

English 11/AP English Language and Composition
Othello presentations
Due: Thursday 17 May

For your topic presentation, you are to, in a reasonably polished way, give us background information about the text. Here are six topics, so you can work in groups of three:

1. Elizabethan/Jacobean plays. With the death of Elizabeth in 1603, there is a change in tone in English culture, along with political changes and changes in other aspects of daily life. With the ascension of James VI of Scotland (who becomes James I of England), we follow these changes. What are the impacts of these shifts on English drama? Into what context is *Othello* written? What are the fundamental characteristics of Elizabethan drama in contrast to those of Jacobean drama?
2. The Globe and Shakespeare's audience. Explain the fundamental set-up of the Globe Theatre (consider a model or several photos), the three primary audiences of Shakespeare's plays, and how the plays themselves reflect this consciousness of audience in the texts themselves.
3. Publication and textual sources of the plays. Where does the text we read come from? Explore the different versions, their sources, their credibility and the decisions editors make in coming up with our text. There is a note in the text about its source, but more is discoverable about the First Folio and other textual sources.
4. The authorship question. Who wrote the plays? Most English teachers regard this question as beside the point; do you? What difference does the authorship question make? First, explore the outlines of this question in the general scholarship, then, if you like, interview Mr. J. McPherson about his views.
5. Sources of the *Othello* story. Shakespeare often sources his works in previous stories. What are the stories behind *Othello*? How does Shakespeare alter the stories for his own dramatic purposes? For his own rhetorical/political purposes?
6. The Moor. How do the advent of globalization and shifting populations affect the majority-culture (ethnically English) people's view of people from other lands? How are people of African descent regarded generally in Elizabethan/Jacobean England?

Your presentation, in total, should not span more than 10 minutes with everyone talking. At the end, hand in your MLA-style Works Cited page with at least 4 credible sources. If you have questions about source credibility for an academic audience, please ask well before your presentation. You may use a PowerPoint, but please do not read slides. Feel free to email (or Tweet) people at Folger education if you have questions you can't find answers to elsewhere, too.