

# 8 - OTHELLO'S STORY

How does Othello use words to convince the court?

## WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 3, to read either on the page or onscreen.

## ACTIVITY

- Read aloud Othello's speech beginning '*Most grave potent signiors*' (Act 1 Scene 3, ~Line 76). Write down on a separate piece of paper any words or phrases that stand out to you. These could be those you don't understand.
- Write your answer to the question: '*What is Othello's main aim?*'
- Go back to the speech and underline or highlight any part of the text where you think Othello is succeeding at 'winning round' his audience. This could be the use of a particular word, or a tactic he employs (e.g. flattery). Do you think his language is successful?
- Research the term 'Rhetoric' - or watch this [short video](#) of RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran explaining what rhetoric is.
- Using highlighters, go back to the speech and pick out any examples of rhetoric in action. Notice if certain moments match with your underlined text from the exercise above.
- Othello is the tragic hero in our play. Having read the whole of this scene, now analyse what your opinion of the character is now. Has **your** opinion changed?
- Find 2-3 quotes that are perfect examples of Othello in this scene.

## EXTENSION

- Read Othello's speech '*Her father lov'd me, oft invited me*'. (~Line 128)
- Track Othello's story beat-by-beat, up to this point, and then re-write the story from Desdemona's point of view. How do their journeys and reactions to events differ?