

***Othello***  
**Act I Study Questions**

**scene i**

1. Often in plays, the setting is not just “where the story happens,” but includes the geographical, historical, social, economic, or philosophical setting. Explain the type of setting that Shakespeare establishes at the beginning of the play. What does the setting convey to the audience?
2. How does Iago believe that people are promoted within the ranks? What effect does his commentary have on the audience?
3. What does the audience learn about the relationship between Roderigo and Iago? How does Iago manipulate Roderigo?
4. Shakespeare begins the play with two secret acts. Explain each deception and the effect that these deceptions have on the tone of the play.
5. Make a list of the images that Shakespeare uses to describe Othello. What do the images suggest about Othello?
6. Using examples from the play, illustrate how Brabantio’s attitude toward Roderigo changes throughout the first act. Why do you think that Brabantio’s attitude changes?

**scene ii**

1. Explain the irony in Iago’s discussion with Othello after Iago has just left Roderigo at Brabantio’s house.
2. Explain the confusion when Iago and Othello see men approaching Othello’s home. What do we learn about the men’s characters in this conflict?
3. Why is Iago unwilling to be present when he is talking about Othello’s marriage to Desdemona? Cite two instances where Iago avoids being involved.
4. How does Othello contradict the image that Iago has portrayed of him to the audience?

**scene iii**

1. Explain the parallels and symbolism between the distraction of the Turks approaching Venice and Iago’s deceptions.
2. Explain the difference in tone between these two references to Othello:

**RODERIGO:** To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor—(I.i.137)

**FIRST SENATOR:** Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor. (I.iii.53)