

Preparing for Othello: Frontloading Meaning (Part 2)

Pre-Reading strategies

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	2- class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	90 minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, British Literature, World Literature		

Essential Question

(Why) Is it important to think about a selection before reading it? How is reading a Shakespeare tragedy an active process/activity that starts before you turn to the first page of the play?

Summary

This two-part lesson includes a variety of pre-reading activities to prepare students to actively read Shakespeare's tragedy, "Othello." Part 2 of this lesson involves predicting characters, settings, problems, and outcomes of the play. Moreover, students decide what else they would like to discover as they read. In this lesson, students also get a glimpse of selected lines/excerpts from the play itself, working collaboratively to create "we think" statements about various facets of the tragedy. Finally, students reflect both on what they learned about Shakespeare and "Othello" as well as if and how the pre-reading activities during this two-part lesson were helpful. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 10th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 9th through 12th, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students refer to and further consider their previous reflections in preparation for part two of the pre-reading lesson.

Explore

Using the "Probable Passage" handout, groups of students consider and predict characters, settings, problems, and outcomes of "Othello."

Explain

A whole-class discussion centers on framing the play, especially focusing on characters, settings, and problems. Unknown words are discussed, but outcomes are left open-ended.

Extend

Students participate in a Tea Party activity as they read and discuss excerpts from the text. Groups of students create "we think" statements based on their conversations.

Evaluate

In consideration of the multiple pre-reading activities, students complete a 3-2-1 reflection with a dual purpose: to consider what they've learned about Shakespeare and "Othello" and also to reflect on if/why pre-reading strategies are important and useful. This transitions them into the actual reading of the text.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.1.S.2: Follow agreed-upon rules as they engage in collaborative discussions about what they are reading and writing, expressing their own ideas clearly, building on the ideas of others, and respectfully disagreeing when necessary in pairs, diverse groups, and whole-class settings.
9.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

9.3.R.4: Evaluate how literary devices impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance)
- irony (i.e., verbal, situational, dramatic)

9.8.W: Write independently using print, cursive, and/or typing for various lengths of time, intentionally selecting and combining modes and genres to suit their audiences and purposes.

Attachments

- Probable Passage—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2 - Spanish.docx
- Probable Passage—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2 - Spanish.pdf
- Probable Passage—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2.docx
- Probable Passage—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2.pdf
- Tea Party—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2 - Spanish.docx
- Tea Party—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2 - Spanish.pdf
- Tea Party—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2.docx
- Tea Party—Preparing for Othello - Frontloading Meaning, Part 2.pdf

Materials

- Parking Lot Post-its from the previous pre-reading lesson
- Copies of "Probable Passage" handout (one for each student)
- Index card with lines from "Othello" (see "Tea Party" attachment)
- Writing materials: paper, pens, pencils, etc.

Engage

As students enter the classroom, ask them to choose one Post-it note randomly from each section of the previous lesson's Parking Lot addressing either Shakespeare or "Othello."

Ask students to first read each Post-it note and then compose a brief written response/reaction on the back of the Post-it.

Encourage students to pair up with an elbow partner to share their Post-its and reactions.

Ask the whole class for a few volunteers to share out. Ask students if anyone would like to share any insights from their own or others' Post-its from the previous activity. Allow students to share with the whole class.

You might prompt students by revisiting the essential questions: *(Why) Is it important to think about a selection before reading it? How is reading a Shakespeare tragedy an active process/activity that starts before you turn to the first page of the play?* Encourage students to keep these questions in mind throughout the remainder of the lesson.

Teacher's Note

Reflection is a key component of learning—especially before, during, and after reading. Students, in this case, are reflecting on what they have learned so far and what they hope to learn in the future. This metacognitive act is helpful for students to not only consider what but also how they learn.

Explore

Students will now explore characters, settings, conflicts, resolutions, and vocabulary from the play in a Probable Passage pre-reading activity. To begin this portion of the lesson, distribute a copy of the "Probable Passage" handout to each student.

Then, write the following words on the board:

- Handkerchief
- Venice
- General
- Moor
- Cyprus
- Plan
- Jealousy
- Love
- Death
- Infidelity
- Wife
- Epilepsy
- Truth
- Soliloquy

Teacher's Note

To save time, write these words on the board before your day starts. They will be ready and waiting for students!

Place students into groups of three or four. Ask them to begin putting words into the correct boxes on the handout. Assert that only the words they don't know should go in the "Unknown Words" box. Be sure, too, that students understand that a word goes in only one box—once they've put it somewhere, it can't go anywhere else. Encourage students to focus just on the boxes initially; they will fill out the gist statement after they've placed all of the words.

Encourage students to look for causal relationships, make comparisons and inferences, and reach conclusions as they work collaboratively. Float the room and assist students/groups as needed.

Teacher's Note

It might be beneficial to model this strategy initially. You could pull up a copy of the handout on the board and place a few words in boxes, thinking aloud as you go. Especially if this is the first time students have engaged in this activity, you will want to demonstrate how the process works before asking students to complete this assignment.

Explain

Students will now share out with the whole class what they came up with during the Probable Passage activity.

Go from group to group, asking students to share one word, where they placed it, and most importantly, WHY they placed it there, explaining their group's rationale.

Groups might certainly disagree, so be certain all voices are heard.

If you have a Smart board, you could fill out a whole-class chart (using different colors for different groups) as students share out. Alternatively, you could recreate the Probable Passage template on the board and fill it out as students share.

The goal is not necessarily to come to a class consensus, but do encourage students to revise their work as they hear others share.

At this point, students should also write a gist statement about the play as a whole.

Optional Differentiation

Students can write a simple gist statement using one or more of the words (except the unknown words). For a challenge, ask students to use ALL of the words they fit in boxes in their gist statement. If groups struggle, the class can collaborate to write a gist statement together. Be sure to take the temperature of your class/students before completing the gist statement.

Finally, students should complete the "To discover . . ." section. Ask students to think through all the things they want to discover as they read the play. Encourage students to be specific; "What happened?" is too broad. On the other hand, "Might jealousy result in death?" is more specific and appropriate for this activity. Groups should come up with at least three questions for the "To discover . . ." section.

Extend

To extend from Probable Passage, students will now work with excerpts of the play itself as they participate in an activity called Tea Party. The Tea Party activity (envisioned by Sue Perona, as discussed by Kyleene Beers) allows students to consider parts of the text before they actually read it—in this case, relevant lines from Othello.

Through active participation, students can predict what might happen next as they infer, see causal relationships, compare and contrast, sequence, and refer to their prior experiences.

Teacher's Note

See attached "Tea Party" handout. These cards can be cut out and randomly distributed to students.

Students will receive an index card with a phrase or line from the play.

For around 5-10 minutes, students will move around the room, sharing their cards and discussing with others what the text might be about. Students should also discuss if and how these portions of the play relate to their current lives or prior knowledge and experiences. Students should attempt to visit with as many of their peers as possible.

Here's a detailed, step-by-step explanation of how this activity works:

- Give each student an index card.
- Ask everyone to get up and move around from student to student.
- Students share their cards with as many classmates as possible.
- Students listen to one another as they read their cards.
- Students discuss how these cards might be related.
- Students speculate on what these cards, collectively, might be about.

Students will then form a small group (around five people) to discuss what might be happening in the play.

Each group will create a "we think" paragraph that details what they think the play will be about. Their paragraph should begin with "We think that this selection is about . . ." Students should be encouraged to provide evidence to explain why they think the way they do.

"We think" paragraphs will be shared out with the whole class. Encourage students to consider how others groups' responses are similar to and different from their own.

These paragraphs should be saved so students can reference them later.

Evaluate

Ask students to complete a 3-2-1 exit ticket at the end of the lesson. 3-2-1 is a strategy which provides a structure for students to reflect on their learning. Through this strategy students respond to three questions that guide students to reflect on their learning experience and the content learned. The strategy 3-2-1 works well as an exit ticket and allows the teacher to formatively assess student understanding.

Here's how 3-2-1 works in this particular situation:

On a blank piece of paper, students should respond to the following questions:

- What are three things you learned about Shakespeare, "Othello," and pre-reading strategies?
- What are two questions you still have about the play?
- What is one thing you found interesting about our activities?

Teacher's Note

For a further challenge, you can pose the essential questions as part of this reflective exit ticket: *(Why) Is it important to think about a selection before reading it? How is reading a Shakespeare tragedy an active process/activity that starts before you turn to the first page of the play?*

Allow students a few minutes to write down their responses. Collect this information from students and provide brief feedback as soon as possible so students can use this information as they read.

Students should now be ready to read the play. Be on the lookout for future lessons that take students through during and after reading strategies!

Resources

- Tea Party and Probable Passages Instructional Strategies: Beers, K. (2003). When kids can't read, what teachers can do: A guide for teachers 6-12. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 3-2-1. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5059a7b