

## Sample Essay Questions

### Past Exam Questions:

(2015)

1. “Desdemona and Emilia are weak characters who fail to gain our sympathy.”  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view of Desdemona and Emilia?  
Support your answer with reference to the play, *Othello*.
2. “The values evident in *Othello* have a profound influence on the outcome of the play.”  
Discuss this view, supporting your answer with reference to at least two of the values evident in the text.

(2008)

1. “Othello’s foolishness rather than Iago’s cleverness leads to the tragedy of Shakespeare’s *Othello*.”  
Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with the aid of suitable reference to the text.
2. “Shakespeare’s play *Othello* demonstrates the weakness of human judgement.”  
Discuss this statement supporting your answer with the aid of suitable reference to the text.

(1998)

1. “Irony is a powerful dramatic device used by Shakespeare to heighten the tragic dimension of his play *Othello*.”  
Discuss this view, with reference to or quotation from the play.
2. “Despite the striking portrayals of goodness and nobility, the play *Othello* leaves the audience with a sense of dismal despair.”  
Discuss this view, with reference to or quotation from the play.

(1994)

1. “Othello is the principal agent of his own downfall.”  
Discuss this view, with reference to or quotation from the play.
2. Discuss the importance of the character Emilia (Iago’s wife) in the play as a whole.  
Discuss this view, with reference to or quotation from the play *Othello*.

(1990)

1. Othello is essentially a noble character, flawed by insecurity and a nature that is naive and sophisticated.  
Discuss this view, with reference to or quotation from the play.
2. "Images of animals, images of storms, and images of Heaven and Hell predominate in *Othello*."  
Discuss the use of such imagery and the purpose they serve in the play. Support your answer by reference or quotation.

### Other Sample Questions:

1. "Both Othello's heroic qualities and his flaws contribute to his demise."  
Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with the aid of suitable reference to the text.
2. "Shakespeare's *Othello* remains relevant for modern audiences."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
3. "The destructive power of jealousy is dramatically presented in Shakespeare's play *Othello*."  
Discuss this statement with reference to the play.
4. "The women in *Othello* are articulate, but frustratingly unable to save themselves from the cruelty of men."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
5. "Iago does not destroy Othello; he provokes Othello to destroy himself."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
6. "In *Othello*, Shakespeare takes a profoundly pessimistic view of human relationships."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
7. "The marriage between Othello and Desdemona was always doomed to fail."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
8. "Iago is the true hero of the play *Othello*."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.
9. "Shakespeare makes use of the characters of Othello and Iago, and Emilia and Desdemona as foils of one another to great dramatic effect."  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play.