

**DBE EXAMINATION: NSC / SCE ENGLISH HL PAPER 2 DRAMA**

**DBE/Feb.-Mar. 2018 NSC**

**OTHELLO - William Shakespeare**

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION**

**Othello is responsible for his own tragic fate.**

**Assess the validity of this statement.**

**Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400-450 words (2-2½ pages).**

Marking Guidelines

OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
  
- Despite Othello's many admirable qualities, he has serious insecurities that contribute to his tragic fate. His insecurities about his race, his age, his ignorance about Venetian society, especially Venetian women, surface only when his confidence in Desdemona's loyalty/faithfulness is undermined by Iago
- Othello allows himself to succumb to Iago's lies. He places his complete trust in Iago, allowing him to become his adviser and confidant, thereby compromising his integrity.
- Although Othello asks for 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's betrayal, he does not question the evidence when it is presented to him.
- Othello enters into an unholy alliance with Iago to kill both Cassio and Desdemona. This deliberate decision to commit murder compromises his morality and leads to his decision to execute justice on himself.
- He also agrees to Iago's suggestion that he eavesdrop on Iago and Cassio's conversation, not realising that Iago is deceiving him. His gullibility in this situation contributes to his downfall.
- Othello allows himself to be manipulated. Iago's suggestion of Desdemona's infidelity provides the excuse Othello needs to justify the destruction of the wife he believes cannot truly love him.
- Othello's low self-esteem, jealousy and pride make him determined to ensure that Desdemona pays dearly for her supposed transgression.

- Although Othello calls himself 'an honourable murderer', his actions in refusing Desdemona the chance to defend herself belie this claim.**
  
- Candidates might argue that, rather than Othello's being responsible for his own fate, it is Iago who is the cause of his downfall.**
  
- Iago plays on Othello's insecurities, poisoning his mind against his wife.**
  
- Othello has no reason to disbelieve or mistrust Iago, as Iago is perceived to be 'honest' by numerous characters in the play.**
  
- Iago is an excellent judge of character. He is opportunistic, cunning and evil, and the naïve and unsophisticated Othello stands no chance against Iago's devious machinations.**

**[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.]**

**[25]**



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OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

EMILIA

What handkerchief!

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,  
That which so often you did bid me steal.  
Hast stole it from her?

EMILIA

No, faith, she let it drop by negligence,  
And to the advantage, I being here took't up.  
Look, here it is.

5

IAGO

A good wench! Give it me

EMILIA

What will you do with it, that you have been  
So earnest to have me filch it?

10

IAGO

(Snatching it) Why, what is that to you?

EMILIA

If it be not for some purpose of import,  
Give't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad  
When she shall lack it.

IAGO

Be not you known on't, I have use for it.

15

Go, leave me.

*Emilia off*

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,  
And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmation strong  
As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.  
The Moor already changes with my poison.  
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,

20

Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
But, with a little act upon the blood, 25  
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so.

*Re-enter Othello*

Look where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep 30  
Which thou owest yesterday

OTHELLO

Ha, ha, false to me, to me? .

[Act 3, Scene 3]

- 13.1 Refer to lines 9–10: 'What will you .../'me filch it?'  
Explain how Iago intends to use Desdemona's handkerchief. (3)
- 13.2 Explain what this extract suggests about Iago's relationship with Emilia. (3)
- 13.3 Refer to line 22: 'The Moor already changes with my poison.'  
Comment on the accuracy of Iago's observation in the context of this extract. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

OTHELLO

Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil  
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

IAGO

Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.  
From this time forth I never will speak word.

LODOVICO

What, not to pray? 5

GRATIANO Torments will ope your lips.

OTHELLO

Well, thou dost best.

LODOVICO

Sir, you shall understand what hath befallen,  
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter  
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo, 10  
And here another. The one of them imports  
The death of Cassio, to be undertook  
By Roderigo.

OTHELLO

O villain!

CASSIO Most heathenish and most gross! 15

LODOVICO

Now here's another discontented paper

Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,

Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain,

But that, belike, Iago in the nick

Came in and satisfied him. 20

...

OTHELLO

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 them as they are. Nothing extenuate, 25

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; of one whose hand,

Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away 30

Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,

Albeit unused to the melting mood,

Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;

And say besides that in Aleppo once 35

Where a malignant and turbaned Turk

Beat a Venetian and traduced the State,

I took by the throat the circumcised dog -

And smote him thus.

*Othello stabs himself* 40

[Act 5, Scene 2]

- 13.4 Refer to lines 9-10: 'Here is a letter ...'/ 'Found in ... the slain Roderigo'.  
Account for Roderigo's involvement in Iago's plan. (3)
- 13.5 Refer to lines 3-4: 'Demand me nothing ...'/ 'will speak word.'  
Comment on the irony of Iago's words. (3)
- 13.6 Othello refers to Iago as a 'demi-devil' (line 1).  
In your opinion, is Othello's assessment of Iago's character justified?  
Motivate your response. (3)

**13.7 Refer to line 21-23: 'Soft you - a word .../'No more of that.'  
If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you  
instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Justify your instructions with reference  
to both body language and tone. (3)**

**13.8 Using this extract as a starting point and drawing on your knowledge of the  
play as a whole, critically comment on the nature of jealousy as presented in the  
play. (4)**

**[25]**

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Marking Guidelines

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 13.1 Iago intends to use the handkerchief as 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. He plans to place the handkerchief in Cassio's lodging, thereby implying that Desdemona gave it to Cassio as a token of her love. This will validate Iago's accusations and will motivate Othello to act against Desdemona and Cassio.
- [Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)
- 13.2 Iago is generally disrespectful and dismissive of Emilia. He does not take her into his confidence or allow her to question his actions. He is rude and bullying. He deliberately uses her as a tool to further his selfish plans.
- [Award 3 marks only if reference is made to this extract.] (3)
- 13.3 Iago's observation is accurate as Othello shows increasing signs of anguish. There is a clear sense of Othello's emotional breakdown. Earlier in the play, Othello refuses to believe that Desdemona could be unfaithful. At this point, his words indicate that he is coming closer to believing in her guilt.
- [Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)
- 13.4 Roderigo had wanted to marry Desdemona but had been unsuccessful. Iago promised to help Roderigo win Desdemona in return for Roderigo's help in bringing about Othello's downfall. He continues to help Iago because he is convinced that Iago will make good on his promise.
- [Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)
- 13.5 Throughout the play, Iago has been very adept at using words to persuade and manipulate. However, here he pledges to remain silent because he realises that nothing he says would be to his advantage and he is happy to thwart the process of justice. He is being spiteful.
- [Award 3 marks only if irony is discussed.] (3)

- 13.6 Yes. From the beginning of the play, Iago's intention has been to destroy Othello. He hates everything that is good, everything that has a 'daily beauty'. He does not believe in concepts such as love and virtue and seeks to destroy anything associated with these ideas. On a number of occasions, he also equates his actions with those of the devil.

OR

[A 'No' response is unlikely; however, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 13.7 Othello is appealing to Lodovico and the assembled company to listen to the reasons for his actions. There is an element of pride and condescension in his tone when he mentions his 'service' to the State. He might raise his hand to stave off being seized by the guards/extend his hand in appeal/point to himself to emphasise his words. His tone becomes dismissive as he comes to realise the insignificance of his past deeds.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)

- 13.8 Feelings of jealousy are displayed by various characters. In this extract, Othello indicates that he is not easily made jealous but once his jealousy is aroused, he is consumed by it. His insecurities and fears lead him to believe Iago's lies. Iago's jealousy is spurred on by his feelings of inadequacy as he feels that he can never be the equal of Cassio and Othello. Roderigo is jealous of Othello's having Desdemona as his wife. Ultimately, jealousy manifests in different ways but always results in destruction of self and others.

[Candidates may make reference to other examples.]

[Award 4 marks only if reference is made to this extract and the play as a whole.] (4)

[25]



**DBE EXAMINATION: NSC / SCE ENGLISH HL PAPER 2 DRAMA**

**OTHELLO - William Shakespeare**

**DBE/2018 SCE**

**QUESTION 22: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION**

**Othello's behaviour throughout the play has unintended consequences.  
Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.**

**Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). [25]**

Marking Guidelines

OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

QUESTION 22: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments. •
  - Candidates might argue that this statement is not entirely true and discuss how Othello's behaviour has either intended or unintended consequences or they might offer a mixed response.
  - When Othello marries Desdemona, he does not expect Brabantio's extreme opposition and prejudice. Brabantio's warning to Othello about Desdemona's betrayal is later exploited by Iago.
  - Othello does not expect Iago's resentment and jealousy when he appoints Cassio as his lieutenant. This spurs Iago's wrath and gives him reason to destroy Othello, Cassio and Desdemona.
  - In naively trusting Iago and placing Desdemona in his care, Othello unwittingly plays into Iago's hands, giving him the opportunity to advance his evil plan.
  - Othello's gullibility in believing Iago's insinuations about Cassio and Desdemona makes him more inclined to trust Iago, rather than Desdemona and Cassio.
  - Desdemona's love is so essential to Othello that her assumed betrayal leads to his uncontrollable jealousy and ultimately destroys his and others' lives. Othello allows his insecurities and emotions to overwhelm his reason.
  - Othello's response to the brawl shows Iago how quickly Othello becomes angry and loses control. Othello's dismissing Cassio and appointing Iago as lieutenant, places Iago in a better position to influence and manipulate him.
  - Othello's demanding 'ocular proof' gives Iago the opportunity to strengthen his hold over Othello. This has the unintended consequence of Iago's having to adapt his plan to ensure the deaths of anyone who might expose his machinations.
  - Othello's fit prevents him from directly confronting Cassio, and gives Iago complete mastery over him, resulting in the unholy alliance to commit murder.
  - Othello's eavesdropping strengthens his belief in Desdemona's infidelity. His integrity is called into question and leads to the diminishing of his noble character. Othello's striking of Desdemona leads to his losing the respect of those who previously admired him.

- Othello's behaviour has consequences for others, such as Desdemona's acting out of character by lying about the handkerchief. This hardens Othello's suspicions against her.
- Candidates might argue that toward the end of the play, Othello is very clear in his intention to mete out justice.
- Othello's military background influences his decision to become Desdemona's judge and executioner and to justify himself as an 'honourable murderer'.
- When Othello realises the truth about Desdemona's innocence, he cannot live with his conscience and executes himself.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[25]

## OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

## QUESTION 23: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

## EXTRACT M

**IAGO**

You, Roderigo? Come, sir, I am for you.

**OTHELLO**

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

Good signior, you shall more command with years

Than with your weapons.

**BRABANTIO**

O thou foul thief! Where hast thou stowed my daughter? 5

Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

(If she in chains of magic were not bound)

Whether a maid, so tender, fair, and happy, 10

So opposite to marriage that she shunned

The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,

Would ever have, to incur a general mock,

Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom

Of such a thing as thou - to fear, not to delight. 15

Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,

That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,

Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals

That weakens motion: I'll have't disputed on;

'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.

I therefore apprehend and do attach thee 20

For an abuser of the world, a practiser

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,

Subdue him at his peril.

...

**OTHELLO**

Where will you that I go 25

To answer this your charge?

**BRABANTIO**

To prison, till fit time  
Of law and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

**OTHELLO**

What if I do obey? 30  
How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,  
Whose messengers are here about my side  
Upon some present business of the State  
To bring me to him?

[Act 1, Scene 2]

- 23.1 Refer to line 1: 'Come, sir, I am for you.'  
Account for Iago's attack on Roderigo. (3)
- 23.2 Refer to lines 32–33: 'Whose messengers are ... of the State'.  
Explain Othello's role in the 'present business of the State'. (3)
- 23.3 Refer to lines 2–4: 'Keep up your ... with your weapons.'  
Suggest how your impression of Othello in these lines differs from the  
impression Brabantio creates of Othello. (3)
- 23.4 Refer to lines 10–11: 'So opposite to marriage that she shunned/The wealthy  
curled darlings of our nation'.  
Based on your knowledge of the play as a whole, discuss how these lines  
contribute to your understanding of Desdemona's character. (3)

AND

EXTRACT N

**OTHELLO**

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,  
If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

**IAGO**

I do beseech you 5  
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,  
(As I confess it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not) I entreat you then,  
From one that so imperfectly conjects,

<p>Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  Out of my scattering and unsure observance.  It were not for your quiet nor your good,  Nor for my manhood, honesty or wisdom,  To let you know my thoughts  OTHELLO</p>	10
<p style="text-align: center;">Zounds!</p>	15
<p>IAGO  Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  Is the immediate jewel of their souls.  Who steals my purse, steals trash: 'tis something, nothing;  'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.  But he that filches from me my good name  Robs me of that which not enriches him  And makes me poor indeed.  OTHELLO</p>	20
<p>By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.</p>	
<p>IAGO  You cannot, if my heart were in your hand,  Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.  OTHELLO Ha!</p>	25
<p>IAGO  O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!  It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss  Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger.  But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er  Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!  OTHELLO  O misery!</p>	30
	[Act 3, Scene 3]

- 23.5 Refer to lines 1-3: 'Thou dost conspire ... to thy thoughts.'  
Account for Othello's belief that Iago is not being honest with him. (3)
- 23.6 Refer to lines 8-11: 'I entreat you... and unsure observance.'  
Discuss the irony in these lines in the context of the play. (3)
- 23.7 Refer to lines 16-19: 'Good name in man ... slave to thousands.'  
If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay specific attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. (3)
- 23.8 Othello's jealousy plays a significant role in the tragedy of the play.

**Do you agree with this statement? Justify your response.**

**(4)**

**[25]**

## Marking Guidelines

## QUESTION 23: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 23.1 Iago pretends to attack Roderigo to make an outward show of his loyalty to and support for Othello. Earlier he mentions that he 'must show out a flag and sign of love' in order to win Othello's trust. This action will later intensify Othello's belief in Iago's integrity.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 23.2 The Venetian State is preparing for war against the Turks. As general of the Venetian army, Othello has been urgently called to the Senate to take charge of the defence of Cyprus.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 23.3 In this extract, Othello is calm, controlled, formal and courteous. He is sophisticated, well-spoken and respectful toward Brabantio.

Earlier, Brabantio has insulted Othello by suggesting that, because Othello is black, he is not deserving of his daughter. Brabantio accuses Othello of being a thief and a practitioner of black magic. The impression Brabantio has created is that Othello is sly and immoral.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 23.4 Desdemona is opposed to being married off to someone not of her choice. She is unafraid of challenging the conventions of her society. Her rejection of many suitors demonstrates her independence. When she falls in love with Othello, she is prepared to defend her choice by standing up to her father and the Duke. Desdemona proves to be courageous, proud and confident.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 23.5 Othello believes Iago is withholding information about Cassio's honesty. He gains this impression because Iago is not being frank with him. Iago has made insinuations which he does not support. He uses innuendo and generalisations to make Othello suspicious of Cassio.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 23.6 Iago pleads with Othello not to take notice of his vague suspicions. He creates the impression that he is merely speculating as to the nature of Desdemona and Cassio's relationship. Iago maintains that he does not want Othello to be concerned about something that might not transpire. However, he is insincere and merely intent on furthering his own plan to ensure Othello's destruction. It is ironic that he appears to set Othello's mind at ease yet it is part of his plan to increase Othello's suspicions and create chaos.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is well discussed.] (3)

23.7 Iago might move close to Othello and might clench his fist and tap his chest when referring to the soul. He might move away from Othello but then come back immediately and make direct eye contact with him when delivering the last three lines. He might put his arm around Othello or clasp his shoulder to create an impression of camaraderie.

Iago's tone would be persuasive/adamant/concerned/apparently sincere. He is trying to convince Othello that one's reputation is extremely important, suggesting that Cassio is attempting to tarnish Othello's good name.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a justification.]

(3)

23.8 AGREE

Othello's love for Desdemona makes him vulnerable and is the reason why he acts rashly. In addition, he feels inadequate because Cassio is younger and he and Desdemona share similar backgrounds. Othello becomes irrational and allows his jealousy to override his reason. He fails to consider Desdemona's innocence. Iago's crude innuendos about Desdemona and Cassio's affair, added to the 'ocular proof', drive Othello to jealousy. He is determined to see justice done by sacrificing Desdemona and having Cassio killed. A further tragedy is that, when he realises that he has wrongly killed Desdemona, he kills himself.

OR

DISAGREE

Candidates might argue that, although Othello's jealousy is pivotal to the tragedy, there are other characters/factors that contribute to the tragedy.

Iago's jealousy is aggravated by his suspicion that both Othello and Cassio have had an affair with his wife, Emilia. Despite having no proof, he seeks revenge for this and other perceived wrongs. His jealousy proves to be monstrous because in the process of destroying Othello and Cassio, he destroys others.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.]

(4)

[25]



**OTHELLO - William Shakespeare**

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION**

**Desdemona and Emilia contradict the idea that Venetian women are submissive and immoral.**

**Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.**

**Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).**

Marking Guidelines

OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO - ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments. •
- Venetian women are subject to a patriarchal society and are expected to be submissive. At times, Desdemona and Emilia adhere to the stereotype, while at other times they challenge their society. The perception of women as sexually immoral does not apply to Emilia and Desdemona.
- Brabantio expects Desdemona to be dutiful and obedient. However, she defies him by eloping with Othello.
- Roderigo regards Desdemona as a prize; as someone whose affections can be bought. Desdemona contradicts his view of women by rejecting him and the wealthy Venetian suitors, instead marrying for love.
- Iago objectifies women of Desdemona's class as a means of improving one's status. He is a misogynist with no respect for women. As Iago's unwitting tools in his plan for revenge, Desdemona and Emilia passively accept his requests and advice. However, they both ultimately prove that he under-estimates women.
- Initially, it is Desdemona's strength of character that Othello admires; he regards her as an equal. However, Othello's perception of Desdemona and women in general is altered as a result of Iago's manipulation and deception, and his (Othello's) jealousy. He now sees both Desdemona and Emilia as immoral.
- At the beginning of the play, Desdemona is strong and determined. She asserts herself with her father and at the Venetian Senate by courageously choosing Othello. She stubbornly disregards Othello's wishes that she not pursue the matter of Cassio's reinstatement. •
- Desdemona defiantly lies about the whereabouts of the handkerchief, thus reinforcing Othello's belief in her immorality.
- Later, Desdemona appears passive and submissive, even blaming herself for Othello's unjust behaviour toward her. Despite Othello's public display of violence against her, she is dignified and justifies Othello's altered behaviour as his being stressed by 'matters of state'. She feels that she has accused him unfairly. Her conversation with Emilia about men's insensitive treatment of women contradicts the stereotype that all women are immoral. She cannot even bring herself to say the words, let alone commit adultery. Desdemona remains devoted and loyal to Othello, even defending him on her deathbed.

- Emilia reveals her non-traditional views on marriage and gives Desdemona worldly advice. Despite her inadvertently betraying Desdemona by giving Iago the handkerchief, she is courageous when she exposes Iago by speaking against him, thus proving her loyalty to Desdemona. She clearly displays the characteristics of a strong-minded woman by exposing her husband and denouncing Othello.
- Candidates might refer to the men's perception of Venetian women as adulterers. However, both Desdemona and Emilia contradict this view as they are loyal to their husbands.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[25]

OTHELLO - William Shakespeare

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

DUKE

I think this tale would win my daughter too ...

Good Brabantio,

Take up this mangled matter at the best.

Men do their broken weapons rather use

Than their bare hands.

5

BRABANTIO

I pray you hear her speak.

If she confess that she was half the wooer,

Destruction light on me if my bad blame

Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress.

Do you perceive in all this company

10

Where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA

My noble father,

I do perceive here a divided duty.

To you I am bound for life and education.

My life and education both do learn me

15

How to respect you. You are lord of all my duty;

I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,

And so much duty as my mother showed

To you, preferring you before her father,

So much I challenge that I may profess

20

Due to the Moor, my lord.

BRABANTIO

God bu'y! I ha' done.

Please it your Grace, on to the state affairs.

I had rather to adopt a child than get it.

Come hither, Moor.

25

I here do give thee that with all my heart

Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart

I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,

I am glad at soul I have no other child,

For thy escape would teach me tyranny

30

To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord

**DUKE** The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a more sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you 35.  
You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

[Act 1, Scene 3]

- 13.1 Account for Brabantio's approaching the Duke and the Senate on the issue of Desdemona's marriage. (3)
- 13.2 Refer to lines 1-3: 'I think this ... at the best.'  
Explain what has prompted the Duke's response in these lines. (3)
- 13.3 Refer to lines 7-11: 'If she confess ... you owe obedience?'  
Discuss the accuracy of Brabantio's perception of Desdemona. (3)
- 13.4 Refer to lines 32-37: 'The Turk with ... and boisterous expedition.'  
In the light of later events, comment on how Othello compromises his reputation. (3)

AND

## EXTRACT H

OTHELLO

O monstrous, monstrous!

IAGO

Nay, this was but his dream.

OTHELLO

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

IAGO'

Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream:

And this may help to thicken other proofs

5

That do demonstrate thinly.

OTHELLO

I'll tear her all to pieces!

IAGO

Nay, but be wise. Yet we see nothing done;

She may be honest yet. Tell me but this.

Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,

10

Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?

OTHELLO

I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

IAGO

I know not that, but such a handkerchief

(I am sure it was your wife's) did I today

See Cassio wipe his beard with.

15

OTHELLO

If it be that-

IAGO

If it be that, or any that was hers,

It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

OTHELLO

O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!

20

One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.

Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago-

All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven ...

'Tis gone.

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!

25

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne

To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,

For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

IAGO

Pray be content.

OTHELLO O,

blood, Iago, blood!

30

IAGO

Patience, I say. Your mind perhaps may change.

- 13.5 Refer to lines 10-15: 'Have you not ... his beard with.'**  
**Account for Iago's deliberate mention of the handkerchief at this point in the play.** (3)
- 13.6 Refer to line 1: 'O monstrous, monstrous!'**  
**If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay special attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions.** (3)
- 13.7 Refer to line 30: 'Patience, I say. Your mind perhaps may change.'**  
**Explain the irony of Iago's advice in the above line.** (3)
- 13.8 Iago's treachery is a sign of cowardice.**  
**Critically comment on the extent to which you agree with this statement** (4)
- [25]

Marking Guidelines

**QUESTION 13: OTHELLO - CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

**13.1 Brabantio believes Othello has bewitched and thus coerced Desdemona into marriage. Despite this being a private matter, Brabantio appeals to the authorities because he wants Othello to be punished. Brabantio also wants the marriage to be annulled. His sense of entitlement causes him to believe the Senate and the Duke will be sympathetic to his appeal.**

**[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)**

**13.2 The Duke is moved by Othello's account of how he and Desdemona fell in love, leading to their marriage. He refutes Brabantio's allegations of kidnapping and witchcraft. The Duke advises Brabantio to make the best of the situation and to come to terms with it. Also, he does not want to lose Othello's services as the general of the Venetian army.**

**[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)**

**13.3 Brabantio believes Desdemona to be obedient, submissive and timid. He cannot conceive of her voluntarily marrying Othello. This perception is inaccurate because Desdemona has been a willing participant in the relationship, encouraging Othello's advances. She does not refute Othello's version of her involvement in the courtship and readily shows her allegiance to Othello as her husband.**

**[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)**

**13.4 Othello is respected as the general of the Venetian army and is trusted to protect and defend Cyprus from the Turks. The Duke expects him to put his duty before his personal life. However, Othello becomes so enraged and consumed with jealousy when he believes that Desdemona has betrayed him, that his duty becomes secondary. Instead of ruling rationally and honourably, he and Iago plot the deaths of Cassio and Desdemona. Othello is supposed to be in Cyprus to uphold law and order; however, he compromises his honour and duty as governor by subverting justice.**

**[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)**

- 13.5 Iago has implied that Desdemona has been unfaithful with Cassio. Othello has demanded 'ocular proof' of the adultery. Iago mentions the incriminating 'ocular' proof - the handkerchief - which he says he has seen in Cassio's possession. This reference to the handkerchief (Othello's love token for Desdemona) will encourage Othello's desire for revenge, which is exactly what Iago intends to achieve.**

**Candidates might refer to Cassio's demeaning use of Othello's love token, which would enrage Othello even further.**

**[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)**

- 13.6 Othello might fall to his knees with clenched fists raised above his head or hit/bang his chest. He might clench his teeth or block his ears; his eyes might be tightly shut to indicate his anguish at the graphic description of Cassio and Desdemona's making love. Othello might cry out with a pained/anguished/ tormented/angry/horrified tone because he feels betrayed by Desdemona and his trusted friend.**

**[Accept valid alternative responses.]**

**[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]**

**[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)**

- 13.7 Iago apparently wants to pacify Othello by implying that when Othello later views the situation, he might change his mind and not desire Desdemona's and Cassio's deaths. However, it is actually part of Iago's plan to drive Othello to a state of madness. Iago's insinuations and lies have affected Othello so intensely that he has become obsessed with revenge and is unable to think objectively. Although Iago is cautioning Othello not to be rash in his desire for vengeance, it is Iago who has brought Othello to this irrational state.**

**[Award 3 marks only if irony is fully discussed.] (3)**

### 13.8 AGREE

The way Iago deals with his jealousy of and hatred for Othello and Cassio is cowardly. Instead of confronting them directly, he uses others to carry out his treacherous plans. His innuendos to Othello about the alleged affair are underhand and cowardly. He pretends to be loyal and Othello's trusted adviser; however, his intention is to deceive and destroy. He blackens the reputations of Cassio and Othello. When Iago does act, it is in a very cowardly manner. Iago stabs a wounded Roderigo in the dark and Emilia from behind to silence her. Iago uses chaos and confusion to hide his treachery and to call into question the actions of others. His silence when he is exposed further establishes his cowardice.

OR

### DISAGREE

Candidates might argue that, rather than cowardice, Iago's treachery is a sign of his cunning and deviousness. Iago's appearance of being honourable, innocent and trustworthy is part of his treacherous plan to destroy his enemies. Iago is a clever, opportunistic man who is calculating in the manner in which he achieves his goals.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR four ideas.] (4)

[25]