

***Writing With Shakespeare***  
***Othello* essay prompt**

“Pre-writing” stage:

Having read and analyzed your assigned essay on *Othello*—and also having “performed” as its author—you are familiar with what that piece of scholarship says. You could, in other words, paraphrase it. (If this is not true, it is time to re-read the essay again, with your text of *Othello* in hand, and perhaps your dictionary nearby, so you feel confident that you do know the author’s main points, observations, and lines of thought.)

Now that you have sympathetically read and articulated the gist of this article, you are ready to perform a critique as “yourself”:

- What are the author’s most compelling arguments or observations?
- What evidence supports these claims?
- Can you think of counterarguments or other evidence drawn from the text of *Othello*, or from watching the VITAL performance versions, that might complicate the author’s claims?
- Can you think of further supporting evidence from those texts?
- What is missing from the analysis?

Gather your thoughts, make whatever notes help you organize them, and get ready to write your essay.

*Written Assignment:*

Compose a **thesis-driven essay** based on your critique of the scholarly article, using your close analysis of it and *Othello* to support your claims. Focus on the most interesting or salient aspects of the article so that we know you have given the author a fair, careful reading, but do not hesitate to disagree or criticize on the basis of your own thinking and the evidence at hand. Make sure your quotations are compelling, and all citations are marked as such. Edit your essay for sound and syntax as well as logic and argument, and then proofread it once more.

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21L.010 / 21W.734J Writing with Shakespeare  
Fall 2010

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