
- As a first step (the “rehearsal”), everyone (“all acting companies”) should read all of the lines together (chorally) and figure out an action that goes with each line. (You don’t need to know anything about the play.)
- After the rehearsal, begin the play. The teacher will read aloud the narrative and each line number. When line numbers are called, the appropriate member of the acting companies run up on “stage” and perform their lines.
- At the end of the production, make sure you clap wildly!

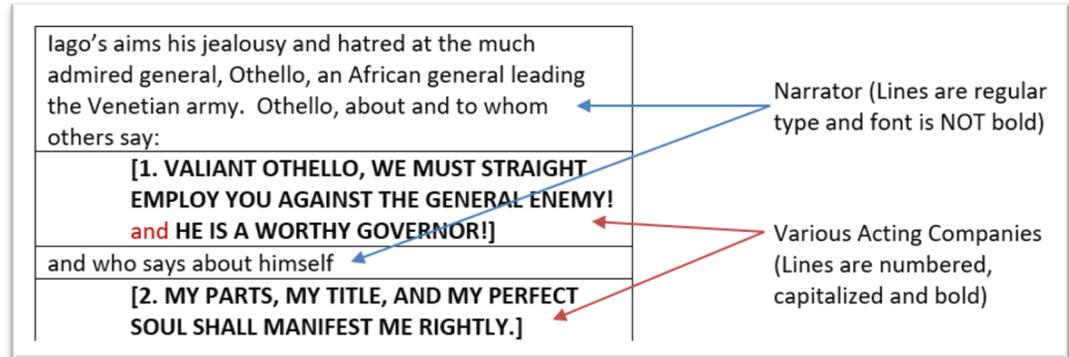
## NARRATOR'S SCRIPT FOR "A SNAPSHOT OF OTHELLO"

This is a pre-reading activity that paves the way for a focus on understanding and enjoying Shakespeare's words. Studying Shakespeare is **not** about memorizing the plot- it's about living inside the language, the strange, cool, wild, beautiful, rich, funny, heartbreaking, poetic, and artful language. This activity will help you really come to own the lines and deepen your readings and interpretations of the text.

**Directions:** The following script has been spliced to provide a snapshot and context for *Othello*. In this snapshot, you'll see that there are narrator lines and lines that actors would read. All of these lines, however, are meant to be read aloud. Use the guidance from the previous page for directions on this performance!

**Note:**

Narrator lines are aligned to the left, regular type, and not bold.  
Actor lines are numbered, capitalized, and bold.  
Reference the graphic to the left to orient to the organization.



Text

*Othello* is one of Shakespeare's most powerful and painful plays. It starts intensely—smack in the middle of a grudge fueled by jealousy and hatred—it moves at 100 mph and it doesn't ever slow down.

Iago's aims his jealousy and hatred at the much admired general, Othello, an African general leading the Venetian army. Othello, about and to whom others say:

**[1. VALIANT OTHELLO, WE MUST STRAIGHT EMPLOY YOU AGAINST THE GENERAL ENEMY! and HE IS A WORTHY GOVERNOR!]**

and who says about himself

**[2. MY PARTS, MY TITLE, AND MY PERFECT SOUL SHALL MANIFEST ME RIGHTLY.]**

Iago is resentful and jealous....maybe because Othello passed him over for the lieutenant's job. Michael Cassio—not Iago—got the job as Othello's lieutenant. Or maybe because Othello is newly married to—and wildly in love with—Desdemona, the prized daughter of a Senator. Desdemona is white.

**[3. DESDEMONA: OUR LOVES AND COMFORTS SHOULD INCREASE EVEN AS OUR DAYS DO GROW!**

**OTHELLO: I CANNOT SPEAK ENOUGH OF THIS CONTENT. IT STOPS ME RIGHT HERE; IT IS TOO MUCH OF JOY]**

Iago hates this love, hates not having the lieutenant's job, and and hates Othello. Iago vows to

**[4. POISON HIS DELIGHT . . . TO PLAGUE HIM WITH FLIES.]**

and says

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**[5. [I WILL] MAKE THE MOOR THANK ME, LOVE ME, AND REWARD ME FOR MAKING HIM EGREGIOUSLY AN ASS, AND PRACTICING UPON HIS PEACE AND QUIET EVEN TO MADNESS.]**

Iago's hatred, his duplicity and manipulation, fuel the whole play. Within two days, Othello and Desdemona are dead.

-----switch narrators-----

So Iago begins his work. He works on everyone, and he starts with Desdemona's father, the Senator Brabantio.

**[6. AN OLD BLACK RAM IS TUPPING YOUR WHITE EWE!]**

and

**[7. YOUR DAUGHTER AND THE MOOR ARE NOW MAKING THE BEAST WITH TWO BACKS.]**

-----switch narrators-----

He moves on his plan to tempt and discredit Michael Cassio. He says to Cassio:

**[8. COME, LIEUTENANT, I HAVE A STOUP OF WINE; AND HERE WITHOUT ARE A BRACE OF . . . GALLANTS THAT WOULD FAIN [DRINK] A MEASURE TO THE HEALTH OF BLACK OTHELLO.]**

Cassio says

**[9. NOT TONIGHT, GOOD IAGO. I HAVE VERY POOR AND UNHAPPY BRAINS FOR DRINKING.]**

Iago says to us in the audience:

**[10. IF I CAN FASTEN BUT ONE CUP UPON HIM WITH THAT WHICH HE HATH DRUNK TONIGHT ALREADY, HE'LL BE AS FULL OF QUARREL AND OFFENSE AS MY YOUNG MISTRESS' DOG...]**

And he does.

Cassio is drunk, but like many who are, he says he's not.

**[11. *CASSIO*: DO NOT THINK, GENTLEMEN, I AM DRUNK . . . I AM NOT DRUNK NOW. I CAN STAND WELL ENOUGH, AND I SPEAK WELL ENOUGH. *MONTANO*: COME, COME, YOU'RE DRUNK. *CASSIO*: DRUNK?]**

Drunk. Cassio wounds Montano during a drunken row . . . all of this behaviour unbecoming a military officer, which causes Othello to say

**[12. *CASSIO*, I LOVE THEE—BUT NEVERMORE BE OFFICER OF MINE.]**

Cassio's reaction:

**[13. REPUTATION, REPUTATION, I HAVE LOST MY REPUTATION! [I . . .] FRANKLY DESPISE MYSELF.]**

Iago's plan to discredit Michael Cassio is a success, and he returns to ruining Othello. Fueled by hate, he uses these words when he talks **about** Othello:

**[14. THICK LIPS BARBARY HORSE LASCIVIOUS MOOR SOOTY BOSOM]**

and

**[15. PRACTICER OF THE ARTS CHANGEABLE MOORS MOOR DEFECTIVE BLACK OTHELLO]**

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When he speaks to Othello, he says these kinds of things:

**[16. MY LORD, YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU and I HUMBLY . . . BESEECH . . . YOUR PARDON FOR TOO MUCH LOVING YOU and MEN SHOULD BE WHAT THEY SEEM.]**

-----switch narrators-----

Iago moves on to Desdemona and urges her to convince Othello of Cassio's virtues. While he is urging Desdemona to say to Othello:

**[17. I HAVE BEEN TALKING WITH [CASSIO] HERE, A MAN THAT LANGUISHES IN YOUR DISPLEASURE],**

he is saying to Othello

**[18. LOOK TO YOUR WIFE; OBSERVE HER WELL WITH CASSIO.]**

as he makes up stories about Cassio and Desdemona's love for each other. The more she talks up Cassio, the more Othello believes she has betrayed their love.

Othello many times calls Iago

**[19. HONEST IAGO! HONEST IAGO! HONEST IAGO! HONEST IAGO!]**

In the course of all, Desdemona is missing a token of Othello's love . . . in the play, it is a very famous missing "thing":

**[20. FETCH ME THE HANDKERCHIEF! THE HANDKERCHIEF! THE HANDKERCHIEF! THE HANDKERCHIEF!]**

Othello believes it all:

**[21. AY, LET HER ROT AND PERISH AND BE DAMNED TONIGHT, FOR SHE SHALL NOT LIVE. NO, MY HEART HAS TURNED TO STONE.]**

Iago suggests:

**[22. STRANGLE HER IN HER BED.]** And he does.

The truth comes finally from Iago's wife, Emilia. Too late.

**[23. MOOR, SHE WAS CHASTE. SHE LOVED THEE, CRUEL MOOR.]**

Othello kills his wife. Iago kills his wife, Emilia.

Before Othello takes his own life, he tells us how to speak of him, and we will:

**[24. SOFT YOU. A WORD OR TWO BEFORE YOU GO. I HAVE DONE THE STATE SOME SERVICE, AND THEY KNOW 'T. NO MORE OF THAT. I PRAY YOU IN YOUR LETTERS, WHEN YOU SHALL THESE UNLUCKY DEEDS RELATE, SPEAK OF ME AS I AM. NOTHING EXTENUATE, NOR SET DOWN AUGHT IN MALICE. THEN MUST YOU SPEAK OF ONE THAT LOVED NOT WISELY, BUT TOO WELL; OF ONE NOT EASILY JEALOUS, BUT BEING WROUGHT, PERPLEXED IN THE EXTREME. . . .]**

And that is a Folger way into the heartbreaking story of *Othello*.

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**After Reading:**

**Reflection Round**

**Directions:** Use the space below to reflect on the following questions about your experience today. Write 7-10 complete sentences in response to today's prompt. Reflect on how your thinking has changed since the warm up.

How are speaking and embodying the language of Shakespeare different from sitting quietly and reading it? What new insights or feelings did you gain as a result of this experience?

## Day 4

**Learning Objective:** You will....

- Reflect on the language of race in Othello and make commitments to engaging in conversations about race, identity, and power by gathering textual evidence and writing a culminating response.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Evidence Collection Chart
3. Culminating Question Response

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- Evidence Collection Chart
- Culminating Question Response

**Warm Up: Quick Write**

**Directions:** Based on your work this week, what have you learned? What commitments should we make when discussing difficult language about race, identity, and power? Why are these commitments important?

**Evidence Collection Chart:**

**Culminating Question:** How are speaking and embodying the language of Shakespeare different from sitting quietly and reading it? What new insights or feelings did you gain as a result of this experience? What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them? As a community confronting difficult questions and painful language about race, identity, and power, what commitments do we make?

Write a well-organized response in which you explain how specific language supports your reflection on your experience this week and your commitments moving forward.

**Directions:** Use the space below to develop an evidence collection chart that best develops your thinking about the prompt above.







# Othello, Week 1 Reflection

## Process Reflection

What went well?	What challenges did you encounter?

## Learning Reflection

What did you learn from this Close Read?	How will you use what you've learned?



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# Distance Learning Plan



## English IV Week 5

## Secondary ELA Distance Learning

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Dear Students and Families,

We hope you are safe and healthy while you are out of school and learning from home! With the extended Distance Learning timeline, content in these units will be new, addressing content that you would have engaged with in your face-to-face learning environments at your schools, with your teachers and other students. We've used those experiences to design similar learning experiences for you while you're at home. This content will be new, as will be some of the routines. Take your time and be patient with yourself, but above all, persevere.

*This learning experience is guided by our partnership with the esteemed Folger Shakespeare Library. You may have performed Shakespeare in ENG I (Romeo and Juliet) or ENG II (Hamlet), or this may be your first time. Typically Shakespeare, and these experiences, are used in a collaborative space with your teacher and fellow students, however, we believe that experiencing Shakespeare and his language is essential, so we have a creative opportunity for you to engage with his language through distance learning. Experience with Shakespeare's language is a foundational experience.*

The Folger Method consists of 8 Foundational Principles and centers around your engagement with the language of Shakespeare. Here is a note from the Folger about their approach and beliefs:

*"The language is what enables you and your classmates to discover amazing things in the texts, the world, and yourselves. We believe that you and your classmates deserve Shakespeare's original language and the opportunity to have honest conversations about the hard questions raised in the plays. Every single student can learn this way, and every teacher can teach this way. Use our tools to read closely, interrogate actively, and make meaning from texts. Even though you'll likely have lots of wonderings while you read, embrace the questions. Shakespeare has something to say to everybody, and everybody has something to say back to Shakespeare. The future of the humanities—and our world—depends on the insights and contributions of all our students. When you learn this way, these things improve:*

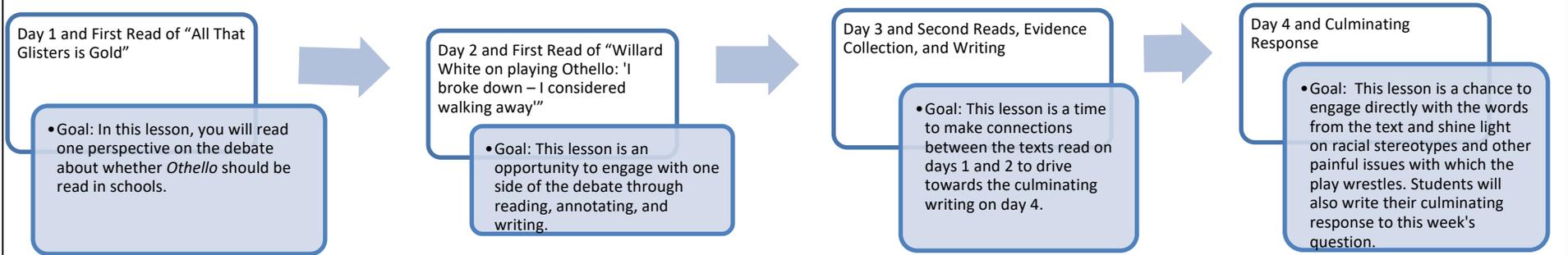
- *your ability to read closely,*
- *your ability to cite evidence from the text,*
- *your confidence in tackling the next challenge."*

Last week you learned that by engaging in Shakespeare's words in an active and experiential way, you will really come to own the lines and deepen your readings and interpretations of the text. The reading in this week's assignment is designed as close reading of paired texts that will enhance your perspective on the language of *Othello* when you return to reading Shakespeare's words next week.

Just like in week 1 of this unit, we recommend that you spend 40-60 minutes per day working on these tasks, as we've outlined in the Daily Sequence and Goals below, but you can decide how best to organize your work and spread it out across the week.

Have fun!

### Daily Sequence and Goals



### Distance Learning Week: 5

ENG IV	Unit 4	Power and Performance	
<b>Description:</b> This week of assignments is adapted from Folger materials, building on week materials, and intended as a pre-reading activity for <i>Othello</i> . You'll read two texts to explain the debate about whether <i>Othello</i> should be read and performed today and consider arguments from both sides of the debate.		<b>Culminating Question:</b> What is Willard White's perspective? Do you see this article in concert or in disagreement with Dr. Ayanna Thompson's position on <i>Othello</i> ? What makes you say this? Explain your perspective and support your perspective with evidence from both texts. Should <i>Othello</i> be taught in school?	
Addressed CCSS:	Reading - <a href="#">RL.12.1</a> , <a href="#">RL.12.4</a> , <a href="#">RL.12.5</a> , Writing - <a href="#">W.12.1</a>	Speaking & Listening <a href="#">SL.12.4</a> , <a href="#">SL.12.6</a>	Language - <a href="#">L.12.4</a>
Text(s): "All That Glisters is Gold" an interview from <i>Code Switch</i> with Ayanna Thompson and "Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'" a <i>Guardian</i> interview by Andrew Dickson			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain one side of the debate about whether <i>Othello</i> should be read and performed today by reading, annotating, and writing about one scholar's perspective.</li> </ul>	<b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain one side of the debate about whether <i>Othello</i> should be read and performed today by reading, annotating, and writing about one actor's perspective.</li> </ul>	<b>Learning Objective:</b> You will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider arguments on both sides of the debate about <i>Othello</i> by rereading both texts and writing a response that connects the two.</li> </ul>	<b>Learning Objectives:</b> You will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a stand in the debate about whether <i>Othello</i> should be read and performed today by completing an evidence collection chart and writing an argumentative response.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. Read and annotate "All That Glisters is Gold"</li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<b>Agenda:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. Read and annotate "Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'"</li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<b>Agenda:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up</li> <li>2. Second read of "All That Glisters is Gold" and "Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'"</li> <li>3. Reflection Round</li> </ol>	<b>Agenda:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm Up Quick Write</li> <li>2. Evidence Collection Chart</li> <li>3. Culminating Question Response</li> </ol>

**Task List for Power and Performance**

**Directions:** The tasks listed below should be completed during the course of this week.

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Cat.</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Done</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 1		
Annotations for “All That Glisters is Gold”	Practice	25 (total)	Day 1		
Reflection Round	Practice	25 (total)	Day 1		
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 2		
Read and annotate “Willard White on playing Othello: ‘I broke down – I considered walking away’”	Practice	50 (total)	Day 2		
Reflection Round	Practice	25 (total)	Day 2		
Warm Up	Practice	50 (total)	Day 3		
Read and annotate “An Invitation from a Black Shakespearean”	Practice	25 (total)			
Reflection Round	Practice	25 (total)	Day 3		
Warm Up	Practice	25 (total)	Day 4		
Evidence Collection Chart	Assessment	50 (total)	Day 4		
Culminating Question Response	Assessment	100 (total)	Day 4		

## Day 1

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to....

- Explain one side of the debate about whether *Othello* should be read and performed today by reading, annotating, and writing about one scholar's perspective.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Read and annotate "All That Glisters is Gold"
3. Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- Read and annotate "All That Glisters is Gold"
- Reflection Round

## Warm Up

**Directions:** Recall 5 words from Shakespeare's *Othello* (either from the 60 words activity or the snapshot activity from last week) and use them to write a summary of the plot of *Othello*.

**Then Jot:** *Othello* is a controversial play. Based on what you have read so far, what might make the play controversial? Why might certain people object to its being studied and performed?

## “All That Glisters Is Not Gold” from NPR’s *Code Switch*

**Directions:** The following text is an excerpt from NPR’s *Code Switch* podcast episode with Folger-affiliated scholar Dr. Ayanna Thompson. Read the excerpt and listen to the interview online: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/752850055>. The portion below begins at around minute 15 (halfway through).

Text	Annotations
<p>MERAJI: We just heard from some high schoolers trying their best to use an incredibly bigoted Shakespeare play, "The Merchant Of Venice," to make a larger point about racism and anti-Semitism. And, Gene, you spoke with an expert who told you, yeah, it's good to know your Shakespeare in order to truly understand the burly, old roots of racism. But she says when it comes to "The Merchant Of Venice" and a couple of other Shakespeare plays, it's complicated. I really wish I knew how to say that in Old English.</p> <p>THOMPSON: My name is Ayanna Thompson, and I'm a professor of English at Arizona State University, and I specialize in Shakespeare and race.</p> <p>DEMBY: You're also the director of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, right?</p> <p>THOMPSON: Yes, I am.</p> <p>DEMBY: OK. Yeah. You don't got to be humble.</p> <p>THOMPSON: (Laughter).</p> <p>DEMBY: So before we get into this, I guess, what is your favorite Shakespeare play?</p> <p>THOMPSON: "Titus Andronicus."</p> <p>DEMBY: OK, so I'm going to be a philistine here. I don't know "Titus Andronicus."</p> <p>THOMPSON: No one knows "Titus Andronicus."</p> <p>(LAUGHTER)</p> <p>DEMBY: Oh, so you're, like, oh. This is a deep cut. You're not up on this.</p> <p>THOMPSON: No. The reason it's my favorite is because it's the play that students have no prior knowledge of. And so I always start my classes with that play. And the play is crazy-pants.</p> <p>DEMBY: (Laughter).</p>	<p>As you listen and read, annotate for details of Ayanna Thompson’s perspective on Shakespeare.</p>

THOMPSON: And it actually has (laughter) - it has a character named Aaron the Moor, who is a black man, who basically wreaks havoc on all the Romans and the Goths and has an affair with a woman, and they have a biracial baby (laughter).

DEMBY: What?

THOMPSON: That's right. This is the play you've never read that is amazing.

DEMBY: Is it?

THOMPSON: And he gives what I will argue is the first black power speech in English.

DEMBY: Wait. I'm sorry.

THOMPSON: Yes. Yes. Written by a white man to be performed by a white man in blackface in 1594 - first black power speech.

DEMBY: Do you remember any of it? Could you...

THOMPSON: (Laughter) So he's talking to two young men whose mother he just had the affair with, and they've had the biracial baby. And they want him to kill the baby because, of course, it will - the black baby will reveal that she's been unfaithful...

DEMBY: Right.

THOMPSON: ...To the emperor of Rome.

DEMBY: Scandalous.

THOMPSON: And he launches into this whole diatribe about why white people are not as good as black people and why blackness is so much better. And he says what, what? You white-limed walls. You alehouse-painted signs. Black is better than another hue and that it scorns to bear another hue (laughter). And it goes on and on. It's amazing.

DEMBY: Wow. OK. So you are obviously a Shakespeare connoisseur and a fan. How did you get into Shakespeare?

THOMPSON: So what's interesting is that I'm not sure I'm a fan (laughter).

DEMBY: Oh. OK.

THOMPSON: Like, I started off when I knew that I was going to become an academic - because I did have a life before that when I was a banker.

DEMBY: Oh...

THOMPSON: But when...

DEMBY: ...Hard pivot.

THOMPSON: (Laughter) You know, working-class black girl - all I wanted to do was make money, so I had to go into banking for a while - but then realized that, you know, something about me likes to think about texts. And I was always interested in racial formation and how we come to where we are now.

And when I started out, I thought I would be doing work on kind of the modern British novel and thinking about the second British Empire as a moment when - at least the argument was that, like, kind of the scientific racism came into play, and that's how these racial formations began.

But actually, the more I read, the more I realized that it was much earlier. And it started in these kind of first encounters in the medieval and Renaissance periods. And so if you're really interested in the ideology of racism, then you have to start a lot earlier than people assumed. And then once you move backwards in time, and you land in, like, the 16th century, you have to deal with Shakespeare (laughter).

DEMBY: Right, of course. So you mentioned "Titus Andronicus" and all of the complicated racial dynamics in that play. We have been talking in this episode about, I guess, one of his better-known plays, "The Merchant Of Venice." So there was a teenage theater troupe - they're mostly white - who decided that they were going to stage "The Merchant Of Venice" as a way to open up this larger dialogue about anti-Semitism. And they made a lot of concessions and tweaks to the play in order for the teenagers in the play to feel comfortable even saying some of the dialogue. So, like, why do we keep making this play? Why does "The Merchant Of Venice" still have all this purchase?

THOMPSON: So I think there are three toxic plays that resist rehabilitation and appropriation that are written by Shakespeare.

DEMBY: OK.

THOMPSON: And they are "Merchant Of Venice," "Othello" and "Taming Of The Shrew." And for each of them, there is a desire to recuperate them and make them progressive texts. And, as you've described, you can tweak, you can change, you can - but ultimately, those three end up kind of circling us back to a really regressive and uncomfortable standpoint. And with "Merchant," it is kind of some deep anti-Semitism. With "Othello," it is deep racism. And with "Taming Of The Shrew," it's deep misogyny.

DEMBY: Yep.

THOMPSON: And I think those three are really, really hard.

DEMBY: And yet they remain really popular.

THOMPSON: Yes, they do (laughter) because there's this - well, we have a narrative in the West that Shakespeare's like spinach, right? He's good for you. He's universally good for you. When, in fact, he's, you know, writing from the vantage point of the 16th and 17th century. And I hope that we have moved on in the 21st century from some of those ideas.

But once we keep recirculating those texts with this idea that they're good for you, people always want to - they're, like, I'm going to finally do the one that reveals Shylock's humanity. Or I'm finally going to do the one that reveals the full complexity of Othello's character. Or I'm finally going to do the one where Katherine has power and agency over Petruchio and the patriarchal system. But they don't end up working (laughter).

DEMBY: Right.

THOMPSON: They resist it. And there's been this amazing study by Willmar Sauter, who does work on audiences in theaters. And he did a study of productions of "Merchant Of Venice" where he went around Europe for a year. And he had nothing to do with the productions. And they were in different countries. They were in Sweden and Germany and Denmark and all over. And they were different types of productions. Some were in modern dress. Some were in, you know, the Elizabethan pumpkin pants. And he gave...

DEMBY: Is that the actual...

THOMPSON: (Laughter).

DEMBY: ...Was pumpkin pants?

THOMPSON: It's the official term...

DEMBY: Oh, wow.

THOMPSON: ...Pumpkin pants (laughter). No. But he gave the audience a survey before they saw whatever production of "Merchant Of Venice" they were seeing that asked them kind of how they feel about anti-Semitism. And then he gave them the exact same survey after they saw whatever production that they saw of "Merchant Of Venice."

DEMBY: Uh-oh.

THOMPSON: And don't you know that audience members felt more secure in their anti-Semitic beliefs after seeing "Merchant Of Venice"? You feel more secure in your anti-Semitism after seeing this play, regardless of what the director or actors were trying to do. That's some hard stuff to grapple with. And for playwrights, directors, theater companies and my students - my undergraduates - when I reveal this to them, they are in shock and disbelief. And I'm, like, this is what - this why I have a career.

(LAUGHTER)

DEMBY: Do this - yes.

THOMPSON: Like, right? You know, like, it's not dying, right? (Laughter).

DEMBY: I mean, I guess the question is, why don't we just jettison them?

THOMPSON: Well, I think there are a couple of things that we'd have to fight against, right? One is this idea that Shakespeare is spinach and universally good for you. We have to make that a more complex narrative. Two, we have to allow ourselves to inhabit the full complexity of these plays and to not try and make everything have a happy Disney uplift narrative.

And I think if we get to a place where, you know, Shakespeare's not universally good for you and maybe these plays aren't always necessarily good for us, then we will be in a position where we can maybe rewrite the endings, change the plays, have other plays enter into the major canon and some of them fall out. But Shakespeare's a huge industry. There's a lot of money residing on Shakespeare.

DEMBY: Right.

THOMPSON: And theater companies, which most of them - and I work with a lot of theater companies - most of them are on a, like, razor-thin wire of profitability if at all. And so they're not willing to do things that will risk anyone not putting money towards a seat. And Shakespeare still remains the most-produced playwright in the West.

DEMBY: Five hundred years after his...

THOMPSON: Five hundred years later.

DEMBY: So when people are putting on these three plays - right? - these three, like, radioactive plays in your opinion, right? - like, what are the arguments they're making for putting them on, right? I mean, obviously, not saying, look, we're putting them out because they're misogynistic or anti-Semitic or racist, right? They're making some sort of affirmative argument about their artistic value.

THOMPSON: Usually they are making an affirmative - taking an affirmative stance on their artistic value. So I would say most of the time, when "Taming Of The Shrew" is put on now, the theater companies try and say, well, we're going to give you a Katherine who is a fully-realized woman who is, in fact, empowered to fight the patriarchy. It's not like, oh, we're putting this on because we think that women should submit.

(LAUGHTER)

After listening to and reading "All That Glisters Is Not Gold," jot your thoughts in response to the following stems. I noticed...

THOMPSON: And same for "Othello." And I - so for a while, I was like the - what's (laughter) - my unofficial title was the "Othello" whisperer...

DEMBY: (Laughter).

THOMPSON: ...Because theater companies - big theater companies - I'm not going to name any of them, but big theater...

DEMBY: Oh, put them on blast.

THOMPSON: No, I'm not putting (laughter) - would put on productions of "Othello." And the actor of color who was playing Othello who's been trained his whole life to strive for this role was having, you know, mental breakdown.

DEMBY: Oh, wow.

THOMPSON: And I got called in. They're, like, we've heard that you worked with so-and-so, and he was able to complete the run. So can we have you come in? (Laughter) And I've done this...

DEMBY: Are you serious? Like...

THOMPSON: I've done this over and over and over again. And what I say to the actors each time - I'm, like, what you're experiencing is not unique (laughter).

DEMBY: Wow.

THOMPSON: There's something about this play because it was written for a white man in blackface that is, of course, feeling like it's damaging your soul (laughter).

DEMBY: Yeah. Wow.

THOMPSON: So...

DEMBY: That is...

THOMPSON: So - but the argument for all those theater companies putting it on was, like, this is a great role for a black actor, and they don't often get to, you know, show their classical chops and blah, blah. And I'm like, nope. And I'm going to tell you, three months from now, you're going to call me (laughter). So anyway, I don't think they should be put on.

DEMBY: What is the value of, like, black and brown kids learning about Shakespeare today?

I discovered...

I predict...

THOMPSON: I think it's incredibly important because if you don't know how our current racialized epistemology started, it's really hard to dismantle it. You get to see in Shakespeare how it wasn't crystallized then; it was forming. And he was one of the people that helped form it.

And if you can reveal that to black and brown students - and, you know, I teach it at a predominantly minority school, so they - in fact, I have - often, I have students who when they're talking to themselves in class speak in Spanish, they're reading the plays in early modern English, and then they're speaking to the whole class in contemporary English. So they're, like, you know, trilingual in the class...

DEMBY: Right.

THOMPSON: ...Which is amazing. But they get it. They get, like, oh, I see what he's doing to black and brown and women and Jews. And, you know, I see how class is working. Sexuality is really complicated. I see how he's working through all these ideas. And once I figure out how the man constructed this all together, I have a lot of tools then to dismantle how he constructed us in this false way.

DEMBY: But when so many of us are encountering Shakespeare for the first time, it's in high school or - you know? And we're not getting all of this context, right? It's, like, "Romeo And Juliet" is this tragedy about these two lovers who are close to your age - 13 and 14-year-olds. We're not getting all of this other sort of, like, context around the ideas and the sort of contemporary social mores of his time and what he was helping to, I guess, introduce into the world.

THOMPSON: I totally agree, and that is the new frontier. So I co-authored a book on how to teach Shakespeare with an education specialist precisely because we realized if you're not hitting both the teachers and the students in high school, then you're missing the boat, or you're missing an opportunity because not everyone gets to go to college and take my class, right (laughter)?

DEMBY: So on the most basic level, do you think high school students should be reading this play, "Merchant Of Venice"?

THOMPSON: No.

(LAUGHTER)

THOMPSON: But I say this - so I talked to a master teaching class a couple of years ago, and I mounted a whole argument about why they shouldn't be doing "Othello" for the same reasons that I would say no to doing "Merchant Of Venice." Like, you know, are you really prepared to open all of this up? How comfortable are you dealing with this long history with anti-Semitism or racism, misogyny - whatever? But this is a group of master teachers. They resisted, and they were like, no, you're wrong; we are exactly the right people to teach these texts.

DEMBY: OK.

THOMPSON: And on the one hand, I left there saying, right. I actually think if we could get teachers to do "Merchant" and "Shrew" and "Othello" in a really responsible way, first of all, Shakespeare ends up being an author that you get to wrestle with as opposed to submitting to, right? And the other thing is it's probably better to have it taught that way than to see a really bad production that is attempting to recuperate them and kind of just redefining all of the nastiness.

DEMBY: OK. So in our episode, one of the things that the troupe in question did was to have discussions with the audience. They had experts come in to sort of talk about anti-Semitism. Do you think that works?

THOMPSON: Well, I think it's a great start. I mean, I think if this group of students realize that a production itself is not enough for the dialogue and what - in educational terms, it's, like, you need a lot of scaffolding around it; in the theater world, they'll call it, like, paratheatrical events. But I imagine that that kind of lifting is a lot heavier for high school students than it is, you know, in a professional theater. So it sounds like they were trying to do the best they could.

**After Reading:****Reflection Round**

**Directions:** In 7-10 sentences, respond to the question below. Cite and explain relevant evidence from Dr. Thompson to support your response.

*According to Dr. Thompson, why does Othello resist rehabilitation and appropriation?*

## Day 2

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to...

- Explain one side of the debate about whether *Othello* should be read and performed today by reading, annotating, and writing about one actor's perspective.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Read and annotate "Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'"
3. Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Quick Write
- Read and annotate "Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'"
- Reflection Round

## Warm Up

**Directions:** *Where does racism start? No single right answer here but explain your thinking and support with examples.*

## “Willard White on playing Othello: 'I broke down – I considered walking away'”

*The opera singer played the jealous general opposite Imogen Stubbs and Ian McKellen in a 1989 RSC version. He remembers the play as a crushing experience*

**Directions:** Read the text below through the first time. Then, reread for evidence of White’s perspective. Annotate by underline details and jotting notes in the margin. You will use this evidence in writing your culminating response on day 4.

Text	Annotations
<p>Over the years, people have asked me whether I’d ever sing Verdi’s Otello. But of course it’s a tenor role, and I’m a bass, so I just smiled. I’d thought about Shakespeare’s play, of course, but always assumed I was in the wrong genre. Then I was working with director Trevor Nunn on a production of Gershwin’s opera Porgy and Bess at Glyndebourne in 1987, and he suggested it. Part of me never expected it to happen. But then a few years later he came back, and introduced me to Ian McKellen, who was going to play Iago. I cancelled the operas I’d been planning to do and made time for this instead.</p>	<p>As you read, annotate for details of White’s perspective.</p>
<p>When I reread the play, the difficulty for me was Othello himself. He’s a man of great stature, this great general who falls in love, and then he destroys everything. I said to Trevor: “I don’t get him.” He said to me: “Well, he loves her from the beginning to the very end, that’s why.”</p>	
<p>I realized people are killed in the name of love. But it was hard. After the scene where I knocked Imogen Stubbs’s Desdemona down and called her a whore, I went into my dressing room and broke down. You have to face certain questions. I considered walking away.</p>	
<p>One of the reasons the drama is so powerful is because of the relationship between Othello and Iago. Iago is an extremely powerful character, but Othello cannot be depicted as a fool, that’s very important. It needs to be a struggle between them; Iago’s deception has to be plausible.</p>	
<p>And one thing you have to remember is that he’s not a jealous black man, he’s a jealous man. All of us can be guilty of enacting a situation – it’s not a question of colour. We point fingers, say it’s those people over there because they’re white or black or Chinese or whatever. But these are human questions: fear, the quest for love, for survival.</p>	
<p>Of course the issues in the play are partly racial, but for me they’re not the defining factor. Yes, some of the language is racist, and characters are racist – Iago saying “an old black ram is tupping your white ewe” is racial. We mustn’t pretend that it’s not there. But it’s not the only thing in the play. And although the play has been associated with great actors such as Ira Aldridge and Paul Robeson and the</p>	

fight for recognition and civil rights, I didn't feel I was stepping into their shoes. I'm not that arrogant. You have to wear your own shoes.

When I started to rehearse, I thought – oh, I have total freedom! No conductor telling me when to come in, no legato or staccato to follow. But actually it's not true, there's a major conductor in the piece: Shakespeare himself. The iambic pentameter is a kind of music.

As an untrained person, it's tempting to use your energy up too quickly. You're five lines into a 30-line speech and you're exhausted. You get lost in the depiction of the emotion. One of my fellow actors helped me with this, John Burgess – he told me that a friend of his always underlined the last word in each line of the speech and went for that. I tried it, it was a bit stilted at first, but it was a window, a way in.

Still, the play is crushing to perform. The final scenes most of all, where Othello turns on Desdemona and then kills her. I was taken into places where I didn't want to go. I needed to open myself to the fact that this man is so torn by a desire for purity – or so impure himself – that he chooses the opposite side. People fainted during that scene. They said, "Oh, it's the heat," and perhaps it was, but it's also truly horrible to watch. That's why it's a great play: we see ourselves on stage. Of course there are questions of race, it's inevitable in a play like this, but ultimately it's the human race we see in front of us.

**After Reading:****Reflection Round**

**Directions:** Reflect on your experience reading today using the following prompts:

- *I noticed...*
  
- *I discovered...*
  
- *I predict...*

Day 3

**Learning Objective:** You will be able to....

- Consider arguments on both sides of the debate about *Othello* by rereading both texts, writing objective summaries, and extending your perspective through reflection.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Read and annotate “An Invitation...”
3. Reflection Round

**Tasks:**

- Warm Up
- Read and annotate “An Invitation...”
- Reflection Round

**Before Reading: Warm Up**

**Directions:** Reread “All That Glisters is Gold” and “Willard White on playing Othello: ‘I broke down – I considered walking away.’” Jot an objective summary of each in the space below.

**Objective Summary: “All That Glisters is Gold”**

**Objective Summary: “Willard White on playing Othello: ‘I broke down – I considered walking away.’”**

## An Invitation from a Black Shakespearean

Note from Folger Education: Now more than ever we need to ask the big questions, confront the issues that both unite and divide us. Today we share an essay written for the CrossTalk: DC Reflects on Identity and Difference project by our colleague Ayanna Thompson, Professor of English at The George Washington University. Professor Thompson is a leading scholar on Shakespeare, race, and performance; a dramaturg for Folger Theatre's current production, *District Merchants*; and a member of the CrossTalk council of scholars. CrossTalk is an experiment and an adventure. It is a partnership led by the Folger Shakespeare Library and six DC institutions. It is a community engagement initiative bringing together disparate publics to talk about identity and difference thoughtfully and deeply, through the lens of literature and history. Read more about this initiative on Folger and the Community, our new community engagement blog, where this essay originally appeared.

**Directions: Read the text below, by Ayanna Thompson, and annotate for evidence of her perspective.**

Text	Annotations
<p>People are always surprised to learn what I do when I meet them outside of George Washington University, where I teach. You see, I am a black woman who teaches and writes about William Shakespeare, and I am also someone who teaches and writes about issues of race. In the current climate, these topics—Shakespeare and race—are usually viewed as mutually exclusive: you are either interested in Shakespeare OR race.</p>	
<p>I have always seen them as integrally entwined, though, perhaps because the first Shakespeare play I saw onstage—at age 13— was a production of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> that had a multi-racial cast. While <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> were played by white actors, Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, was performed by the black British actor, Hugh Quarshie, whose swagger and strength was hypnotizing. It was set in the world of 1980's Wall Street, and that production imprinted on my mind that Shakespeare can and should be about contemporary racial politics. It wasn't until college that I realized that my Shakespeare was not everyone else's—and especially not my professors' Shakespeare!</p>	
<p>And yet, Shakespeare provides us with incredibly rich plays that are filled with incredibly complex characters who frequently make references to racial differences. Sometimes the references are empowering: In <i>Titus Andronicus</i>, Aaron the Moor claims that black is actually better than white: "Coal-black is better than another hue / In that it scorns to bear another hue." But more often, the references are disturbingly racist: Roderigo refers to Othello as "thicklips," for example. And most disturbing are the constant digs at black women as those whose bodies are the least desirable. For instance, in <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>, when Lysander wants to thwart Hermia's romantic desire for him, he says, "Away, you Ethiop!" Likewise, in <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>, when Proteus believes that he loves Sylvia instead of Julia, he claims, "And Sylvia—witness heaven that made her fair— / Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiop." And when Claudio, in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>, thinks he must marry someone he has never met, he boldly declares, "I'll hold my tongue were she an Ethiop". Everyone is more desirable than a black woman in Shakespeare's plays! These sentiments are not surprising when one realizes that Shakespeare was a product of his time; the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade was supported in part by a belief in the fundamental differences between black and white. The casual racism in</p>	

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Shakespeare's plays can be jarring if one has been taught to believe that Shakespeare's plays are timeless and universal because he was, in fact, of his time.

So I think through Shakespeare and race together NOT because I view Shakespeare and his plays as universally good and racially progressive. I bristle every time I read the lines above. I hate that black women are almost entirely absent from Shakespeare's plays and when they are present, they are the butt of jokes about the limits of desire. (I say almost entirely absent, because it is compelling and instructive to think whether Cleopatra was or should be performed as a black woman; after all, in Antony and Cleopatra, she is described as having a "tawny front.")

My interest, rather, stems from a belief that Shakespeare's plays offer us all unique opportunities to explore these complex issues. His plays continue to be the most produced throughout the world, and unlike many American classics, Shakespeare's plays invite discussions about race and difference because there is so much in them about those topics

So as a black woman with both eyes open, I invite you to think through Shakespeare and race together. What new discussions and productions can we create if we allow Shakespeare AND race to occupy the same universe?? To borrow from Shakespeare and Prospero in The Tempest, I marvel, "Oh brave new world that has such people in 't!"

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**After Reading:****Reflection Round**

**Directions:** Reflect on your experience reading today using the following prompts:

- *I noticed...*
- *I discovered...*
- *I predict...*

## Day 4

**Learning Objective:** You will....

- Take a stand in the debate about whether *Othello* should be read and performed today by completing an evidence collection chart and writing an argumentative response.

**Agenda:**

1. Warm Up
2. Evidence Collection Chart
3. Culminating Question Response

**Tasks:**

- Quick Write
- Evidence Collection Chart
- Culminating Question Response

## Quick Write Warm Up

Directions: Answer the questions below to reflect on your learning.

Based on your work this week, what questions have been raised about race, identity and power? What new observations do you have? What commitments will you make to engage in this work moving forward? Explain in 7-10 sentences below.

**Evidence Collection Chart:**

**Culminating Question:** What is Willard White's perspective? Do you see this article in concert or in disagreement with Dr. Ayanna Thompson's position on Othello? What makes you say this?

**Directions:** Reread "All That Glisters is Not Gold" and "Willard White..." Use the space below to develop an evidence collection chart that best develops your thinking about the prompt above.





## *Othello*, Week 2 Reflection

### Process Reflection

What went well?	What challenges did you encounter?

### Learning Reflection

What did you learn from this Close Read?	How will you use what you've learned?