

# 15 - POWER AND STATUS

## Who has the power?

### WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to watch [this clip](#).
- A mirror and a camera.
- A copy of Act 3 Scene 3 to read either on the page or onscreen.

### ACTIVITY

- Stand in front of the mirror pretending to be a character with extremely high power, or high social status. Take a photo. Then do the same exercise for a person with very low status.
- Look at the photos side-by-side: what do you notice? What have you instinctively chosen to do with your body? Look out for things like the body language, facial expression, arm and hand positions. Write some notes explaining what you notice.
- It may seem obvious from looking at these two photos, but sometimes when reading or studying a play we can forget that interactions between the characters (and therefore some of the story) can also be communicated by just looks or movement in live performance. Communication is not solely restricted to the choice of words spoken. It is an actor's job to interpret the language written in the text, and characterise the complex goings-on of human behaviour.
- Take Act 3 Scene 3 as an example: a scene where Iago is employing every trick he can muster to falsely convince Othello of his wife's dishonesty. Load [this video](#), which shows this scene in performance.
- **Don't allow the video to play.** Instead, click along the timeline every 30 seconds. At each freeze-frame write down observations about the positions of the two actors on stage in relation to each other, and their body language. What story does this tell?
- Go back to the text and pick out some key quotes where you feel there is a POWER SHIFT (i.e. a moment when Othello pulls rank against Iago, or Iago successfully gets Othello's attention.)

### EXTENSION

- Compare the conversations between Othello and Desdemona in Act 3 Scene 3, before and after this conversation with Iago.
- Think about it in terms of body language and status. How might you notice the difference before and after? Draw a sketch of the two characters at the beginning of Act 3 Scene 3, and again at the end.