

9 - DESDEMONA AND 'DUTY'

What is the role of Desdemona in this world?

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 3 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- From the work we have done so far, we realise we have been told a lot about Desdemona by *report*.
- Consider if we know any **FACTS** about Desdemona. If we are seeing the play for the first time, think of **OPINIONS** you have of her from what we have learnt up to this point. What type of person do we anticipate?
- Familiarise yourself again with Act 1 Scene 3, and the moment of Desdemona's first entrance. (See Activity 8).
- Here Desdemona speaks of 'divided duty'. Duty is a broad term that can be applied to many areas of life. e.g. military duty, filial duty etc. Think about the role of women in this society and how this definition of 'duty' may contrast depending on gender.
- Answer the question: Does Desdemona believe what she says to her father in front of the court?
- Go to the Character Analysis page for Desdemona on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Work through the activity 'Why does Desdemona love Othello?'

EXTENSION

- Watch the Trailer for the 2015 production [here](#).
- What is Desdemona's role here? Think about the creative decisions for this piece. Does it highlight the drama and issues of the play in a minute? Watching this trailer, what do you think the issues and key events are?