



Modernizing Shakespeare: Finding Contemporary Themes from Othello

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This unit's ultimate purpose is to teach research skills, and is intended for tenth graders. The selections used to meet this purpose are Shakespeare's *Othello* and adaptations of this play. In fact, a portion of this unit's focus is *adaptation* itself. Students will realize that Shakespeare's play is actually an adaptation of an Italian writer's short story. The play, *Othello*, is used as a backdrop for the lessons herein and the unit uses the themes from this play to hook students prior to reading Shakespearean language. The unit uses film to engage students as well as to provide a basis for the questioning strategies. These concepts and theories can be used to teach film, adaptation, Shakespeare plays, and research skills. In this unit, my students look at modern film to see that Shakespeare's themes can be applied to their own lives and situations. They also see that Shakespeare adapted his work from another writer's. And, finally, they use this background knowledge about the power of adaptation and the influence of Shakespeare to research other adaptations of *Othello* and write a documented research report about an adaptation they've found on their own.

(Developed for English, grade 10; recommended for English, grades 9-12)

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