

# 1 - THE SETUP

What kind of relationship do Iago and Roderigo have?

## WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#) and watch [this clip](#).
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, to read either on the page or onscreen.

## ACTIVITY

- Watch the excerpt of Act 1 Scene 1 being performed by RSC actors on stage [here](#).
- As you watch, write down any words that stand out or that you find interesting. These might not be words that you understand in context just yet.
- Based on the words you wrote down, complete the following sentence: "I think *Othello* will be a play about..."
- Now visit [this page](#) on the RSC Learning Zone. Click 'Read the Scene and Explore.' You can click on the highlighted text to familiarise yourself further.
- Read the whole scene from Line 1 to Line 82 (Brabantio's entrance). Ask yourself: what is the relationship like between Roderigo and Iago? Who has control, or the upper hand? Does one character lead, and the other follow? Does this ever change? Think about why this might be.
- Shakespeare opens the play without the title character Othello; instead, we hear him being talked about by Iago and Roderigo. Why has the playwright chosen to do this?
- Think again on the sentence "I think *Othello* will be a play about...". Has your definition changed?

## EXTENSION

- The scene begins with Iago and Roderigo in mid-conversation. Speculate what Iago may have said to Roderigo for him to reply '*Tush, never tell me! ...*' Write the conversation that went before in your own words.