Grade 12 Literature Setwork

NSC and SC Examination Question Papers and Memoranda
(Marking Guidelines)

English Home Language: Drama – Othello
**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

Othello is responsible for his own tragic fate.

Assess the validity of this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

**QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT G**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMILIA</th>
<th>IAGO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What handkerchief!</td>
<td>Hast stole it from her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,</td>
<td>No, faith, she let it drop by negligence,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That which so often you did bid me steal.</td>
<td>And to the advantage, I being here took't up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Look, here it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hast stole it from her?</td>
<td>IAGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMILIA</td>
<td>A good wench! Give it me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, faith, she let it drop by negligence,</td>
<td>EMILIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And to the advantage, I being here took't up.</td>
<td>If it be not for some purpose of import,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look, here it is.</td>
<td>Give't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>When she shall lack it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMILIA</td>
<td>IAGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will you do with it, that you have been</td>
<td>(Snatching it) Why, what is that to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So earnest to have me filch it?</td>
<td>EMILIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>If it be not for some purpose of import,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Snatching it) Why, what is that to you?</td>
<td>Give't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMILIA</td>
<td>When she shall lack it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Be not you known on't, I have use for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Go, leave me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia off</td>
<td>Emilia off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,</td>
<td>I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And let him find it. Trifles light as air</td>
<td>And let him find it. Trifles light as air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are to the jealous confirmation strong</td>
<td>Are to the jealous confirmation strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.</td>
<td>As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moor already changes with my poison.</td>
<td>The Moor already changes with my poison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,</td>
<td>Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
But, with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so.

Re-enter Othello
Look where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

OTHELLO
Ha, ha, false to me, to me?

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.1 Refer to lines 9–10: 'What will you …?/me filch it?'
Explain how Iago intends to use Desdemona's handkerchief. (3)

13.2 Explain what this extract suggests about Iago's relationship with Emilia. (3)

13.3 Refer to line 22: 'The Moor already changes with my poison.'
Comment on the accuracy of Iago's observation in the context of this extract. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

OTHELLO
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?
IAGO
Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word.
LODOVICO
What, not to pray?

GRATIANO
Torments will ope your lips.

OTHELLO
Well, thou dost best.
LODOVICO
Sir, you shall understand what hath befallen,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another. The one of them imports
The death of Cassio, to be undertook
By Roderigo.
OTHELLO
O villain!
CASSIO
Most heathenish and most gross!
LODOVICO
Now here's another discontented paper
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems, Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain, But that, belike, Iago in the nick Came in and satisfied him.

...

**OTHELLO**

Soft you – a word or two before you go. I have done the State some service and they know’t. No more of that. I pray you in your letters When you shall these unlucky deeds relate

Speak of them as they are. Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well; Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought, Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand, Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes, Albeit unused to the melting mood, Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees Their medicinal gum. Set you down this; And say besides that in Aleppo once Where a malignant and turbaned Turk Beat a Venetian and traduced the State, I took by the throat the circumcised dog – And smote him thus.

*Othello stabs himself*  
[Act 5, Scene 2]

13.4 Refer to lines 9–10: 'Here is a letter …'?Found in … the slain Roderigo'.

Account for Roderigo's involvement in Iago's plan.  

(3)

13.5 Refer to lines 3–4: 'Demand me nothing …'will speak word.'

Comment on the irony of Iago's words.  

(3)

13.6 Othello refers to Iago as a 'demi-devil' (line 1).

In your opinion, is Othello's assessment of Iago's character justified? Motivate your response.  

(3)

13.7 Refer to line 21–23: 'Soft you – a word …'?No more of that.'

If you were the director of a production of *Othello*, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Justify your instructions with reference to both body language and tone.  

(3)

13.8 Using this extract as a starting point and drawing on your knowledge of the play as a whole, critically comment on the nature of jealousy as presented in the play.  

(4)
**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Despite Othello's many admirable qualities, he has serious insecurities that contribute to his tragic fate. His insecurities about his race, his age, his ignorance about Venetian society, especially Venetian women, surface only when his confidence in Desdemona's loyalty/faithfulness is undermined by Iago.
- Othello allows himself to succumb to Iago's lies. He places his complete trust in Iago, allowing him to become his adviser and confidant, thereby compromising his integrity.
- Although Othello asks for 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's betrayal, he does not question the evidence when it is presented to him.
- Othello enters into an unholy alliance with Iago to kill both Cassio and Desdemona. This deliberate decision to commit murder compromises his morality and leads to his decision to execute justice on himself.
- He also agrees to Iago's suggestion that he eavesdrop on Iago and Cassio's conversation, not realising that Iago is deceiving him. His gullibility in this situation contributes to his downfall.
- Othello allows himself to be manipulated. Iago's suggestion of Desdemona's infidelity provides the excuse Othello needs to justify the destruction of the wife he believes cannot truly love him.
- Othello's low self-esteem, jealousy and pride make him determined to ensure that Desdemona pays dearly for her supposed transgression.
- Although Othello calls himself 'an honourable murderer', his actions in refusing Desdemona the chance to defend herself belie this claim.

Candidates might argue that, rather than Othello’s being responsible for his own fate, it is Iago who is the cause of his downfall.

Iago plays on Othello's insecurities, poisoning his mind against his wife.

Othello has no reason to disbelieve or mistrust Iago, as Iago is perceived to be 'honest' by numerous characters in the play.

Iago is an excellent judge of character. He is opportunistic, cunning and evil, and the naïve and unsophisticated Othello stands no chance against Iago's devious machinations.

[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.]
QUESTION 13:  OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Iago intends to use the handkerchief as 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. He plans to place the handkerchief in Cassio's lodging, thereby implying that Desdemona gave it to Cassio as a token of her love. This will validate Iago's accusations and will motivate Othello to act against Desdemona and Cassio.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.2 Iago is generally disrespectful and dismissive of Emilia. He does not take her into his confidence or allow her to question his actions. He is rude and bullying. He deliberately uses her as a tool to further his selfish plans.

[Award 3 marks only if reference is made to this extract.] (3)

13.3 Iago's observation is accurate as Othello shows increasing signs of anguish. There is a clear sense of Othello's emotional breakdown. Earlier in the play, Othello refuses to believe that Desdemona could be unfaithful. At this point, his words indicate that he is coming closer to believing in her guilt.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.4 Roderigo had wanted to marry Desdemona but had been unsuccessful. Iago promised to help Roderigo win Desdemona in return for Roderigo's help in bringing about Othello's downfall. He continues to help Iago because he is convinced that Iago will make good on his promise.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.5 Throughout the play, Iago has been very adept at using words to persuade and manipulate. However, here he pledges to remain silent because he realises that nothing he says would be to his advantage and he is happy to thwart the process of justice. He is being spiteful.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is discussed.] (3)

13.6 Yes. From the beginning of the play, Iago's intention has been to destroy Othello. He hates everything that is good, everything that has a 'daily beauty'. He does not believe in concepts such as love and virtue and seeks to destroy anything associated with these ideas. On a number of occasions, he also equates his actions with those of the devil.

OR

[A 'No' response is unlikely; however, treat all responses on their merits.] (3)

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)
13.7 Othello is appealing to Lodovico and the assembled company to listen to the reasons for his actions. There is an element of pride and condescension in his tone when he mentions his ‘service’ to the State. He might raise his hand to stave off being seized by the guards/extend his hand in appeal/point to himself to emphasise his words. His tone becomes dismissive as he comes to realise the insignificance of his past deeds.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate’s response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)

13.8 Feelings of jealousy are displayed by various characters. In this extract, Othello indicates that he is not easily made jealous but once his jealousy is aroused, he is consumed by it. His insecurities and fears lead him to believe Iago’s lies. Iago’s jealousy is spurred on by his feelings of inadequacy as he feels that he can never be the equal of Cassio and Othello. Roderigo is jealous of Othello’s having Desdemona as his wife. Ultimately, jealousy manifests in different ways but always results in destruction of self and others.

[Candidates may make reference to other examples.]

[Award 4 marks only if reference is made to this extract and the play as a whole.] (4) [25]
Othello – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 22 (essay question) OR QUESTION 23 (contextual question).

QUESTION 22: Othello – Essay Question

Othello’s behaviour throughout the play has unintended consequences.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

QUESTION 23: Othello – Contextual Question

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT M

IAGO
You, Roderigo? Come, sir, I am for you.

OTHELLO
Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

BRABANTIO
O thou foul thief! Where hast thou stowed my daughter?
Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
(If she in chains of magic were not bound)
Whether a maid, so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou – to fear, not to delight.
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense,
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
That weakens motion: I'll have't disputed on;
'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.
Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.

...
23.1 Refer to line 1: 'Come, sir, I am for you.'

Account for Iago's attack on Roderigo. (3)

23.2 Refer to lines 32–33: 'Whose messengers are … of the State'.

Explain Othello's role in the 'present business of the State'. (3)

23.3 Refer to lines 2–4: 'Keep up your … with your weapons.'

Suggest how your impression of Othello in these lines differs from the impression Brabantio creates of Othello. (3)

23.4 Refer to lines 10–11: 'So opposit to marriage that she shunned/The wealthy curled darlings of our nation'.

Based on your knowledge of the play as a whole, discuss how these lines contribute to your understanding of Desdemona's character. (3)

AND

EXTRACT N

OTHELLO
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

IAGO
I do beseech you
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
(As I confess it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not) I entreat you then,
From one that so imperfectly conjects,
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of my scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good, 
Nor for my manhood, honesty or wisdom, 
To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO

Zounds!

IAGO

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, 
Is the immediate jewel of their souls. 
Who steals my purse, steals trash: 'tis something, nothing; 
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands. 
But he that filches from me my good name 
Robs me of that which not enriches him 
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand, 
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

OTHELLO

Ha!

IAGO

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! 
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock 
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss 
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger. 
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er 
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

OTHELLO

O misery!

[Act 3, Scene 3]

23.5 Refer to lines 1–3: 'Thou dost conspire … to thy thoughts.'

Account for Othello's belief that Iago is not being honest with him. (3)

23.6 Refer to lines 8–11: 'I entreat you… and unsure observance.'

Discuss the irony in these lines in the context of the play. (3)

23.7 Refer to lines 16–19: 'Good name in man … slave to thousands.'

If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay specific attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. (3)

23.8 Othello's jealousy plays a significant role in the tragedy of the play.

Do you agree with this statement? Justify your response. (4)
OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 22: OTHello – ESSAY QUESTION

• Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
• A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
• Refer to page 37 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might argue that this statement is not entirely true and discuss how Othello's behaviour has either intended or unintended consequences or they might offer a mixed response.
• When Othello marries Desdemona, he does not expect Brabantio's extreme opposition and prejudice. Brabantio's warning to Othello about Desdemona's betrayal is later exploited by Iago.
• Othello does not expect Iago's resentment and jealousy when he appoints Cassio as his lieutenant. This spurs Iago's wrath and gives him reason to destroy Othello, Cassio and Desdemona.
• In naively trusting Iago and placing Desdemona in his care, Othello unwittingly plays into Iago's hands, giving him the opportunity to advance his evil plan.
• Othello's gullibility in believing Iago's insinuations about Cassio and Desdemona makes him more inclined to trust Iago, rather than Desdemona and Cassio.
• Desdemona's love is so essential to Othello that her assumed betrayal leads to his uncontrollable jealousy and ultimately destroys his and others' lives. Othello allows his insecurities and emotions to overwhelm his reason.
• Othello's response to the brawl shows Iago how quickly Othello becomes angry and loses control. Othello's dismissing Cassio and appointing Iago as lieutenant, places Iago in a better position to influence and manipulate him.
• Othello's demanding 'ocular proof' gives Iago the opportunity to strengthen his hold over Othello. This has the unintended consequence of Iago's having to adapt his plan to ensure the deaths of anyone who might expose his machinations.
• Othello's fit prevents him from directly confronting Cassio, and gives Iago complete mastery over him, resulting in the unholy alliance to commit murder.
• Othello's eavesdropping strengthens his belief in Desdemona's infidelity. His integrity is called into question and leads to the diminishing of his noble character. Othello's striking of Desdemona leads to his losing the respect of those who previously admired him.
• Othello's behaviour has consequences for others, such as Desdemona's acting out of character by lying about the handkerchief. This hardens Othello's suspicions against her.
• Candidates might argue that toward the end of the play, Othello is very clear in his intention to mete out justice.
• Othello's military background influences his decision to become Desdemona's judge and executioner and to justify himself as an 'honourable murderer'.
• When Othello realises the truth about Desdemona's innocence, he cannot live with his conscience and executes himself.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] [25]
QUESTION 23: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

23.1 Iago pretends to attack Roderigo to make an outward show of his loyalty to and support for Othello. Earlier he mentions that he 'must show out a flag and sign of love' in order to win Othello's trust. This action will later intensify Othello's belief in Iago's integrity.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

23.2 The Venetian State is preparing for war against the Turks. As general of the Venetian army, Othello has been urgently called to the Senate to take charge of the defence of Cyprus.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

23.3 In this extract, Othello is calm, controlled, formal and courteous. He is sophisticated, well-spoken and respectful toward Brabantio.

Earlier, Brabantio has insulted Othello by suggesting that, because Othello is black, he is not deserving of his daughter. Brabantio accuses Othello of being a thief and a practitioner of black magic. The impression Brabantio has created is that Othello is sly and immoral.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

23.4 Desdemona is opposed to being married off to someone not of her choice. She is unafraid of challenging the conventions of her society. Her rejection of many suitors demonstrates her independence. When she falls in love with Othello, she is prepared to defend her choice by standing up to her father and the Duke. Desdemona proves to be courageous, proud and confident.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

23.5 Othello believes Iago is withholding information about Cassio's honesty. He gains this impression because Iago is not being frank with him. Iago has made insinuations which he does not support. He uses innuendo and generalisations to make Othello suspicious of Cassio.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

23.6 Iago pleads with Othello not to take notice of his vague suspicions. He creates the impression that he is merely speculating as to the nature of Desdemona and Cassio's relationship. Iago maintains that he does not want Othello to be concerned about something that might not transpire. However, he is insincere and merely intent on furthering his own plan to ensure Othello's destruction. It is ironic that he appears to set Othello's mind at ease yet it is part of his plan to increase Othello's suspicions and create chaos.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is well discussed.] (3)
23.7 Iago might move close to Othello and might clench his fist and tap his chest when referring to the soul. He might move away from Othello but then come back immediately and make direct eye contact with him when delivering the last three lines. He might put his arm around Othello or clasp his shoulder to create an impression of camaraderie.

Iago's tone would be persuasive/adamant/concerned/apparently sincere. He is trying to convince Othello that one's reputation is extremely important, suggesting that Cassio is attempting to tarnish Othello's good name.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a justification.]

23.8 AGREE

Othello's love for Desdemona makes him vulnerable and is the reason why he acts rashly. In addition, he feels inadequate because Cassio is younger and he and Desdemona share similar backgrounds. Othello becomes irrational and allows his jealousy to override his reason. He fails to consider Desdemona's innocence. Iago's crude innuendos about Desdemona and Cassio's affair, added to the 'ocular proof', drive Othello to jealousy. He is determined to see justice done by sacrificing Desdemona and having Cassio killed. A further tragedy is that, when he realises that he has wrongly killed Desdemona, he kills himself.

OR

DISAGREE

Candidates might argue that, although Othello's jealousy is pivotal to the tragedy, there are other characters/factors that contribute to the tragedy.

Iago's jealousy is aggravated by his suspicion that both Othello and Cassio have had an affair with his wife, Emilia. Despite having no proof, he seeks revenge for this and other perceived wrongs. His jealousy proves to be monstrous because in the process of destroying Othello and Cassio, he destroys others.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.]
**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

Desdemona and Emilia contradict the idea that Venetian women are submissive and immoral.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

**QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT G**

**DUKE**
I think this tale would win my daughter too …
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best.
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.

**BRABANTIO**
I pray you hear her speak.
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction light on me if my bad blame
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress.
Do you perceive in all this company
Where most you owe obedience?

**DESDEMONA**
My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty.
To you I am bound for life and education.
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you. You are lord of all my duty;
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother showed
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.

**BRABANTIO**
God bu’ry! I ha’ done.
Please it your Grace, on to the state affairs.
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.
Come hither, Moor.

I here do give thee that with all my heart.
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child,
For thy escape would teach me tyranny
To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.

DUKE
The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello,
the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have
there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a more
sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you. You
must therefore be content to slumber the gloss of your new fortunes
with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

[Act 1, Scene 3]

13.1 Account for Brabantio's approaching the Duke and the Senate on the issue of
Desdemona's marriage. (3)

13.2 Refer to lines 1–3: 'I think this … at the best.'

Explain what has prompted the Duke's response in these lines. (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 7–11: 'If she confess … you owe obedience?'

Discuss the accuracy of Brabantio's perception of Desdemona. (3)

13.4 Refer to lines 32–37: 'The Turk with … and boisterous expedition.'

In the light of later events, comment on how Othello compromises his
reputation. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

OTHELLO
O monstrous, monstrous!
IAGO  Nay, this was but his dream.

OTHELLO
But this denoted a foregone conclusion.
IAGO  'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream:
And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.

OTHELLO
I'll tear her all to pieces!
IAGO  Nay, but be wise. Yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this.
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief,
Spotted with strawberries, in your wife's hand?
OTHELLO
I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

IAGO
I know not that, but such a handkerchief
(I am sure it was your wife's) did I today
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

OTHHELLO
If it be that–

IAGO
If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her, with the other proofs.

OTHHELLO
O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago–
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven …
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

IAGO
Pray be content.

OTHHELLO
O, blood, Iago, blood!

IAGO
Patience, I say. Your mind perhaps may change.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.5 Refer to lines 10–15: 'Have you not … his beard with.'

Account for Iago's deliberate mention of the handkerchief at this point in the play. (3)

13.6 Refer to line 1: 'O monstrous, monstrous!'

If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay special attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. (3)

13.7 Refer to line 30: 'Patience, I say. Your mind perhaps may change.'

Explain the irony of Iago's advice in the above line. (3)

13.8 Iago's treachery is a sign of cowardice.

Critically comment on the extent to which you agree with this statement. (4)
OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHÉLLO – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Venetian women are subject to a patriarchal society and are expected to be submissive. At times, Desdemona and Emilia adhere to the stereotype, while at other times they challenge their society. The perception of women as sexually immoral does not apply to Emilia and Desdemona.

- Brabantio expects Desdemona to be dutiful and obedient. However, she defies him by eloping with Othello.
- Roderigo regards Desdemona as a prize; as someone whose affections can be bought. Desdemona contradicts his view of women by rejecting him and the wealthy Venetian suitors, instead marrying for love.
- Iago objectifies women of Desdemona’s class as a means of improving one’s status. He is a misogynist with no respect for women. As Iago’s unwitting tools in his plan for revenge, Desdemona and Emilia passively accept his requests and advice. However, they both ultimately prove that he under-estimates women.
- Initially, it is Desdemona’s strength of character that Othello admires; he regards her as an equal. However, Othello’s perception of Desdemona and women in general is altered as a result of Iago’s manipulation and deception, and his (Othello’s) jealousy. He now sees both Desdemona and Emilia as immoral.
- At the beginning of the play, Desdemona is strong and determined. She asserts herself with her father and at the Venetian Senate by courageously choosing Othello. She stubbornly disregards Othello’s wishes that she not pursue the matter of Cassio’s reinstatement.
- Desdemona defiantly lies about the whereabouts of the handkerchief, thus reinforcing Othello’s belief in her immorality.
- Later, Desdemona appears passive and submissive, even blaming herself for Othello’s unjust behaviour toward her. Despite Othello’s public display of violence against her, she is dignified and justifies Othello’s altered behaviour as his being stressed by ‘matters of state’. She feels that she has accused him unfairly. Her conversation with Emilia about men’s insensitive treatment of women contradicts the stereotype that all women are immoral. She cannot even bring herself to say the words, let alone commit adultery. Desdemona remains devoted and loyal to Othello, even defending him on her deathbed.
- Emilia reveals her non-traditional views on marriage and gives Desdemona worldly advice. Despite her inadvertently betraying Desdemona by giving Iago the handkerchief, she is courageous when she exposes Iago by speaking against him, thus proving her loyalty to Desdemona. She clearly displays the characteristics of a strong-minded woman by exposing her husband and denouncing Othello.
- Candidates might refer to the men’s perception of Venetian women as adulterers. However, both Desdemona and Emilia contradict this view as they are loyal to their husbands.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]
QUESTION 13: *OTHELLO* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Brabantio believes Othello has bewitched and thus coerced Desdemona into marriage. Despite this being a private matter, Brabantio appeals to the authorities because he wants Othello to be punished. Brabantio also wants the marriage to be annulled. His sense of entitlement causes him to believe the Senate and the Duke will be sympathetic to his appeal.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.2 The Duke is moved by Othello's account of how he and Desdemona fell in love, leading to their marriage. He refutes Brabantio's allegations of kidnapping and witchcraft. The Duke advises Brabantio to make the best of the situation and to come to terms with it. Also, he does not want to lose Othello's services as the general of the Venetian army.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.3 Brabantio believes Desdemona to be obedient, submissive and timid. He cannot conceive of her voluntarily marrying Othello. This perception is inaccurate because Desdemona has been a willing participant in the relationship, encouraging Othello's advances. She does not refute Othello's version of her involvement in the courtship and readily shows her allegiance to Othello as her husband.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.4 Othello is respected as the general of the Venetian army and is trusted to protect and defend Cyprus from the Turks. The Duke expects him to put his duty before his personal life. However, Othello becomes so enraged and consumed with jealousy when he believes that Desdemona has betrayed him, that his duty becomes secondary. Instead of ruling rationally and honourably, he and Iago plot the deaths of Cassio and Desdemona. Othello is supposed to be in Cyprus to uphold law and order; however, he compromises his honour and duty as governor by subverting justice.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

13.5 Iago has implied that Desdemona has been unfaithful with Cassio. Othello has demanded 'ocular proof' of the adultery. Iago mentions the incriminating 'ocular' proof – the handkerchief – which he says he has seen in Cassio's possession. This reference to the handkerchief (Othello's love token for Desdemona) will encourage Othello's desire for revenge, which is exactly what Iago intends to achieve.

Candidates might refer to Cassio's demeaning use of Othello's love token, which would enrage Othello even further.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)
13.6 Othello might fall to his knees with clenched fists raised above his head or hit/bang his chest. He might clench his teeth or block his ears; his eyes might be tightly shut to indicate his anguish at the graphic description of Cassio and Desdemona's making love. Othello might cry out with a pained/anguished/tormented/angry/horrified tone because he feels betrayed by Desdemona and his trusted friend.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a justification.]

13.7 Iago apparently wants to pacify Othello by implying that when Othello later views the situation, he might change his mind and not desire Desdemona's and Cassio's deaths. However, it is actually part of Iago's plan to drive Othello to a state of madness. Iago's insinuations and lies have affected Othello so intensely that he has become obsessed with revenge and is unable to think objectively. Although Iago is cautioning Othello not to be rash in his desire for vengeance, it is Iago who has brought Othello to this irrational state.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is fully discussed.]

13.8 AGREE
The way Iago deals with his jealousy of and hatred for Othello and Cassio is cowardly. Instead of confronting them directly, he uses others to carry out his treacherous plans. His innuendos to Othello about the alleged affair are underhand and cowardly. He pretends to be loyal and Othello's trusted adviser; however, his intention is to deceive and destroy. He blackens the reputations of Cassio and Othello. When Iago does act, it is in a very cowardly manner. Iago stabs a wounded Roderigo in the dark and Emilia from behind to silence her. Iago uses chaos and confusion to hide his treachery and to call into question the actions of others. His silence when he is exposed further establishes his cowardice.

OR

DISAGREE
Candidates might argue that, rather than cowardice, Iago's treachery is a sign of his cunning and deviousness. Iago's appearance of being honourable, innocent and trustworthy is part of his treacherous plan to destroy his enemies. Iago is a clever, opportunistic man who is calculating in the manner in which he achieves his goals.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR four ideas.]
**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

The problem of making moral choices is a significant issue in the play.

Critically assess the validity of this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

**QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT G**

**OTHELLO**

If it were now to die, 'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear My soul hath her content so absolute That not another comfort like to this Succeeds in unknown fate.

...  

**IAGO**

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe't. That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit. The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not, Is of a constant, noble, loving nature, And, I dare think, he'll prove to Desdemona A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too— Not out of absolute lust (though peradventure I stand accountant for as great a sin) But partly led to diet my revenge, For that I do suspect the lusty Moor Hath leaped into my seat, the thought whereof Doth like a poisonous mineral gnaw my inwards. And nothing can or shall content my soul Till I am evened with him, wife for wife, Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor At least into a jealousy so strong That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do, If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash For his quick hunting, stand the putting on, I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb
(For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too)
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me
For making him egregiously an ass
And practising upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'Tis here but yet confused.
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

[Act 2, Scene 1]

13.1 Refer to lines 1–2: 'If it were … be most happy'.
Account for Othello's feelings at this stage of the play. (2)

13.2 Refer to lines 6–7: 'That Cassio loves … of great credit.'
Explain how Iago intends to use the friendship between Desdemona and
Cassio to his benefit. (2)

13.3 Refer to lines 11–19: 'Now, I do … wife for wife'.
Suggest what these lines indicate about Iago's character. (2)

13.4 Refer to lines 8–11: 'The Moor, howbeit … most dear husband.'
Explain what is ironic about Iago's words. (3)

13.5 Refer to lines 28–31: 'Make the Moor … Even to madness.'
In the light of the above statement, discuss why Iago will be successful in
manipulating Othello. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

EMILIA
Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian
Called Roderigo.

OTHELLO
Roderigo killed?
And Cassio killed?

EMILIA
No, Cassio is not killed.

OTHELLO
Not Cassio killed! Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DESDEMONA
O, falsely, falsely murdered!

EMILIA
O Lord! What cry is that?

OTHELLO
That? What?

EMILIA
Out and alas! It is my lady's voice!
Emilia draws back the bed-curtains
Help, help, ho, help! O, lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona, O sweet mistress, speak!

DESDEMONA
A guiltless death I die.

EMILIA
O, who has done this deed?

DESDEMONA
Nobody; I myself. Farewell.
Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell!

Desdemona dies

...

EMILIA
Thou art rash as fire to say
That she was false. O, she was heavenly true!

OTHELLO
Cassio did top her – ask thy husband else.
O, I were damned beneath all depth in hell
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMILIA
My husband!

OTHELLO
Thy husband.

EMILIA
That she was false to wedlock?

OTHELLO
Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me another such world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it.

EMILIA
My husband!

OTHELLO
Ay, 'twas he that told me first.

An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMILIA
My husband!

OTHELLO
What needs this iteration? Woman, I say thy husband.

EMILIA
O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!
My husband say that she was false?

OTHELLO
He, woman.

I say thy husband – dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

[Act 5, Scene 2]
13.6 Refer to lines 6–7: 'Not Cassio killed! … revenge grows harsh.'

Explain Othello's reactions in these lines. (3)

13.7 Refer to lines 13–14: 'Help, help, ho, … sweet mistress, speak!'

If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actress to deliver these lines? Justify your instructions with reference to both body language and tone. (3)

13.8 Refer to lines 17–18: 'Nobody; I myself … my kind lord.'

Discuss the extent to which Desdemona's own actions have contributed to the tragedy. (3)

13.9 The death of Desdemona marks the ultimate victory of evil.

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, critically comment on the validity of this statement. (4)
**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

**QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Characters find themselves in situations where they allow themselves to compromise their morality when it comes to the choices they make.

- Initially, Othello prides himself on his honour and integrity. However, when his love for Desdemona is tested by Iago's innuendos, he chooses to believe Iago's lies. This compromises his morals, as he appoints himself Desdemona's judge and executioner. His insecurities contribute to his questionable choices. Othello justifies his killing of Desdemona as the actions of 'an honourable murderer' and that he will be making the world a better place.

- Roderigo's choices reveal his flouting of moral standards. He has no qualms about participating in Iago's plot to break up Othello and Desdemona's marriage. He allows himself to be persuaded by Iago to kill Cassio, a treacherously evil act.

- Cassio's decision to give in to peer pressure, even though he knows he is in charge of the watch that night is dereliction of duty. The consequences of his choice are serious as he loses his position as Othello's lieutenant, as well as the trust and friendship of a man he greatly admires.

- When Brabantio learns that Othello and Desdemona have eloped, he allows his prejudice and bigotry to control him. His accusation that Othello has bewitched his daughter has no basis in the truth. When Desdemona chooses her husband over her father, he disowns her.

- Emilia makes a poor moral decision by choosing to keep the handkerchief that Desdemona accidentally loses. Even when she is aware of how devastated Desdemona is by the loss of Othello's first gift to her, she says nothing. Her choice makes her an unwitting accomplice to Desdemona's death. When she does reveal her actions, it is too late.

- Desdemona's passive acceptance of Othello's abusive treatment might also be considered a questionable moral choice. Had she stood up to Othello and challenged him, her fate might have been different.

- The issue of being guided by morals when making choices is of no significance at all to Iago, since he has no moral compass and he hates everything that is good in the world, acting only out of self-interest.

[Accept valid alternative responses.] [25]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Othello is relieved that Desdemona has arrived safely despite the storm. He is ecstatic/overjoyed at being reunited with her in Cyprus. His overwhelming love for her is evident.

[Award 2 marks for any two ideas.] (2)

13.2 Iago intends to use the friendship between Desdemona and Cassio to suggest that they are in love and are having an affair. Iago will benefit as he will derive great satisfaction from destroying Othello's happiness. By creating suspicion in Othello's mind, Iago is hoping to be appointed as Othello's lieutenant.

[Award 2 marks for any two ideas.] (2)

13.3 These lines reveal Iago's deep-seated jealousy of Othello and his sense of (sexual) insecurity. He suspects that Othello has slept with Emilia and he will not be satisfied until he has avenged himself by sleeping with Desdemona. This reveals his suspicious and vengeful nature.

[Award 2 marks for any two ideas.] (2)

13.4 Despite his hatred for Othello, Iago acknowledges that Othello will be a loyal and 'loving' husband to Desdemona. This is ironic because, instead of being 'A most dear husband', Othello chooses to put his trust in Iago rather than in Desdemona. He becomes emotionally and physically abusive of Desdemona and ultimately kills her.

OR

Candidates might construe Iago's appreciation of Othello's goodness as ironic because he is usually critical/disparaging of Othello and goodness in general.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is discussed.] (3)

13.5 It is Othello's gullible and trusting nature that enables Iago to manipulate him. As an excellent judge of character, Iago realises that he can use Othello's many insecurities to his advantage. Furthermore, Iago knows that Othello thinks him honourable and honest, and that, as a fellow soldier, Iago has his best interests at heart. As a result, Othello will be amenable to any of Iago's suggestions.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.6 Othello is horrified as he and Iago had agreed to kill Desdemona and Cassio that night. However, Iago has failed to keep his word to have Cassio killed, whereas Othello has proceeded to kill Desdemona. He is distressed at the thought that Cassio has escaped their 'justice' while Desdemona has paid the ultimate price.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)
13.7 Emilia would bend toward Desdemona as she lies on the bed, shaking her and appealing to her to awaken and speak. Her tone would be distressed/distraught/pitiful/sorrowful/anguished as she attempts to revive her dying mistress. Emilia is horrified that Desdemona might be dying.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)

13.8 Desdemona's naïveté, her betrayal of her father by running off with Othello, her obvious sympathy for Cassio and her desire to help him to be reinstated play into Iago's hands and make his lies about her more credible to Othello. Her submissiveness as Othello becomes increasingly abusive also contributes to the tragedy as she takes the blame for Othello's behaviour and actions, instead of standing up for herself.

OR

Candidates might argue that Desdemona should not be blamed for her good intentions and inability to recognise and understand evil. Othello's extreme jealousy and deep-seated insecurities have also contributed to the tragedy as at no stage does Othello confront Desdemona or Cassio with his suspicions. Instead he chooses to put his complete trust in Iago.

[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.9

VALID.

Desdemona is the embodiment of virtue and innocence. She is ignorant of the nature and extent of evil in her world. She becomes the unwitting pawn in Iago's evil plan to destroy Othello. Her death at Othello's hand implies that evil has triumphed because Othello destroys not only Desdemona but himself as well.

OR

INVALID.

Despite evil's achieving a great deal of success, it is not victorious. Othello is redeemed to a degree by his remorse and self-execution. Cassio is appointed to succeed Othello and indicates that Iago will be subjected to an agonising interrogation and is doomed to dreadful punishment.

[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 4 marks for three ideas well discussed OR four distinct ideas.] (4)

[25]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

Egotism is one of the centrally important issues in Othello.

Critically assess the validity of this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

DUKE
Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.
(To Brabantio) I did not see you. Welcome, gentle signior.
We lacked your counsel and your help tonight.

BRABANTIO
So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me.
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care
Take hold on me, for my particular grief
Is of so floodgate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows
And yet is still itself.

DUKE
Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO
My daughter! O, my daughter!

SENATORS
Dead?

BRABANTIO
Ay, to me.

She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.


DUKE
Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After its own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

BRABANTIO
Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now it seems
Your special mandate for the state affairs
Hath hither brought.

ALL
We are very sorry for it.

DUKE
(To Othello) What in your own part can you say to this?
BRABANTIO
Nothing, but this is so.

[Act 1, Scene 3]

13.1 Refer to lines 1–2: 'Valiant Othello … general enemy Ottoman.'

Explain why Othello has been sent for by the Duke and the senate. (3)

13.2 Refer to line 1: 'Valiant Othello'.

Explain how the Duke's attitude toward Othello differs from that of Iago and Roderigo earlier in the play. (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 16–20: 'She is abused … witchcraft could not.'

Comment on Brabantio's reaction to Desdemona's elopement. (3)

13.4 Refer to line 28: 'Here is the man, this Moor'.

If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Motivate your instructions with reference to both body language and tone. (3)

13.5 Refer to lines 21–25: 'Whoe'er he be … its own sense'.

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, discuss the extent to which the portrayal of Venice in these lines is accurate. (3)

AND
EXTRACT H

OTHELLO
… But there where I have garnered up my heart,
Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs
Or else dries up – to be discarded thence!
Or to keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there;
Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin,
Ay, there look grim as hell!

DESDEMONA
I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO
O, ay! as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O, thou black weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

DESDEMONA
Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO
Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write 'whore' on? What, committed!
Committed! O, thou public commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth
And will not hear it. What committed!
Impudent strumpet!

DESDEMONA
By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTHELLO
Are you not a strumpet?

DESDEMONA
No, as I am a Christian.

If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any hated foul unlawful touch,
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO
What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA
No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO
Is't possible?

DESDEMONA
O, heaven forgive us!
OTHELLO
I cry you mercy then,
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
That married with Othello.

[Act 4, Scene 2]

13.6 Refer to line 14: 'Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?'
In your view, is Desdemona's question typical of her character? Motivate your response. (3)

13.7 Refer to lines 15–25: 'Was this fair paper … Impudent strumpet!'
Comment on how Othello's use of language in these lines reflects a change in his attitude toward Desdemona. (3)

13.8 Using EXTRACT H as a starting point, comment on the extent to which it would be justifiable for the audience to feel pity for Othello. (4)
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

- Othello's tragedy is a result of his self-absorption, combined with his love for Desdemona. Othello is proud of his reputation as a soldier and finds it difficult to accept Desdemona's apparent infidelity. It is Othello's ego that contributes to the events that unfold.
- Initially, Othello displays humility. However, Iago's machinations expose his excessive pride. Othello's ego blinds him to the truth and allows Iago to exploit and manipulate him.
- Othello is proud of his achievements and aware of his royal status. His pride allows him to be easily wrought upon and his jealousy culminates in murder. He is aware of the high esteem in which he is held and any threat to his honour is unacceptable.
- Iago's ego prompts him to exploit people's perception of him as honest and trustworthy.
- Iago is contemptuous of others and enjoys the power he is able to wield over them. He is single-minded in his aim to destroy Othello, Desdemona and Cassio. Iago is satisfied that he has power over Othello, who has undervalued him, and over his rival, Cassio. It is Iago's resentment and extreme self-involvement that lead to his destructive behaviour. Iago's pathological self-concern makes him hostile to others and sensitive to real and imagined slights. These cause him to take revenge on the world. Iago feels insufficiently recognised.
- Brabantio's egotism does not allow him to accept a black son-in-law, causing dissent between him and Desdemona.
- Roderigo's ego, which is fuelled by Iago, leads to his belief that he can sway Desdemona with possessions and win her from Othello. His vanity leaves him susceptible to Iago's plotting.
- Cassio's vanity makes him susceptible to peer pressure. Despite his being the officer in charge of the watch and having a poor head for alcohol, he allows himself to be persuaded to drink. He arrogantlly takes offence at Montano's comment that he is drunk, resulting in the brawl that leads to his dismissal.
- Because of their egos, Cassio and Iago objectify and exploit women.

[Any reference to other issues should be peripheral at most.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Othello, the general of the Venetian army, is required to lead the Venetian forces against the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Othello is highly respected and trusted. He excels as a military commander and the Venetians rely on him for his expertise.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.2 The Duke’s attitude is respectful and admiring, clearly showing his high regard for Othello. The Duke also addresses Othello as ‘valiant’, acknowledging Othello’s courage and honour.

However, Iago and Roderigo refer to Othello as the ‘Moor’ and use derogatory terms, such as, ‘thick lips’, ‘old black ram’, ‘Barbary horse’ and ‘devil’. This is indicative of their contempt for him, as well as evidence of their racial prejudice. Iago’s attitude is that Othello is proud and pompous.

[Award 3 marks only if the contrast is clear.] (3)

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.3 Brabantio cannot conceive that his daughter would voluntarily choose a black man. To him, such an act is abhorrent and unnatural. Therefore he is convinced that Desdemona has been ‘stolen’ and that witchcraft and drugs must have been used. There is no evidence to support his assertions. His racial prejudice is evident as he bases his assumptions solely on the fact that Othello is black.

[Candidates might introduce the idea that the racism displayed by Brabantio is later exploited by Iago] (3)

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.4 Brabantio’s actions should be clearly directed at Othello. He could raise his voice in outrage while pointing at or gesturing dramatically toward Othello. Brabantio could walk right up to Othello and stare into his face belligerently. His tone might be contemptuous/scornful/ angry/smug. He believes that Othello is a villain who has stolen his daughter.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate’s response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a motivation.] (3)
13.5 Here the Duke accurately portrays Venice as a place of law and order. He states that the wrong-doer, whoever he is, will be punished to the fullest extent of the law, therefore displaying fairness and justice. This is borne out by the Duke's asking Othello for his side of the story. Despite Brabantio's attempt to manipulate the law, the Duke insists on rational justice.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.6 Yes.
Desdemona's question is typical of her innocence and naivety. She cannot conceive of the notion of women's being unfaithful; to her, marriage vows are sacred and she would never betray them. She cannot imagine being accused of having committed any immoral act because it is so foreign to her nature. Her readiness to accept that she has erred indicates the trusting and humble aspects of her character.

OR

No.
The question is not typical of Desdemona as, earlier in the play, she has been feisty and able to stand her ground. Her strength of character and independent nature are displayed when she marries Othello without asking for her father's permission and when she insists on following Othello to Cyprus. She is not generally submissive.

[Accept mixed responses.]

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.7 Previously, Othello was loving and respectful toward Desdemona but now he is disgusted by her. The language Othello uses is insulting, derogatory and full of vulgar sexual innuendo. He refers to her as a 'whore' and a 'strumpet', suggesting that he would be too embarrassed to mention what she has done. Where once he was enthralled by her, Othello now finds Desdemona repulsive, saying she is brazen and shameless in her behaviour. He is horrified at her apparent lack of awareness of what she has done.

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate indicates the change in Othello's attitude and comments on the language.]

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)
13.8 In Extract H, Othello's sorrow and despair are clearly evident. He says that his entire emotional being is centred in Desdemona. Their love gives meaning to his life and she is the source ('fountain') of his existence; without her, his life is emotionally and spiritually barren. The audience might feel a sense of pity for him as he truly believes that she has betrayed their love. The audience might pity him because he has been duped by Iago, who has exploited his weaknesses and insecurities.

**OR**

The audience might not pity Othello. He does not confront Desdemona with his suspicions, choosing instead to call her 'whore' without any explanation of his reasons for doing so. He is naive and has chosen to trust Iago rather than Desdemona. This makes a mockery of his assertion, 'My life upon her faith', to Brabantio earlier in the play. The sheer cruelty of his behaviour toward and verbal abuse of Desdemona in this extract cannot be condoned. Neither can his later behaviour when he strikes her and insults her in front of the Venetian delegation. The audience is unlikely to feel pity for a man who makes a pact to cold-bloodedly kill both his wife and his friend.

[Award 4 marks for any three points well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

Referring to Cassio, Iago says: ‘He hath a daily beauty in his life,/That makes me ugly’.

Critically discuss how Othello demonstrates that, when characters feel inferior to others, the results are destructive.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

OR

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

OTHELLO
Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
IAGO
(Returning) My lord, I would I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further. Leave it to time.
Though it be fit that Cassio have his place
(For sure he fills it up with great ability)
Yet if you please to hold him off a while,
You shall by that perceive him and his means;
Note if your lady strain his entertainment
With any strong or vehement importunity.
Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears
(As worthy cause I have to fear I am)
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.
OTHELLO
Fear not my government.
IAGO
I once more take my leave.

Off
OTHELLO
This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealing. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years (yet that's not much),
She's gone. I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O, curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones:
Prerogatived are they less than the base.
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
When we do quicken. Look where she comes:
Re-enter Desdemona and Emilia
If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe't.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.1 Explain why it is possible for Othello to so readily believe Iago. (3)
13.2 Refer to lines 3–4: 'My lord, I ... thing no further.'

Account for Iago's plea in these lines. (3)
13.3 Refer to lines 5–6: 'Though it be ... with great ability').

Explain the irony of Iago's words. (3)
13.4 Refer to lines 18–20: 'This fellow's of ... Of human dealing.'

In your opinion, is Othello's assessment of Iago's character justified? Substantiate your response. (3)
13.5 Refer to lines 30–33: 'I had rather ... For others' uses.'

Discuss how Othello's tone in these lines reflects a change in his state of mind. (3)

AND
EXTRACT B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESDEMONA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O good Iago,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What shall I do to win my lord again?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good friend, go to him, for by this light of heaven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delighted them in any other form,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or that I do not yet, and ever did,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And ever will (though he do shake me off)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To beggarly divorcement love him dearly</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And his unkindness may defeat my life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But never taint my love. I cannot say 'whore';</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does abhor me now I speak the word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do the act that might the addition earn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The business of the State does him offence,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And he does chide with you.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Act 4, Scene 2]

13.6 Refer to lines 1–2: 'O good Iago, … my lord again?'

Explain why Desdemona appeals to Iago for assistance. (3)

13.7 In line 4, Desdemona says, 'Here I kneel.'

Earlier in the play, Othello also kneels as he takes what he regards as a sacred vow.

Critically compare and contrast the two vows. (3)

13.8 In EXTRACT A, lines 39–40, Othello says of Desdemona, 'If she be … I'll not believe't.'

Is this assessment of Desdemona's character reinforced in EXTRACT B? Justify your response. (4)

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to the rubric on page 23 to assess this question.

Characters in the play have different reasons for feeling inferior, all of which lead to tragedy.
- Iago hates everything that is associated with spiritual/moral/emotional beauty. He is jealous of both Othello's and Cassio's status, nobility of character, manners, attractiveness and polish, while Iago, at best, feigns them at times.
- Iago is bitter and envious that he has not been promoted and feels that he has been overlooked because he lacks the social skills and status into which Cassio was born. Iago feels he has been superseded by a member of the privileged class and feels disregarded. This leads to Iago's plotting against Cassio, Othello and Desdemona.
- Iago lacks self-esteem and for this reason suspects that Cassio and Othello both have slept with Emilia. This contributes to his vindictive malice.
- Othello's inferiority stems from the fact that he is black, older and, despite his acumen on the battlefield, feels like an outsider in Venetian society. He is unschooled in its ways and fears that he is socially inadequate. Because he has spent so much time on the battlefield, Othello feels insecure in courtship rituals. These insecurities are exploited by Iago, resulting in tragedy.
- Othello's lack of confidence later contributes to his sensitivity and suspicion. He cannot believe that someone of Desdemona's stature has chosen to marry him and this lack of self-esteem is exploited by Iago.
- Bianca's jealousy stems from her sense of inferiority. She returns the handkerchief to Cassio in view of Othello. He regards this as 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's adultery, resulting in her murder.
- Emilia is subservient to Iago and does not have the courage and self-confidence to stand up to her husband.
- Cassio neglects his sworn duty because of peer pressure. He lacks the self-confidence to do the right thing in this regard.
- Roderigo's constant dependence on Iago shows his lack of self-esteem.

[Consider alternative valid responses.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to the rubric on page 23 to assess this question.

Characters in the play have different reasons for feeling inferior, all of which lead to tragedy.
- Iago hates everything that is associated with spiritual/moral/emotional beauty. He is jealous of both Othello's and Cassio's status, nobility of character, manners, attractiveness and polish, while Iago, at best, feigns them at times.
- Iago is bitter and envious that he has not been promoted and feels that he has been overlooked because he lacks the social skills and status into which Cassio was born. Iago feels he has been superseded by a member of the privileged class and feels disregarded. This leads to Iago's plotting against Cassio, Othello and Desdemona.
- Iago lacks self-esteem and for this reason suspects that Cassio and Othello both have slept with Emilia. This contributes to his vindictive malice.
- Othello's inferiority stems from the fact that he is black, older and, despite his acumen on the battlefield, feels like an outsider in Venetian society. He is unschooled in its ways and fears that he is socially inadequate. Because he has spent so much time on the battlefield, Othello feels insecure in courtship rituals. These insecurities are exploited by Iago, resulting in tragedy.
- Othello's lack of confidence later contributes to his sensitivity and suspicion. He cannot believe that someone of Desdemona's stature has chosen to marry him and this lack of self-esteem is exploited by Iago.
- Bianca's jealousy stems from her sense of inferiority. She returns the handkerchief to Cassio in view of Othello. He regards this as 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's adultery, resulting in her murder.
- Emilia is subservient to Iago and does not have the courage and self-confidence to stand up to her husband.
- Cassio neglects his sworn duty because of peer pressure. He lacks the self-confidence to do the right thing in this regard.
- Roderigo's constant dependence on Iago shows his lack of self-esteem.

[Consider alternative valid responses.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Othello has a trusting nature and believes that Iago is honest and trustworthy. He is a soldier who sees things for what they are. He judges people by appearances only and Iago has made every effort to appear to be the dutiful and loyal servant. Iago has a fine intelligence and is a good actor. He understands human nature and is able to deceive Othello.

[Full marks may be awarded if candidates focus on one character only.]

[Award 3 marks for three valid ideas OR 3 marks for two valid ideas well discussed.]

13.2 Iago feigns reluctance and uncertainty so as to appear innocent. Moreover, his words suggest that there is something suspicious happening. It is part of Iago’s plan to manipulate Othello. He realises that telling Othello not to pursue the matter further, will make it likely that Othello will do just that. Furthermore, at this stage Iago does not have the proof that Othello requires.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas OR 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

13.3 Iago says that Cassio is deserving of his position; yet earlier in the play he makes derogatory remarks about Cassio’s being an ‘arithmetician’ and a ‘bookish theorist’. He wishes to convey the impression that he is admiring and supportive of Cassio.

OR

Iago remarks that Cassio is worthy of his position; however, Iago is responsible for orchestrating the situation which leads to Cassio’s dismissal. He wishes to convey his apparent support for and admiration of Cassio.

[Award full marks only if irony is discussed.]

13.4 No. Othello praises Iago, whom he thinks is an honest and decent person; however, Iago is deceptive and generally diabolical. Iago’s insights into human nature are put to evil use.

OR

Yes. At this stage in the play, any evidence that Othello has concerning Iago indicates that he is a decent, honest man. Othello accepts Iago’s behaviour at face value for which he cannot be blamed.

[Accept mixed responses.]

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

(3)
Prior to this, Othello has been controlled, and his tone has reflected this. His tone has been dignified, courteous and decisive. However, in these lines Othello's tone is disparaging/bitter/disgusted as he succumbs to doubts, suspicions, mistrust and jealousy.

[Award 3 marks only if tone is identified and the contrast in state of mind is discussed.] (3)

Othello has accused Desdemona of being an adulteress/prostitute and she is distraught, badly wanting to regain his love. Desdemona believes that Iago is honest and trustworthy. She has travelled to Cyprus under his protection and has come to regard him as a friend and confidant. She believes that, as Othello's ancient, Iago is in the best position to advise her.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas OR 3 marks for two ideas well developed.] (3)

A vow usually expresses a very serious commitment: it has connotations of the sacred. However, Othello's vow is blasphemous as he commits himself to murder. It indicates how badly his soul has been tainted. By contrast, Desdemona's vow is an expression of reverence and commitment to the man she loves. It signifies her purity and innocence.

[Award 3 marks only if the contrast is clear.] (3)

Othello has his doubts about Desdemona's fidelity, but struggles to accept the idea that she could be unfaithful. He cannot believe that heaven would make such a perfect woman, yet allow her to act in a dishonourable manner.

In EXTRACT B, it is evident that Desdemona's inner qualities are consistent with Othello's assessment of her. We are aware of her honesty and her fidelity to Othello. Desdemona's main concern is to regain Othello's love. Her essential goodness is evident in her inability even to utter the word, 'whore', let alone commit adultery.

OR

No.
[A cogent 'No' answer is unlikely. However, accept valid alternative responses on their merits.]

[Accept mixed responses.] (4)

[Award 4 marks only if the candidate refers to both extracts.] [25]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

The play, Othello reveals how manipulation of weaknesses results in injustice.

Critically discuss this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

OR

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

DESDEMONA
That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and scorn of fortunes
May trumpet to the world. My heart’s subdued
Even to the utmost pleasure of my lord.
I saw Othello’s visage in his mind,
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTHELLO
Let her have your voice.
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat (the young affects
In me defunct) and proper satisfaction,
But to be free and bounteous to her mind.
And heaven defend your good souls that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me. No, when light-winged toys
Of feathered Cupid foils with wanton dullness
My speculative and active instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

DUKE
Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for stay or going. The affair cries haste,
And speed must answer. You must hence tonight.

DESDEMONA
Tonight, my Lord?

DUKE
This night.

OTHELLO
With all my heart.

DUKE
At ten in the morning here we'll meet again.
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you,
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth concern you.

OTHELLO
So please your grace, my ancient –
A man he is of honesty and trust.
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good Grace shall think
To be sent after me.

[Act 1, Scene 3]

13.1 Explain why both Othello and Desdemona are summoned to appear before the senate. (3)

13.2 How does Desdemona's behaviour and attitude in this extract contrast with the impression created of her by Brabantio earlier in the play? (3)

13.3 Refer to line 5: 'I saw Othello's visage in his mind' and line 18: 'But to be free and bounteous to her mind'.

Discuss how these lines contribute to an understanding of Othello and Desdemona's relationship early in the play. (3)

13.4 Refer to lines 39–41: 'So please your grace, … assign my wife'.

Discuss the irony of Othello's words in these lines. (3)
**Extract B**

EMILIA

Villainy, villainy, villainy!
I think upon't, I think – I smell't! O villainy!
I thought so then. I'll kill myself for grief.
O villainy, villainy!

IAGO

What, are you mad? I charge you get you home.

EMILIA

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTHELLO

*(Falling on the bed)* O! O! O!

EMILIA

Nay, lay thee down and roar,
For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO

*(Rising)* O, she was foul! …
I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopped.

I know this act shows horrible and grim.

*[Act 5, Scene 2]*

13.5 Refer to line 1: 'Villainy, villainy, villainy!'

Account for Emilia's use and repetition of these words. (3)

13.6 Refer to line 9: '*Falling on the bed* O! O! O!'

Comment on the dramatic impact of Othello's outburst, as well as his falling on the bed. (3)

13.7 Refer to lines 10–12: 'Nay, lay thee ... lift up eye.'

If you were the director of a production of *Othello*, how would you instruct the actress to deliver these lines? Motivate your instructions. (3)

13.8 Refer to lines 13–16: 'O, she was foul! … horrible and grim.'

Do these lines influence your attitude to Othello? Provide a convincing motivation for your response. (4)

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

The inherent weaknesses in various characters are manipulated, leading to injustice.
- Othello's weaknesses: his jealousy and a lack of control over his emotions, as well as his insecurities, based on his age and his sense of racial inferiority and foreignness, are exploited by Iago. These will result in a miscarriage of justice: his murder of Desdemona.
- His naive and trusting nature causes him to place his faith in Iago, a grave error.
- His lack of perception and sophistication, his gullibility and his limited experience of female company are all weaknesses that are manipulated by Iago.
- His lack of emotional balance is demonstrated as he descends into primitive/barbaric behaviour and becomes irrational. This state of mind makes him vulnerable to Iago's innuendos, resulting in his obsession with vengeance.
- Othello is self-righteous, believing he is executing justice in punishing Desdemona for her adultery. His act of justice is in fact unjust.
- Desdemona's naïvety in believing that Othello is not jealous and her lie to Othello about the handkerchief, lead to her unjust death. Othello physically and verbally abuses Desdemona. However, her loyalty becomes a weakness when she blames herself for Othello's abusive and even murderous behaviour.
- Her loyalty to her friends, usually considered to be a strength, is perverted into a weakness to be exploited by Iago. Her nagging insistence on pursuing Cassio's suit reinforces the belief that she is pleading for her lover.
- Cassio's giving in to peer pressure to accept another drink, then becoming a participant in a drunken brawl, displays a weakness which allows Iago to manipulate events to his advantage. Cassio is dismissed from his position, losing Othello's friendship and trust.
- The callous way in which Cassio mocks Bianca's infatuation, allows Iago to provide the oculus proof demanded by Othello to confirm Desdemona's affair with Cassio.
- Brabantio's prejudice enables Iago to manipulate him into attempting to dissolve the marriage between Othello and Desdemona.
- Roderigo's lack of intelligence, as well as his gullibility and lack of mature morality, allows him to become Iago's dupe. Despite becoming disillusioned with Iago's ability to fulfil his promise, he is easily persuaded to become further embroiled in Iago's plans.
- Emilia is a bullied wife who steals Desdemona's handkerchief because she wants to please her husband. The act of stealing the handkerchief allows Iago to further his plan of sowing discord. Emilia does not question his desire to acquire the handkerchief, proving she is ignorant of his true nature.
- It is Iago's manipulation of the weaknesses of various characters that results in the unjust and tragic deaths.

[Candidates might argue that it is not the characters' weaknesses, but rather Iago's devious manipulation that results in the injustice.]
[Irrespective of the number of characters mentioned, full credit may be given provided that the discussion is on manipulation of weaknesses resulting in injustice.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL

13.1 Desdemona is summoned as a witness to validate Othello's story of how he has come to marry her. Brabantio has accused Othello of stealing his daughter by using witchcraft or drugs and demands that Othello be punished. As general of the Venetian army, Othello is summoned for the purpose of sending him to head off the imminent Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

[Award 1½ marks for each of the characters.] (3)

13.2 Brabantio creates the impression that Desdemona is meek and obedient, but here she is bold, outspoken and defiant of her father. She shows herself to be intelligent and able to make her own decisions. She does not seem concerned about following convention: she insists on accompanying Othello to Cyprus.

[Award 3 marks only if the contrast is evident.] (3)

13.3 Desdemona's words suggest that what she sees in Othello is well beyond the physical and superficial. She says that she has fallen in love with Othello's inner qualities. Othello's words point to his appreciation of Desdemona's independent thinking. Othello later refers to Desdemona as 'my soul's joy', revealing their spiritual bond. He refers to her as 'my fair warrior', implying that he sees her as his equal. Desdemona appreciates his sense of adventure and empathises with the pain he has endured. Their relationship is based on more than mere physical attraction.

[Award 3 marks for any three ideas.] (3)

13.4 Othello places Desdemona in Iago's care because he believes Iago to be trustworthy. Othello believes that she will be safe with him. This is ironic, as Iago cannot be trusted. He will use Desdemona to effect Othello's downfall. His plan will result in the deaths of both Othello and Desdemona.

(3)

13.5 Emilia has just come to the dreadful realisation that her husband, Iago, is responsible for Othello's murdering of Desdemona. The act of murder is villainous and the words thus also refer to Othello's actions. Her repetition of the words conveys her inability to come to terms with and/or her sheer horror at the magnitude of this appalling act.

[Award 1½ marks for the meaning of 'villainy' in context and 1½ marks for the emotional impact of Emilia's realisation.] (3)

13.6 The words reveal his anguish at the dawning realisation that he has murdered an innocent. He realises the extent of his perfidy. His falling on the bed conveys his horror: he is so traumatised that he is unable to remain upright. The audience can empathise with the emotional torture that Othello is undergoing, or be repulsed by his self-pity.

[Award 1½ marks for the outburst and 1½ marks for the physical action.] (3)
13.7 Emilia would stand with her hands on her hips/stand with her arms outstretched/arms folded/point at Othello to convey her abhorrence.

Her tone would be contemptuous/scornful/angry to convey her disgust/horror at what Othello has done to Desdemona.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]
[To earn 3 marks, the candidate must provide a motivation.]
[Award 3 marks only if both the instruction and the motivation are discussed.]

13.8 No. The audience might pity Othello for his suffering as a result of Iago's manipulation. He appears to be unable to acknowledge the magnitude of the mistake he has made. His insecurities and naivety have been manipulated by Iago. Othello is still clinging to the hope that he has been just ('I know this act shows horrible and grim') and has done the world a favour by executing his wife. The audience is aware that he will not be able to live with the enormity of his deed.

OR

No. A candidate might already have a poor opinion of Othello, perhaps, for example, seeing him as a self-involved fool. So the cited lines simply reinforce this adverse attitude.

OR

Yes. The audience might lose respect for Othello. His words, 'There lies your niece', together with the use of 'uncle' and 'I know this act shows' sound weak and defensive. The audience might feel that Othello is ignoble: he is like a common villain, attempting to justify his actions.

[Accept a mixed response.]
[Accept other valid alternatives.]
[Award 4 marks only if the candidate assesses how 'these lines' influence attitude to character.]

[25]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

**OTHELLO – William Shakespeare**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 13 (essay question) OR QUESTION 14 (contextual question).

**QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION**

In the play, *Othello*, love and friendship are vulnerable to both internal and external forces.

Critically assess the validity of this statement in a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

**OR**

**QUESTION 14: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT A**

CASSIO
You advise me well.
IAGO
I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.
CASSIO
I think it freely, and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.
IAGO
You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.
CASSIO
Good night, honest Iago. 
*Cassio* off
IAGO
And what's he then that says I play the villain, When this advice is free I give, and honest, Probable to thinking, and indeed the course To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy The inclining Desdemona to subdue In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful As the free elements; and then for her To win the Moor, were't to renounce his baptism, All seals and symbols of redeemed sin, His soul is so enfettered to her love, That she may make, unmake, do what she list, Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will their blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
As I do now. For while this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.

[Act 2, Scene 3]

14.1 Place the extract in context. (3)

14.2 Refer to line 1: 'You advise me well' and line 10: 'this advice is free I give, and honest'.
Discuss the irony of Iago's advice. (3)

14.3 Refer to lines 18–21: 'His soul is ... his weak function.'
In your view, is Iago's assessment of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona accurate? Motivate your response. (3)

14.4 Refer to lines 23–26: 'Divinity of hell! ... I do now.'
Critically discuss how the paradox in these lines reveals Iago's true nature. (3)

EXTRACT B

DESDEMONA
How, sweet Othello?

OTHELLO
Devil!
_He strikes her_

DESDEMONA
I have not deserved this.

LODOVICO
My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw't. 'Tis very much.
Make her amends – she weeps.

OTHELLO
O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with women's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.

DESDEMONA
I will not stay to offend you.
6

Desdemona starts to go

LODOVICO
Truly an obedient lady.
I do beseech your lordship, call her back. 15

OTHELLO
Mistress!

DESDEMONA
My Lord?

OTHELLO
What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO
Who, I, my Lord?

OTHELLO
Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on.
And turn again.

[Act 4, Scene 1]

14.5 How does Othello’s exclamation, ‘Devil!’ (line 2) and the stage direction, ‘He strikes her’ (line 3) contribute to your understanding of Othello’s state of mind at this stage of the play? (3)

14.6 Refer to Desdemona’s replies to Othello, ‘I have not deserved this’ (line 4) and ‘I will not stay to offend you’ (line 12).

Are these responses typical of Desdemona’s character? Motivate your response. (3)

14.7 Refer to lines 9–10: ‘If that the … prove a crocodile.’

Comment on the dramatic irony of Othello’s statement. (3)

14.8 The play, Othello, depicts how easily characters can destroy themselves.

By a close reading of Extract A and Extract B, comment critically on how this is true of Iago and Othello. (4)

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – ESSAY

• Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
• Refer to page 29 for the rubric to assess this question.

• Both internal and external forces are responsible for destroying the bond of love between Othello and Desdemona, as well as the bond of friendship between Othello and Cassio.
• Othello’s insecurities (foreignness, age, race, lack of sophistication) play an important role.
• Othello’s ‘free and open nature’ contributes to Iago’s being able to manipulate him – this accounts for his rash actions.
• His jealousy is aroused, but he does not know how to respond appropriately, since he has never been jealous or in love before.
• His inherent pride, fear of having his suspicions confirmed and his faith in Iago also contribute to his acceptance of Iago’s lies. This clearly reveals his lack of judgement.
• Othello’s vivid imagination serves as fertile ground for Iago’s insinuations.
• Desdemona’s naivety, her total belief in the goodness of people, her loyalty towards Cassio and her conviction that Othello is devoid of jealousy, contribute to the destruction of their marriage.
• Othello and Cassio’s friendship is destroyed by Othello’s jealousy and lack of trust.
• Cassio’s immaturity and weakness allow him to be pressured into drinking. This, together with Iago’s manipulation of Cassio’s weakness, is an external force that destroys the friendship between Othello and Cassio.
• Cassio’s callous behaviour towards Bianca provides Iago with supposed ‘proof’ of infidelity.
• Othello and Desdemona’s love, new and fragile, is clearly vulnerable to external forces, most notably the evil manipulations of Iago, who finds it very satisfying to destroy the goodness of their love.
• Iago has the uncanny ability to seek out the weaknesses in the relationship and to use these weaknesses to destroy it. He realises that Othello has the subconscious fear that he may lose Desdemona and that behind his assertive and confident exterior lie insecurities. Iago proceeds to focus on these in order to convince Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful.
• The friendships between Desdemona and Cassio, and between Othello and Cassio, are exploited and undermined by Iago.
• Othello is consumed by jealousy and plots to murder Cassio when he believes Iago’s suggestions of an affair between Desdemona and Cassio. His belief is based upon the seemingly irrefutable ‘ocular proof’ provided by Iago.
• There is a bond of friendship between Desdemona and Emilia, with Emilia’s playing the role of loyal confidante. However, this relationship is undermined by Emilia’s wanting to please Iago by stealing Desdemona’s handkerchief. She thus unwittingly contributes to Desdemona’s destruction.
• Social conventions and attitudes have an effect on Othello, e.g. racism and the norms of propriety.
• Mention might be made of the Iago–Roderigo relationship.
• The movement of the action to Cyprus enables the vulnerability of friendship and love by removing the controls of Venice.
QUESTION 14: *OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL*

14.1 Cassio is involved in a drunken brawl instigated by Iago to discredit Cassio. As a result, he is stripped of his position by Othello. Iago advises him to request Desdemona to plead with Othello on his behalf. (3)

14.2 It is ironic that Cassio thank Iago for his good advice, when the advice is intended to destroy him. His advice does seem potentially helpful to Cassio; however, the irony is that his real intention is to bring about Cassio’s downfall and ultimately Othello’s, by implying to Othello that Cassio is having an affair with Desdemona. (3)

14.3 No. Iago’s words imply that Othello is sexually enslaved by Desdemona. This is not true, as earlier in the play Desdemona says that she has fallen in love with Othello’s admirable qualities/his noble nature. Othello also refers to Desdemona as ‘my soul’s joy’, clearly showing that their love is genuine. The love, respect and deep spiritual bond between them are clearly evident.

OR

Yes. Iago says that Othello’s ‘soul is … enfettered to her love’: it can indeed be argued that Othello’s soul is completely dominated by his love for Desdemona, e.g. he refers to her as ‘my soul’s joy’. Indeed, Othello’s berserk violence toward Desdemona can, in good measure, be seen as the result of his obsessive passion for her.

[Credit valid alternative responses.] (3)

14.4 The paradox shows Iago’s twisted values since he regards evil as divine (‘divinity of hell’). Iago’s inverted sense of moral values is emphasised. He equates himself with a devil, who feigns innocence while carrying out his most wicked deeds. This highlights Iago’s deceitful/hypocritical nature: when he is plotting to cause the most harm to his victims, he puts on an appearance of goodness, honesty and virtue, thus gaining the trust of all with whom he comes into contact.

[Award full marks only if candidate demonstrates an understanding of paradox in this context.] (3)

14.5 His exclamation, ‘Devill!’, suggests that his language has become harsh. The harmony within Othello has been destroyed. He is tormented by his belief in Desdemona’s infidelity. Othello’s physical abuse of Desdemona reveals the deterioration in his character. He has lost control of his ability to be rational and has allowed passion to take over.

[Award full marks only if both ‘exclamation’ and ‘stage directions’ are discussed.] (3)
14.6 [Candidates may either agree or disagree, depending on their own interpretation of Desdemona’s actions and the manner in which they perceive her tone.]

Yes. If Desdemona’s words are interpreted as feisty/assertive: Desdemona’s independence is asserted, as is her indignation at being unjustly accused. Her responses reveal her strength of mind. Although she weeps, she is still determined to stand up for herself, as when she stands up to her father and the Duke in the senate.

Yes. If Desdemona’s words are interpreted as meek: Desdemona is meek and self-sacrificing in her relationship with Othello. She is prepared to be subservient to his will. This is also evident on her death bed when she accepts the blame for her own death.

OR

No.
In the past, Desdemona has proven herself to be assertive and willing to stand up for her beliefs, e.g. her determination to accompany Othello to Cyprus. In this extract, she is submissive and accepting of Othello’s callous treatment.

[Mark globally.]
[Credit a mixed response.]

14.7 It is ironic that Othello accuses Desdemona of being hypocritical and deceitful, yet the audience is aware of her honesty and fidelity.

[Award full marks only if candidate demonstrates an understanding of dramatic irony in this context.] (3)

14.8 Iago’s evil machinations eventually rebound and destroy him; so good triumphs over evil. Iago’s commitment to evil means that his self-destruction is inevitable.

Othello’s insecurities blind him to Iago’s plotting and true nature. As a consequence, it is easy for him to be held responsible for his own destruction.

Extract A reveals Iago’s love of power. He is acutely aware of his own genius, congratulating himself on his cleverness. He takes delight in the sheer intellectual pleasure of devising what he thinks is a fool-proof plan. However, his plans rebound and he is caught in a web of his own making.

Also, in Extract A, Iago implies that Othello’s deep love for Desdemona makes him vulnerable to his insinuations. Othello will become consumed with jealousy to such an extent that he is unable to think rationally. This accounts for the ease with which Iago manipulates him into destroying himself.

In Extract B, Othello’s loss of control, his lack of judgement and his inability to see Iago’s true nature are revealed – these flaws lead to his self-destruction.

[Award full marks only if candidate:
• Makes equal reference to both characters and both extracts.
• Includes the critical dimension in his/her response.]
[Credit valid alternative responses based on merit.]

(4)
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

To a significant degree, Othello deserves what happens to him.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

Venice. A street.

Enter Roderigo and Iago

RODERIGO
Tush – never tell me! I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.
IAGO
'Sblood, but you will not hear me!
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.
RODERIGO
Thou told'st me thou did'st hold him in thy hate.
IAGO
Despise me if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capped to him; and by the faith of man
I know my price – I am worth no worse a place.
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,
And in conclusion
Nonsuits my mediators. For 'Certes', says he,
'I have already chose my officer.'
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine –  
A fellow almost damned in a fair wife –  
That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows  
More than a spinster – unless the bookish theoretic,  
Wherein the toged consuls can propose  
As masterly as he.  

[Act 1, Scene 1]

13.1 Refer to lines 3–5: 'Tush – never tell ... know of this.'
Account for Roderigo's current state of mind. (3)

13.2 Explain how this extract sets the scene for the events that follow. (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 6–8: 'Sblood, but you ... Abhor me.'
Suggest how Iago's choice of language is intended to influence Roderigo. (3)

13.4 Refer to line 14: 'But he, as loving his own pride and purposes'.
Discuss the irony in Iago's description of Othello. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

IAGO
Be not you known on 't, I have use for it.
Go, leave me.
Emilia off
I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ.

OTHELLO
Ha, ha, false to me, to me?
IAGO
Why, how now, General! No more of that.
OTHELLO
Avaunt! Be gone! Thou hast set me on the rack.
IAGO
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little.
IAGO
How now, my lord?
What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?  
I saw't not, thought it not; it harmed not me.  
I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and merry;  
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.  
He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,  
Let him not know't and he's not robbed at all.  

IAGO  
I am sorry to hear this.  

OTHELLO  
I had been happy if the general camp,  
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,  
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!  
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars  
That make ambition virtue – O, farewell,  
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner, and all quality,  
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!  
And, O ye mortal engines, whose rude throats  
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,  
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.  

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.5 Refer to line 4: 'I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin'.  
Explain the significance of the handkerchief in the play.  

13.6 Refer to line 10: 'Thou hast set me on the rack.'  
Discuss how this image contributes to your understanding of Othello's state of mind at this stage in the play.  

13.7 Refer to Iago's responses to Othello in the following lines:  
'Why, how now, General! No more of that.' (Line 9)  
'How now, my lord?' (Line 13)  
'I am sorry to hear this.' (Line 20)  
Comment on Iago's intention in these lines. In your response, deal with these lines together and not separately.  

13.8 Refer to Othello's speech in lines 21–33: 'I had been ... Othello's occupation's gone.'  
Is Othello justified in making this highly dramatic speech? Argue in support of your response, using your knowledge of the play as a whole.
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.

- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

Disagree:
- Othello has reached the position of general through sheer hard work, skill and determination despite the odds against him. He is a brilliant soldier and is highly respected.
- He has spent the greater part of his life in the army and as such his unfamiliarity with civilian life provides Iago with the opportunity to manipulate him.
- Iago uses Othello's trusting nature, vulnerability and insecurities to sow seeds of doubt in Othello's mind. Iago's strong manipulative character corrupts Othello's better nature, making Othello a victim.
- As an honourable man, Othello expects others to subscribe to the same values as those to which he does.
- Since he relies increasingly on Iago, Othello becomes isolated and is manipulated by the circumstantial evidence of the handkerchief.
- Cassio's suspicious behaviour unwittingly lends credibility to Iago's innuendos and convinces Othello that his wife is unfaithful.
- Perhaps, since he believes in the concept of military justice, Othello's decision to kill Desdemona might be anticipated.

Agree:
- Othello's flaw is that he is too trusting and allows himself to be manipulated. He is a poor judge of character and so embroiled in his personal anguish that he allows it to cloud his judgement.
- Othello becomes increasingly irrational as he is consumed by his jealousy. He is unable to think clearly.
- His abusive behaviour toward Desdemona and his vulgar language when speaking to or about her cannot be condoned.
- Othello's pride will not allow him to be disgraced; he feels the need to punish those who have tarnished his reputation.
- Othello's failure to listen to Desdemona is a serious flaw, with fatal consequences. His only evidence for Desdemona's supposed infidelity is flimsy.
- When Othello is convinced that Desdemona is unfaithful, he becomes blind to reason. He plots Cassio's death and murders Desdemona. Desdemona's death is tragic and undeserved.

[Credit mixed responses/valid alternative responses.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Roderigo is frustrated/indignant/resentful because he thinks that Iago has known about the relationship between Othello and Desdemona but has failed to share this knowledge with him. Roderigo is infatuated with Desdemona and Iago has promised to win her for him. He is aggrieved because he provides Iago with money, hoping that Iago will secure a meeting between him and Desdemona.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.2 In this extract, we are aware of Iago’s jealousy. His grievance is directed at Cassio for being Othello’s man of choice and at Othello for not giving him the position that he believes is his due. Iago’s resentment will serve as the catalyst for the web of deceit that he will weave in order to destroy both Othello and Cassio. Roderigo is important as Iago’s catspaw, i.e. dupe who is used by the villain.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.3 'Sblood’ is a blasphemous oath that conveys Iago’s intense emotion and his supposed commitment to Roderigo. Iago’s first exclamation reinforces the sense of his frustration that Roderigo does not appear to believe him. He claims that he has not even dreamt of the possibility of a relationship between Desdemona and Othello and gives Roderigo permission to hate him if he has proven to have done so. Iago’s choice of language is intended to reassure Roderigo of his trustworthiness.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.4 Iago accuses Othello of being proud; however, it is he who is proud and filled with rage that his worth has been overlooked by Othello. He feels peeved that Othello has disregarded him when he is directly in line for the position of lieutenant. It is ironic that he accuses Othello of selecting Cassio for his own purposes when in fact it is Iago who has hidden motives for all his actions.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is well discussed.] (3)

13.5 Iago intends to use the handkerchief as the 'ocular proof' of Desdemona’s infidelity. Furthermore, by planting the handkerchief in Cassio’s room, Iago strengthens the impression that Cassio is Desdemona’s lover. The sentimental value of the handkerchief intensifies Othello’s jealousy.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)
13.6 Othello feels as if he is being tortured and is in immense agony at the thought that Desdemona has been unfaithful to him. The image vividly expresses the intensity of his anguish. Although the pain is emotional, it is as if it is dreadfully physical as well. His mind is in turmoil and his imagination runs wild with thoughts of Desdemona’s alleged behaviour.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.7 Iago creates the impression that he is concerned about Othello and wants to comfort him. He presents himself as a good friend who is caring and sympathetic toward Othello’s distressed state. He actually says very little because he wants Othello to continue ranting in order to exacerbate his [Othello’s] suffering and to intensify his anger toward Desdemona.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.8 No.
Othello's dramatic speech is an insult to Desdemona, who has been tried in his mind and found to be guilty of infidelity. Desdemona has done nothing wrong. She continues to be a devoted and loving wife to Othello. She absolves him of all blame even on her death bed, demonstrating the intensity of her love for and devotion to him.

OR

Yes.
The insecure Othello who continues to feel like an outsider in Venetian society despite his marriage to Desdemona is vulnerable. He finds it difficult to believe that the beautiful and highly sought-after Desdemona should choose him for her husband. This innate fear and insecurity are what Iago capitalises on to convince Othello that Desdemona is unfaithful. Othello is trusting and has no reason to doubt Iago's credibility.

[Credit mixed responses/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.] (4) [25]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

The characters in Othello are driven by self-interest rather than concern for others.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

Enter Desdemona, Cassio and Emilia

DESDEMONA
Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

EMILIA
Good madam, do. I warrant it grieves my husband
As if the case were his.

DESDEMONA
O, that's an honest fellow! Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.

CASSIO
Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He's never anything but your true servant.

DESDEMONA
I know't; I thank you. You do love my lord.
You have known him long, and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.

CASSIO
Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That I being absent and my place supplied,
My General will forget my love and service.
DESDEMONA
Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here
I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship I'll perform it
To the last article. My lord shall never rest.
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience.
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift–
I'll intermingle everything he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.1 Explain how Cassio's appeal to Desdemona will promote Iago's plans. (3)

13.2 Refer to lines 24–25: 'If I do vow … the last article.'

How are Desdemona's words in keeping with what we know of her up to this point in the play? (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 29–31: 'be merry, Cassio … thy cause away.'

Discuss what is ironic about Desdemona's statement. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

IAGO
How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?

OTHELLO
Dost thou mock me?

IAGO
I mock you? No, by heaven!

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

OTHELLO
A horned man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO
There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.

OTHELLO
Did he confess it?

IAGO
Good sir, be a man.

Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you. There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.
OTHELLO
O, thou art wise, 'tis certain.
IAGO

Stand you awhile apart;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here erewhile, mad with your grief
(A passion most unsuiting such a man)
Cassio came hither. I shifted him away
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy,
Bid him anon return and here speak with me,
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes and notable scorns
That dwell in every region of his face,
For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago and when
He hath and is again to cope your wife.
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience!
Or I shall say you're all in all in spleen.
And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO
Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience,
But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.

[Act 4, Scene 1]

13.4 Refer to lines 1–5: 'How is it ... and a beast.'
Account for Othello's sensitivity at this stage in the play. (3)

13.5 Examine lines 14–17: 'O, 'tis the spite ... she shall be.'
Discuss how the language used in these lines conveys Iago's attitude toward women. (3)

13.6 Refer to lines 19–32: 'Stand you awhile ... Marry, patience!'
Comment on the effect that Iago's speech will have on Othello's perception of Iago. (3)

13.7 Since the beginning of the play, there has been a change in Iago's tone when addressing Othello.
Discuss the significance of this change. (3)

13.8 Refer to lines 35–37: 'Dost thou hear ... most bloody.'
Critically discuss, in the context of the play as a whole, how these lines influence your attitude to Othello. (4)
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

• Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
• A range of examples must be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
• Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

• Iago's behaviour is driven completely by self-interest. He makes use of characters' weaknesses and vulnerabilities to further his cause.
• He thinks the worst of others and does not believe in love or loyalty: for example, Othello's love for Desdemona or Cassio's loyalty to Othello.
• He uses people for his own benefit, showing little respect or concern for gullible people. When he gives Cassio and Roderigo advice, it is not because he has any concern for them, but rather because he has an ulterior motive to further his own plans.
• He does not love Emilia; neither does he treat her with respect. He belittles her in front of others and uses her to procure Desdemona's handkerchief so that he can provide Othello with the proof he has demanded. When she defies him at the end of the play, he kills her.
• His alerting Othello to the alleged affair is not out of concern for Othello, but rather as part of his plan to bring about Othello's downfall.
• Emilia's act of stealing Desdemona's handkerchief is motivated by self-interest as she hopes to please her husband, but her shock and horror when she realises that she has inadvertently contributed to Desdemona's death show that she is capable of great loyalty and love for her mistress. She refuses to be silenced, even though it could mean her death.
• Brabantio, too, acts out of self-interest rather than concern for his daughter's happiness when, because of his racism, he tries to dissolve her marriage.
• Othello's feelings of betrayal, hurt pride and humiliation at the alleged affair cause him to act out of self-interest and a desire for revenge when he kills Desdemona. His refusal to listen to her pleas of innocence might be construed as his pride's being greater than his love for her.
• Cassio's appeal to Desdemona to be reinstated is made out of justifiable self-interest: he wants his rank and social position to be restored.
• Cassio's affair with Bianca is motivated by self-interest. He has no respect for her.
• Roderigo is willing to use criminal means to serve his obsession with Desdemona.
• However, Desdemona's actions throughout the play show loyalty and steadfastness in her love for Othello, as well as in her friendship with Cassio. She is prepared to go to any decent lengths to help Cassio. Her actions are motivated by a concern for others rather than by self-interest.

[Credit mixed responses/valid alternative responses.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Cassio's appeal for Desdemona's assistance will reinforce Othello's impression that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair. The thought of Desdemona's infidelity will destroy Othello's happiness and peace of mind. Iago uses Cassio's appeal to manipulate the situation and gain revenge on Othello for perceived injustices against him.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.2 Desdemona's response reflects her loyalty and commitment. Her response is fully in keeping with her refusal to compromise when it comes to matters important to her, such as her determination to marry Othello and to accompany him to Cyprus. Desdemona's steadfast loyalty to Othello despite her father's disapproval is indicative of her faithfulness.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.3 Desdemona says that she 'shall rather die' than give up her attempts to have Cassio reinstated. It is ironic that Desdemona does indeed lose her life in her attempt to keep her promise to Cassio. It is her determination to plead Cassio's case that convinces Othello of her infidelity, culminating in her tragic death.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is well discussed.] (3)

13.4 Othello is sensitive because he now believes Iago's innuendoes regarding the affair. Othello refers to the belief that a man who has been cuckolded wears horns. Thus, when Iago asks him if he has hurt his head, he thinks that Iago is taunting him about the affair. Moreover, Othello realises that he has had a fit. His vulnerability is exposed and he feels humiliated about this weakness.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.5 Iago uses derogatory language to describe women who are unfaithful to their husbands, saying that there are women who appear virtuous ('chaste') but are not ('wanton'). Iago is cynical about female virtue. He has a generally disparaging attitude toward women in general.

[Award 3 marks only if the language in the lines is discussed.] (3)

13.6 Othello sees Iago as being loyal and concerned about Othello's well-being. Iago's willingness to show Othello proof of his accusations will lead Othello to believe in their veracity. Othello feels indebted to Iago, who he believes has his best interests at heart. It will increase his faith in Iago's supposed loyalty and he will be more amenable to any of Iago's future allusions and hints.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)
13.7 Earlier in the play, Iago's tone is respectful and deferential, acknowledging Othello's higher status and rank. His tone is used to ingratiate himself with Othello and to gain Othello's trust.

In this extract, Iago's tone is scornful and contemptuous. He mocks Othello's manhood and implies that Othello is behaving in a weak and unbecoming manner for someone of his stature.

Alternatively, Iago's tone in this extract can be seen as confident and firm, but also falsely sympathetic. He is asserting control over Othello while continuing to sound like a true friend.

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate discusses the change in tone.]

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

13.8 Initially one responds favourably toward Othello because of his integrity. However, one might lose respect for Othello because his moral deterioration is evident in his taking satisfaction in being 'cunning' and being 'most bloody', qualities that were alien to his nature at the beginning of the play. Previously he prides himself on being someone who is forthright and honest in his dealings with others; now he has become devious and has lost his honour and integrity.

One might feel sympathy for Othello because Iago has stripped him of his honour and integrity. Othello is reduced to an animal-like state, having lost rational control.

[Award 4 marks only if the candidate assesses how 'these lines' influence attitude to character in the context of the play as a whole.]

[Credit mixed responses.]

[Credit valid alternative responses.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

*OTHELLO* – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: *OTHELLO* – ESSAY QUESTION

In *Othello*, Shakespeare portrays a situation in which individuals are destroyed as a consequence of deception and conspiracy.

Critically discuss this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

OR

QUESTION 13: *OTHELLO* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT A**

CASSIO

Good ancient, you are welcome. (To Emilia) Welcome, mistress.
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

*He kisses Emilia*

IAGO

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You'd have enough.

DESDEMONA

Alas, she has no speech.

IAGO

In faith, too much.
I find it still when I have list to sleep.
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant
She puts her tongue a little in her heart
And chides with thinking.

EMILIA

You have little cause to say so.

IAGO

Come on, come on. You are pictures out of doors,
Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.
DESDEMONA
O, fie upon thee, slanderer!
IAGO
Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk–
You rise to play and go to bed to work.
EMILIA
You shall not write my praise.
IAGO
No, let me not.

DESDEMONA
What wouldst thou write of me if thou shouldst praise me?
IAGO
O, gentle lady, do not put me to’t.
For I am nothing if not critical.
DESDEMONA
Come on, assay … There’s one gone to the harbour?
IAGO
Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA
I am not merry, but I do beguile
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

[Act 2, Scene 1]

13.1 Account for Desdemona’s presence on the island of Cyprus. (3)

13.2 Refer to lines 3–4: ‘I extend my manners … show of courtesy.’

How is this statement typical of the kind of person Cassio is? (3)

13.3 How does the tone in this extract set the scene for Iago’s plot against Othello? (3)

AND

EXTRACT B

OTHELLO
‘Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well.
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago,
I’ll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove,
And on the proof there is no more but this—
Away at once with love or jealousy! 5

10
IAGO
I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife. Observe her well with Cassio. 15
Wear your eye thus, not jealous, nor secure.
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abused. Look to't.
I know our country disposition well.
In Venice they do let God see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands. Their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone but keep't unknown.
OTHELLO
Dost thou say so?
IAGO
She did deceive her father marrying you,
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks, 25
She loved them most.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.4 Refer to line 1: "'Tis not to make me jealous'.
Account for Iago's desire to make Othello jealous. \(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) 

13.5 Refer to lines 1–7: "'Tis not to make ... and chose me.'
Discuss how Othello's attitude towards his relationship with Desdemona changes in the course of the play. \(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) 

13.6 Discuss the irony in Othello's statement, 'I'll see before I doubt' (line 8). \(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) 

13.7 Refer to lines 15–16: 'Look to your ... jealous, nor secure.'
If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay specific attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. \(\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) 

13.8 Refer to EXTRACT A and EXTRACT B.
How is Iago's attitude towards women, as demonstrated in both extracts, a reflection of his essential nature? \(\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\) 

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

Characters are damaged or destroyed because of their inability to perceive deception, as well as by Iago’s manipulations and fate/opportunity. However, candidates might choose to argue that some individuals are destroyed as a consequence of their own folly.

- Iago plots to exact revenge on Othello and Cassio. He uses Roderigo, Emilia and Desdemona in his deception, resulting in deaths and the destruction of reputations and camaraderie.
- Iago deceives people as to his true nature and intentions, thus ensuring that he is regarded as honest, loyal and trustworthy. Iago employs trickery in suggesting there is an affair between Desdemona and Cassio. His machinations are successful because he knows how people will react.
- Iago plots to use Othello’s potential for jealousy. Othello’s subsequent irrational behaviour ensures the success of Iago’s plans.
- Iago’s machiavellism exploits Othello’s trusting nature, bringing about his downfall. Iago manipulates Othello by playing on his insecurities.
- Othello and Iago conspire to murder Cassio and Desdemona.
- Iago plays on the importance of reputation to Othello and Cassio.
- Fate ensures that the action moves to Cyprus, aiding Iago’s intrigue. It is also due to fate that Bianca arrives with the handkerchief while Iago is questioning Cassio as Othello watches; Desdemona drops the handkerchief where Emilia can find it.
- Misdeeds aside, characters’ inherent qualities contribute to their own destruction: Roderigo’s gullibility and improper desire; Emilia’s desire to please Iago, which blurs her moral sense.
- Desdemona has absolute faith in Iago. Her goodness and naivety ensure the success of Iago’s scheming. Ironically, he is finally responsible for the tragedy of Desdemona’s death.
- Desdemona and Emilia are also guilty of deception (both lie about the handkerchief), which contributes to their deaths.
- Cassio’s weakness for alcohol ensures the destruction of his reputation and his dismissal from his position. Cassio’s irresponsibility allows peer pressure to cause him to drink in spite of his poor head for alcohol. Moreover, he is the officer in charge of the watch and should be more responsible.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]
[Both aspects of the question i.e. deception and conspiracy, must be addressed in order to receive more than 60%.]

[25]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL

13.1 Desdemona has married Othello. Othello has been sent to Cyprus to defend the island against the Turkish invasion. Desdemona has the permission of the Senate to accompany Othello.

[Award 3 marks for three distinct ideas.]

13.2 Cassio is playing the elegant courtier. He indicates that Iago should not be annoyed by his ‘manners’ as they are part of his upbringing. This is typical of Cassio’s behaviour as he is a well-born gentleman. He is gallant and well versed in the appropriate social etiquette of the time. He has social grace and charm. However, there is something foppish about his enjoyment of the role. His behaviour towards Emilia could be regarded as flirtatious, which would also be typical of Cassio as a womaniser.

[Award 3 marks for three distinct ideas.]

13.3 Iago’s tone is sarcastic/sneering/critical/derogatory/disrespectful/cynical. Iago convinces Othello that Desdemona is as vile as he sarcastically depicts all women as being and/or that Iago actually displays his true nature here and its cynical nastiness is in tune with his plot against Othello.

[Identification of the general tone of the extract or another character’s tone if not related to Iago’s plot will not received more than 1 mark.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to tone and its connection to Iago’s plotting against Othello.]

13.4 Iago is envious of everything Othello embodies. He is jealous of Othello’s successes and impressive qualities. Iago wants revenge on Othello for denying him the promotion he has desired. He also suspects that Othello has slept with Emilia. By making Othello jealous, Iago reduces Othello’s stature by exploiting a weakness. Othello’s jealousy clouds his ability to reason, thus making it easier for Iago to manipulate, damage or even destroy him.

[Award 3 marks for three valid and distinct points.]

13.5 In these lines, the relationship is based on mutual respect and admiration. Othello appreciates Desdemona’s virtues. He believes that Desdemona has fallen in love with him because of his inner qualities. Later, as a result of his insecurities and jealousy, Othello’s perception of their relationship changes to suspicion and doubt. He no longer trusts anything she says or does. He no longer sees her as pure, but as an adulteress.

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate discusses the change in Othello’s attitude toward Desdemona.]
13.6 Othello claims to need proof of Desdemona’s infidelity before he believes Iago’s claims. However, Othello soon becomes irrational and believes Desdemona to be untrue without any proof at all. He later regards the flimsy evidence of the handkerchief as ‘ocular proof’. It is ironic that while professing his belief in Desdemona’s virtues, he will easily be swayed to believe Iago. The irony of the ‘proof’ is that it is not proof.

[Award 3 marks only if the irony is well discussed.]

13.7 Iago might put his hand on his heart/place his hand on Othello’s shoulder/look into his eyes in an attempt to appear sincere. The words would be said quietly. His tone would be sinister/sincere/caring/warning to intimate that he has Othello’s best interests at heart and that there is some truth to his concerns.

[The candidate’s response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to and motivates both body language and tone.]

13.8 Iago is disrespectful toward and has no regard for women. In Extract A, he is disparaging, suggesting that women talk too much, as well as being shrewd and deceptive. This cynical attitude is repeated in Extract B when he reminds Othello of Desdemona’s deception of her father by marrying Othello. He debases women and sees them as disloyal. Iago considers women to be possessions and he sexually objectifies them. Iago’s attitude is that all women are promiscuous and unfaithful by nature.

Iago’s cynical and vicious attitude toward women is indicative of his general insecurity; he is hostile to anything that challenges his ego.

[Candidates must refer to both Extract A and Extract B; should they not, a maximum of 2 marks may be awarded.]

[Award 4 marks for any three points well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

Shakespeare’s play, Othello, suggests that when people believe they have complete power, they abuse that power.

Critically discuss the validity of this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

QUESTION 13: OTHHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Re-enter second Gentleman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CASSIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How now? Who has put in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 GENTLEMAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Tis one Iago, ancient to the General.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASSIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s had most favourable and happy speed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempests themselves, high seas and howling winds,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The guttered rocks and congregated sands,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traitors ensteeped to clog the guiltless keel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As having sense of beauty, do omit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their mortal natures, letting go safely by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The divine Desdemona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTANO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is she?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASSIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She that I spake of, our great Captain’s captain,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left in the conduct of the bold lago,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A se’night’s speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make love’s quick pants in Desdemona’s arms,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And bring all Cyprus comfort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[25]
Enter Desdemona, Emilia, Iago, Roderigo and Attendants

O, behold,
The riches of the ship is come ashore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.
Hail to thee, lady! And the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round.

DESDEMONA
I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

CASSIO
He is not yet arrived; nor know I aught
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

DESDEMONA
O, but I fear! How lost you company?

CASSIO
He is not yet arrived; nor know I aught
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

DESDEMONA
O, but I fear! How lost you company?

CASSIO
The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship.

A cry within: 'A sail, a sail, a sail!' Another salvo.

But hark, a sail!

[Act 2, Scene 1]

13.1 Place this extract in context. (3)

13.2 Refer to line 10: 'The divine Desdemona' and line 23: 'The riches of the ship is come ashore!'

Explain how Cassio's attitude toward Desdemona differs from Iago's attitude toward her elsewhere in the play. (3)

13.3 Refer to line 12: 'our great Captain's captain'.

Discuss how this detail about Desdemona is used by Iago to further his plans. (3)

13.4 Refer to lines 5–7: 'Tempests themselves, high ... the guiltless keel'.

Discuss the significance of the storm in the context of the play as a whole. (3)

AND

EXTRACT H

IAGO
Good my lord, pardon me.
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts! Why, say they are vile and false?
As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law-days and in session sit
With meditations lawful?
OTHELLO
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wronged, and mak'st his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.

IAGO
I do beseech you
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
(As I confess it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not) I entreat you then,
From one that so imperfectly conjects,
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of my scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO
Zounds!

IAGO
Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse, steals trash: 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO
By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO
You cannot, if my heart were in your hand,
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.5 Refer to lines 2–3: 'Though I am bound ... slaves are free to.'
Comment on Iago's ironic use of the words, 'duty' and 'slaves'. (3)

13.6 Refer to lines 13–23: 'I do beseech ... know my thoughts.'
If you were the director of a production of Othello, describe how you would direct the actor to play Iago in this extract. Motivate your answer with reference to both body language and tone. (3)

13.7 Refer to lines 25–26: 'Good name in man ... of their souls.'
Discuss the significance of reputation in the context of the play. (3)

13.8 Refer to line 10: 'Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago'.
Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, discuss the extent to which mistrust is an important element in the tragedy of Othello. (4)
SECTION C: DRAMA

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

When people feel effectively omnipotent, they abuse their power and manipulate others to satisfy their own needs. Candidates, however, might argue that not all characters with the requisite power abuse it.
- The Duke does not abuse his power: he displays fairness.
- Initially Othello is fair and just. However, he later abuses his authority/power.
- Othello’s pride, insecurities and fear of humiliation lead to his abuse of his position as husband. He verbally abuses and eventually murders Desdemona.
- His denying Desdemona and Cassio the chance to defend themselves also demonstrates his abuse of power. He acts as judge and executioner.
- Candidates might argue that it is not Othello’s abuse of power that motivates him, but his jealousy.
- Iago’s greatest satisfaction comes from asserting his power and superiority over others. He derives sadistic pleasure from the suffering of his victims.
- Iago’s power comes from his superior intellect, his excellent understanding of human nature, and his ability to discern his victims’ weaknesses/vulnerabilities, which he then exploits: Cassio’s weak head for alcohol and need for popularity/social success; Roderigo’s gullibility and lust for Desdemona; Emilia’s desire to please him (Iago).
- Iago taps into Othello’s insecurities to drive him mad with jealousy in order to take revenge on him.
- Iago uses Desdemona’s generosity of spirit and loyalty to enmesh her in his plans to destroy her marriage to Othello.
- Iago abuses people’s inaccurate perception of him as honest in order to manipulate them. He plays God by ending their lives once their usefulness to him is over.
- Brabantio abuses his position as a senator and nobleman in Venice in his attempt to satisfy his desire to have Othello punished.
- Cassio abuses both his social status and his identity as a man in his mistreatment of Bianca.

[Credit mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[25]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Othello is sent to Cyprus to conduct the war. Iago is in another ship, with Desdemona. The ships are caught in a very bad storm. There is fear for their safety. Iago and Desdemona’s safe arrival is cause for great relief.

[Award 3 marks for any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.2 Cassio’s attitude to Desdemona is respectful and admiring. He puts her on a pedestal. The word, ‘divine’ suggests she is like a goddess. He also refers to her as precious treasure on board the ship.

Iago uses sexual innuendo when referring to Desdemona. He is disrespectful when referring to her as being ‘full of game’. In his comments to Othello, he suggests that her choice of Othello as husband is unnatural and abnormal.

[Award 3 marks only if both Cassio’s and Iago’s attitudes are discussed.] (3)

13.3 Referring to Desdemona as Othello’s ‘captain’ suggests that Desdemona is important in Othello’s life and that she has influence over him. Othello’s emotions are therefore that much easier to control because his love for Desdemona makes him vulnerable. If Iago then raises doubts about her in Othello’s mind, he will cause Othello to act irrationally and to destroy himself.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.4 The storm is a device used by Shakespeare to remove the Turkish threat, allowing the reader to focus on Iago’s plot to destroy Othello.

Symbolically, the storm is a foreshadowing of the destruction and chaos that will be unleashed as a result of Iago’s machinations. The storm is also symbolic of the chaos unleashed in Othello’s mind as a result of his overwhelming jealousy, as well as the conflict between his love for Desdemona and his desire to make her pay for her betrayal of their love.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

13.5 When Iago uses the words ‘duty’ and ‘slave’, he uses them ironically, to create the impression that he is subservient and loyal. However, he disregards ‘duty’ and all other virtues. He focuses only on himself and has no honour. He does not regard himself as bonded to anybody.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)
13.6 For example, Iago might raise his arms in a pleading manner. He might place one hand on his heart, with the other outstretched toward Othello. This would be to convince Othello of his sincerity.

His tone might be concerned/sincere/self-effacing in order to convince Othello that he has Othello’s best interests at heart.

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate discusses both body language and tone.]

[The candidate’s response should be convincing in context.]  

[Accept valid alternative responses.]  

13.7 Cassio and Othello regard their reputations as crucial to their honour. When Cassio is stripped of his position as a result of his drunken brawling, he is devastated about losing his reputation, referring to it as ‘the immortal part’ of himself. He is desperate to regain his reputation as well as Othello’s esteem.

Othello, too, highly prizes his reputation as a soldier, as well as the regard in which he is held by the Duke and the Senate. He believes that Desdemona’s alleged infidelity is a stain on his reputation.

Iago, on the other hand, uses the concept of reputation expediently and to manipulate characters. In this extract, he calls reputation ‘the immediate jewel’ of men’s souls. In order to win Cassio’s trust and to use him in his plot to destroy Othello, Iago dismisses reputation as a ‘false imposition’ which is unfairly gained.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.]  

13.8 Iago’s manipulative strategy ensures that he keeps Othello’s trust and creates the impression that he has Othello’s best interests at heart. This exacerbates Othello’s mistrust of Cassio and Desdemona, and ultimately leads to his desire to have them both killed.

Despite the fact that Othello has pledged his trust in Desdemona’s love and loyalty (‘my life upon her faith’), he later believes Iago and doubts Desdemona, leading to the tragic ending of the play.

Brabantio mistrusts Othello’s courting and marrying his daughter. This causes a rift in his relationship with Desdemona, later resulting in his own death. Othello’s insecurities are awakened by Brabantio’s words. This makes Othello more susceptible to Iago’s innuendo, contributing to the tragedy.

Candidates might argue that other factors, such as Othello’s and Desdemona’s naivety, as well as Iago’s deviousness, are important elements in the tragedy.

[Award 4 marks only if candidates discuss how mistrust culminates in tragedy.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

Othello is a tragedy of misunderstanding.

Critically discuss the validity of the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2 ½ pages). [25]

OR

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRABANTIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call up my brother … O that you had had her!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some one way, some another! Do you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RODERIGO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think I can discover him, if you please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get good guard and go along with me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRABANTIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And raise some special officers of night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On, good Roderigo – I'll deserve your pains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCENE 2

Venice. Another street.

Enter Othello, Iago, and Attendants with torches

IAGO
Though in the trade of war I have slain men, |
Yet do I hold it very stuff of conscience |
To do no contrived murder. I lack iniquity |
Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times |
I had thought to have yerked him here, under the ribs. |

OTHELLO
'Tis better as it is.
IAGO
Nay, but he prated
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honour
That, with the little godliness I have,
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray, sir,
Are you fast married? For be sure of this,
That the Magnifico is much beloved
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.

[Act 1, Scenes 1 & 2]

13.1 Refer to lines 4–5: 'I think I can … along with me.' Explain why Roderigo is ready to assist Brabantio. (3)

13.2 Refer to lines 23–26: 'For be sure … as the Duke's.' Account for Iago's warning Othello about Brabantio. (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 14–15: 'I lack iniquity sometimes to do me service.' Drawing on your knowledge of the play as a whole, explain the irony in these lines. (3)

13.4 Refer to lines 27–28: 'Or put upon … enforce it on'. By focusing on the reference to 'the law', discuss the significance of moving the action of the play to Cyprus. (3)

AND

EXTRACT B

LODOVICO
Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

OTHELLO
I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
Othello wounds Iago
LODOVICO
Wrench his sword from him.

IAGO
I bleed, sir, but not killed.

OTHELLO
I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live,
For in my sense 'tis happiness to die.
LODOVICO
O, thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fallen in the practice of a damned slave,
What shall be said to thee?  
OTHELLO
Why, anything –
An honourable murderer, if you will,
For naught did I in hate but all in honour.
LODOVICO
This wretch hath part confessed his villainy.
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?
OTHELLO
Ay.
CASSIO
Dear General, I never gave you cause.

[Act 5, Scene 2]

13.5 Account for Lodovico's reference to Iago as a 'viper' (line 1).  
13.6 Refer to lines 2–3: 'I look down … cannot kill thee.'

Explain how the image in these lines contributes to your understanding of Othello's attitude toward Iago at this stage in the play.  
13.7 Refer to lines 13–14: 'An honourable murderer … all in honour.'

Critically discuss how these lines influence your reaction to Othello.  
13.8 The play, Othello, is characterised by irrational behaviour.

Do you agree? Justify your response by providing evidence from the play as a whole.  

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 26 for the rubric to assess this question.

A misunderstanding of characters’ true natures and intentions, as well as a misinterpretation of events and actions, contributes to the tragedy of Othello. However, Iago, who creates the misunderstanding, is the exception.
- Brabantio’s misunderstanding of Othello’s reason for marrying Desdemona is driven by his bigotry. He misconstrues the depth of their love and assumes that Othello is bewitched by her. This contributes to the tragedy: he breaks ties with Desdemona and dies of a broken heart.
- Brabantio fails to understand Desdemona’s character. He thinks she is timid and submissive. He is not prepared for her defiance.
- Characters are unaware of Iago’s true nature, regarding him as honest and loyal. They misunderstand his actual intentions. His manipulative nature is so well concealed that not even Emilia has the vaguest notion of his plans. His skilful manipulations win the confidence of everyone, while he carefully plots their destruction. Emilia has no clue about the extent of Iago’s evil until the evidence becomes overwhelming.
- Roderigo misinterprets Iago’s motives and is unaware that he is being deceived. On more than one occasion he realises that he has been exploited but is convinced otherwise by Iago.
- Cassio is deluded into thinking that Iago is honest. His following of Iago’s advice contributes to the tragedy.
- Because of his insecurities, Othello fails to trust Desdemona’s loyalty. Iago’s constant innuendo lays the foundation for Othello’s misreading of the relationship between Desdemona and Cassio.
- Othello is easily convinced of his wife’s alleged affair when Iago orchestrates Othello’s eavesdropping on the conversation between Iago and Cassio. Othello’s misinterpretation results in Desdemona’s murder.
- Cassio’s possession of the handkerchief so cleverly obtained by Iago, convinces Othello of his wife’s infidelity.
- Othello’s belief in Iago clouds his mind to such an extent that he loses focus on the true nature of the woman he married.
- Desdemona misinterprets the change in Othello.
- In general, decent people cannot grasp how much evil there is around them. If one has an emotional need not to see the truth, one tends not to: e.g. Emilia can have valid suspicions about Othello’s attitude whereas Desdemona finds it difficult to credit such possibilities.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL

13.1 Roderigo is serving his own interests as he is infatuated with Desdemona. He hopes that Brabantio will follow his directions and find Othello and Desdemona together, have the marriage annulled, and look upon him with favour.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas.]

13.2 Iago hopes that the warning will help to convince Othello of his (Iago’s) loyalty. Iago also hopes to undermine Othello’s happiness. He possibly hopes that Othello will react in a way that disgraces him.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

13.3 ‘Iniquity’ denotes wickedness/evil-mindedness and for Iago to suggest that he lacks this quality is ironic as he plots against Cassio and Othello, uses Roderigo and Emilia, and is responsible for the tragic deaths of Othello, Desdemona, Roderigo and Emilia. His use of the word reflects his hypocritical nature.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is discussed and reference is made to the play as a whole.]

13.4 The reference to the law is a reminder that Venice is an organised, civilised state, renowned for its refined behaviour. It is an orderly, law-abiding society associated with reason and stability, while Cyprus is regarded as a hostile, barbaric military outpost situated on the edge of Venetian territory. In a less law-abiding place such as Cyprus, it is easier for Iago to manipulate Othello. With the move from Venice to Cyprus, Othello’s behaviour becomes less controlled and more irrational. It is in Cyprus that Othello descends into the jealous paranoia that leads to his downfall.

AND/OR

Cyprus is situated between Venice and the Turks. Venice represents civilised order and rational law. The Turks represent the forces of darkness and chaos. The main action takes place on Cyprus, a site of conflict between ‘good’ and ‘evil’. On Cyprus, Othello is similarly caught between these opposing forces/aspects of the human condition.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

13.5 A viper is deadly and associated with wickedness and poison. This is an appropriate word to describe Iago. He has been identified as the instigator of the plot against Othello and as Emilia’s murderer. He has duped all the characters, including his wife, into participating in his evil plans and has trapped them all in a web of lies and deceit.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]
13.6 Othello regards Iago as the devil incarnate when he says: ‘I look down towards his feet’ as if to imply Iago should have the cloven hoofs of the devil. Iago’s actions are so diabolical that only the devil is capable of such malice. This comparison conveys Othello’s attitude of bitterness/anger/loathing toward Iago.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

13.7 The question hinges on whether one regards the word ‘honourable’ as valid. The audience might feel either sympathy for Othello or revulsion that he tries to dignify murder.

One can see Othello as ‘honourable’ on the grounds that he earnestly believed he was doing the noble thing in killing Desdemona, thereby saving men from becoming victims of infidelity. He sees himself as merely dispensing justice as he would in the military. Othello’s sincerity heightens the empathy/pity/sympathy that the audience might feel for him.

OR

One can reject Othello’s claim to having acted honourably on the ground that he sees himself as judge, jury and executioner. The audience might be horrified that Othello attempts to justify his murderous behaviour by appealing to honour and suggesting that it was an act of justice.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas or 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.]

13.8 Candidates may argue that irrationality is so crucially important that rational behaviour can be seen as merely a foil serving to highlight the central focus on irrationality.

Yes. In the course of the play, Iago drives Othello to the point of madness, culminating in the senseless murder of Desdemona and his irrational justification of his murderous actions. Othello’s treatment of Desdemona is unforgiveable. He has lost control.

Iago holds an illogical grudge against Othello for any slight, no matter how imaginary: the alleged affair with Emilia and Cassio’s promotion. In essence, he obsessively resents anyone whose ‘daily beauty … makes [him] ugly’.

Brabantio’s accusations against Othello stem from his irrational prejudices.

OR

No. Although irrationality is significant, the play is not about irrationality as such, because the nature and importance of reasonable behaviour is also stressed. One might point to the very efficient functioning of the Senate, Othello’s own rational responses to situations earlier in the play: his calm reaction during the Senate meeting; his appropriate response to Brabantio’s accusations.

[Accept mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks only if the candidate has referred to the play as a whole.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 12 (essay question) OR QUESTION 13 (contextual question).

QUESTION 12: OTHHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

The female characters in Shakespeare's Othello are victims of male oppression.

Critically assess the validity of this statement in a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]

OR

QUESTION 13: OTHHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT A

EMILIA
Madam, here comes my lord.
CASSIO
Madam, I'll take my leave.
DESDEMONA
Why, stay and hear me speak.
CASSIO
Madam, not now. I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purpose.
DESDEMONA
Well, do your discretion.
Cassio off
IAGO
Ha! I like not that.
OTHELLO
What dost thou say?
IAGO
Nothing, my lord; or if – I know not what.
OTHELLO
Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?
IAGO
Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it
That he would sneak away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

5

10
OTHELLO

I do believe 'twas he.  

DESDEMONA

How now, my lord?
I have been talking with a suitor here.
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTHELLO

Who is't you mean?

DESDEMONA

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take,
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgement in an honest face.
I prithee call him back.

OTHELLO

Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA

Yes, faith, so humbled,
That he hath left part of his grief with me
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTHELLO

Not now, sweet Desdemona – some other time.

DESDEMONA

But shall't be shortly?

[Act 3, Scene 3]

13.1 Explain how this extract illustrates how Iago's plan has been set in motion. (3)

13.2 Refer to line 31: 'Not now, sweet Desdemona – some other time.'
Account for Othello's refusal to deal with Desdemona's request immediately. (3)

13.3 Refer to lines 4–5: 'I am very ill at ease, Unfit for mine own purpose.'
Discuss how Cassio's nature, as revealed in these lines, contributes to the success of Iago's plans. (3)

13.4 Refer to Desdemona's diction in lines 16–26: 'How now, my lord? ... call him back.'
Comment on how Desdemona's entreaty on Cassio's behalf contributes to her fate. (3)

AND
EXTRACT B

Desdemona in bed asleep. Enter Othello with a light.

OTHELLO
It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul –
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars! –
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light.
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have plucked the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again –
It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree.

Othello kisses her.

[Act 5, Scene 2]

13.5 How does Othello's repetition of the words, 'it is the cause' (line 2) reflect his state of mind? (3)

13.6 Refer to line 7: 'Yet she must die'.

Comment on how Othello's military background influences his decision to kill Desdemona. (3)

13.7 Refer to line 8: 'Put out the light, and then put out the light.'

If you were the director of a production of Othello, how would you instruct the actor to deliver this line? Motivate your response. (3)

13.8 In your view, can Othello be held responsible for his actions? Motivate your response. (4)

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 12: OTHELLO – ESSAY

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates are expected to discuss all of the female characters; however, in their responses they might choose to agree and/or disagree with the validity of the statement. Candidates might choose to discuss some or all of the following points:

- In the Venice of the play, a male-dominated society thrives. Although Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca are very different from one another, they are all victims to some extent of male oppression.
- To some men, women are possessions and described in sexist and derogatory terms. Roderigo's and Iago's ribald descriptions bear testimony to this.
- When Desdemona speaks to her father about her 'obedience' and her 'divided duty', it becomes apparent that men expect women to be dutiful and submissive.
- Desdemona is assertive and at times audacious, refusing to be oppressed by men. She speaks her mind to her father and the Senate and insists on accompanying Othello to Cyprus. She is a strong-willed, courageous woman who is prepared to defy the stereotypical attitudes of her time. Initially, Othello regards Desdemona as an equal and she demands to be treated equally.
- Later, however, Desdemona fails to speak for herself with clarity and authority when Othello verbally and physically abuses her. By defending his actions, she becomes a submissive and obedient wife. Ultimately, she is a victim of Othello's overpowering strength and oppressive jealousy.
- Emilia is verbally abused by Iago and initially she obeys him without question. However, Emilia is not simply passive. She is a realist who later displays great courage and defies her victimhood and her duties as a wife when she refuses to obey Iago. She is prepared to denounce him even though she realises she might die in doing so.
- Because of her lower position in society, Bianca is treated with disdain by Michael Cassio, whom she loves, because he does not regard her as a woman deserving of respect. In doing so, Cassio is guilty of a form of oppression. He uses her sexually and laughs at her behind her back. She is an exploited plaything. She becomes an easy target when Iago tries to implicate her in Cassio's attempted murder.
- Female suffering in Othello is caused by the oppression of men. Othello feels justified in killing Desdemona because of her supposed infidelity. Iago kills Emilia to silence her. Despite her defiance, she is still a victim.
- Not all men are guilty of the subjugation of women. Lodovico is horrified when Othello strikes Desdemona and Gratiano is outraged when Iago draws his sword on Emilia.

[25]
QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL

13.1 Iago uses the friendship (the web) between Cassio and Desdemona to make it appear that they are having an affair. Othello's seeing Cassio and Desdemona together, combined with Iago's innuendo ('Ha! I like not that'; 'I cannot think it/That he would sneak away so guilty-like,/Seeing you coming'), will arouse Othello's suspicions. It is from this point that these suspicions and doubts start to trouble Othello. (3)

13.2 Iago has already made Othello uneasy about the relationship between Cassio and Desdemona by referring to Cassio's 'sneak[ing] away so guilty-like'. Othello is bothered by her request. Furthermore, he has matters of state to which he needs to attend. He would offend the islanders were he seen to be lenient with Cassio. (3)

13.3 Cassio's concern for his reputation, together with his shame/humiliation/discomfort/failure of self-confidence and guilt that he has let down his friend and General, result in his being unable to face Othello. Iago also ensures that they are kept apart. Thus he can manipulate the situation and further his plans. Because Cassio leaves at that point, Iago uses the opportunity to insinuate that Cassio is guilty of something. [Mark globally.] (3)

13.4 By showing her support for and empathy with Cassio, Desdemona contributes to her fate and fuels Othello's suspicions. Her persistence in pursuing Cassio's case will also give Othello the impression that she is pleading on her lover's behalf. Had Desdemona not had such a strong sense of justice or intervened in a case in which she is not involved, she might have survived. Desdemona innocently refers to Cassio as a 'suitor'. She means that he is someone requesting a favour, but to Othello the word might have romantic connotations and aggravate his jealousy. Othello will construe her words, 'If I have any grace or power to move you', as Desdemona's using her feminine wiles on him to reinstate her lover. [Mark globally.] (3)

13.5 The repetition reflects how traumatised Othello is. He is filled with anguish and despair, and has the need to convince himself of the justice of his actions. The repeated words convey the conflict between his love for Desdemona and his horror at the thought of her alleged affair. (3)

13.6 Othello has been a soldier for most of his life and thinks in military terms. He has a simplistic attitude toward dealing with an enemy. He rationalises his intended murder by seeing himself as an instrument of justice: he is protecting others, which is something a soldier does. Desdemona is perceived to be a threat: 'Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.' In war, an enemy would be destroyed; therefore Othello feels justified in killing her. [Accept valid alternative responses.] (3)
13.7 Othello’s voice might break, and be hesitant and soft since there is a dreadful conflict between his love for Desdemona and his conviction that she deserves to die. However, Othello might also deliver the lines in a hurried manner to convey his desperation to get the deed done quickly. His tone might be despairing/filled with anguish/anxiety. His body language would reflect his tone.

The actor might look at the candle and then turn towards Desdemona. This creates a link between the actor’s literal snuffing out of the candle and the imminent ending of Desdemona’s life.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[To earn full marks, the candidate must provide motivation.]

13.8 Candidates might/might not agree that Othello can be held responsible. Award marks based on the quality of the argument presented by the candidate. Evaluate alternative responses on merit/cogency. Candidates might include the following points:

No.
• Othello is a victim of Iago’s manipulation.
• He is insecure as he is an outsider, is older than Desdemona, lacks sophistication, is aware of the current of racism in his society and is ignorant of the behaviour of Venetian women.
• It is the first time he has been in love and he is inexperienced in the ways of courtship. His love for Desdemona is idealistic; therefore her perceived betrayal is devastating to him.
• He rationalises murder by saying he is dispensing justice. In this way, he absolves himself of culpability.
• Desdemona’s refusal to admit to the loss of the handkerchief, as well as her persistence in pleading Cassio’s case, contributes to Othello’s actions.

Yes.
• He has believed Iago too easily, despite the fact that none of his suspicions has been confirmed.
• He becomes increasingly irrational and doesn’t question the supposed evidence presented to him.
• Using the excuse of dispensing justice does not absolve him or justify his actions.

[Accept mixed responses.]
SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

OTHELLO – WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Answer EITHER QUESTION 13 (essay question) OR QUESTION 14 (contextual question).

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – ESSAY QUESTION

In Othello, Shakespeare depicts how the more deplorable qualities of human nature can destroy people.

In a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages), critically discuss this assessment of the play. [25]

OR

QUESTION 14: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

---

EXTRACT A

CASSIO

You have been hotly called for.

When being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate sent about three several quests
To search you out.

OTHELLO

‘Tis well I am found by you.

I will but spend a word here in the house
And go with you.

Off

CASSIO

Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO

Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land carack.¹
If it prove lawful prize, he’s made for ever.

CASSIO

I do not understand.

IAGO

He’s married.

CASSIO

To who?

Re-enter Othello

IAGO

Marry, to — Come, Captain, will you go?

OTHELLO

Have with you.
CASSIO
Here comes another troop to seek for you.

Enter Brabantio, Roderigo, and Officers with torches and weapons

IAGO
It is Brabantio. General, be advised –
He comes to bad intent.

OTHELLO
Holla, stand there!

RODERIGO
Signior, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO
Down with him, thief!

They draw swords on both sides

IAGO
You, Roderigo? Come, sir, I am for you.

OTHELLO
Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.

[Act 1, Scene 2]

Glossary:
1 Spanish/Portuguese treasure ship

14.1 Refer to lines 1–4: 'You have been … search you out.'

14.1.1 Account for Othello's being 'hotly called for' (line 1). (2)

14.1.2 What do these lines suggest about Othello's position in Venice at this point in the play? (2)

14.2 Refer to lines 10–13: 'Faith, he tonight … He's married.'

Explain what these lines reveal about Iago's attitude toward love and marriage. (3)

14.3 Refer to lines 20–21:

'General, be advised –
He comes to bad intent.'

Discuss the irony of Iago's warning. (3)

14.4 Refer to lines 28–29: 'Good signior, you … with your weapons.'

Discuss how Othello's words may be seen as a criticism of Brabantio. (3)

AND
EXTRACT B

OTHELLO
... And, O ye mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove’s dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello’s occupation’s gone.
IAGO
Is’t possible, my lord?
OTHELLO
Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore.
Be sure of it, give me the ocular proof,
Or by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!
IAGO
Is’t come to this?

OTHELLO
Make me to see’t, or at the least so prove it
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!
IAGO
My noble lord —
OTHELLO
If thou dost slander her and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse.
On horror’s head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that.

[Act 3, Scene 3]

14.5 Refer to lines 5–6: ‘Villain, be sure … the ocular proof’.

Explain how Iago succeeds in providing the ‘ocular proof’ demanded by Othello. (2)

14.6 Refer to line 3: 'Farewell! Othello’s occupation's gone.'

Discuss the impact of Desdemona’s alleged betrayal on Othello. (3)

14.7 By drawing on your knowledge of the play as a whole, discuss the effectiveness of the manipulative technique that Iago employs in line 4, 'Is't possible, my lord?' and line 10, 'Is't come to this?' . (3)

14.8 By a close examination of EXTRACT A and EXTRACT B, comment on how the change in Othello’s language and behaviour reflects the change in his character. (4)

OR
SECTION C: DRAMA

QUESTION 13: OTHELLO – ESSAY

Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following points as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.

Refer to page 28 for the rubric to assess this question.

Shakespeare explores the dark side of human nature by focusing on the deplorable qualities displayed by certain characters. These qualities are responsible for the destruction of characters in Othello.

- Iago, Roderigo and Brabantio hold Othello in contempt; their attitudes and derogatory comments are based on racial stereotypes. The veiled racism in Venetian society possibly undermines Othello's confidence and self-esteem, making him more vulnerable to Iago's machinations.
- Brabantio's prejudice prevents him from accepting the marriage, and his rejection of Desdemona results in his heartbreak and ultimate death.
- Iago, Brabantio, Cassio and, later, Othello, display sexist attitudes.
- Cassio's sexist attitude towards Bianca is used by Iago to provide 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's alleged adultery, thus contributing to her death. Cassio's immoral behaviour with Bianca leads to Iago's being able to implicate him in an affair with Desdemona, and contributes to the deaths of Othello and Desdemona.
- Roderigo sees Desdemona as a prize, believing he can woo her with money and jewellery. This enables Iago to exploit him, leading to his financial ruin and, ultimately, his death. His gullibility and belief in Iago blind him to rational thinking, allowing him to become Iago's dupe. When his usefulness is over, Iago disposes of him.
- Emilia's desire to please her husband by stealing the handkerchief betrays Desdemona's trust and has fatal consequences for herself and for Desdemona.
- Iago's ambition and desire for power and revenge lead to his plotting, since he has an innate need to have control over others. He is caught in his own web of deceit.
- Iago's disappointment at not being promoted and his jealousy of Cassio and Othello motivate him to destroy what is good in others because of his own contempt for virtue and his envy of the 'daily beauty' in others.
- Othello's jealousy is aroused when he believes he has been cuckolded, but he is unable to react rationally. His pride and his fear of having his suspicions confirmed, prevent him from questioning the validity of the accusations, which reveals his lack of judgement.
- Othello's actions are motivated by a desire for revenge, although he deludes himself that his actions are just.
QUESTION 14: OTHELLO – CONTEXTUAL

14.1 14.1.1 The Turks are launching an attack on Cyprus, an island ruled by Venice. Othello has been summoned by the Senate to lead the army to defend Cyprus.

14.1.2 He is the general of the Venetian army. He is highly respected and trusted. He excels as a military commander. The Venetians rely on him for his expertise.

[Accept any TWO points.]

14.2 Iago has a cynical/mocking attitude toward love and marriage. This is evident in the comment in which he refers to Othello's marriage to Desdemona in terms that suggest that Othello's motives are crudely sexual and financially mercenary. Iago sees marriage as a way of improving one's status.

14.3 Iago pretends to be concerned about Othello's safety. It is ironical that Iago warns Othello about Brabantio's 'bad intent' when he, himself, is planning to bring about Othello's downfall. It is Iago who initially informs Brabantio of the elopement.

14.4 Brabantio's behaviour in this extract is violent and irrational, both qualities that are unbecoming of someone of his age and stature. Othello implies that Brabantio will command his respect if he behaves with dignity and wisdom, instead of with violence.

14.5 Emilia steals the handkerchief which Othello has given Desdemona as a token of his love, and hands it over to Iago, who subsequently places it in Cassio's lodging, making it appear as if Desdemona has given the handkerchief to him.

14.6 When Othello marries Desdemona, she becomes his world. His statement that his 'occupation's gone' suggests that the importance of his achievements on the battlefield is now insignificant in the light of Desdemona's betrayal. He is utterly devastated by her supposed infidelity. The word 'farewell' implies finality and that life has become meaningless.

14.7 Iago's devices work well and Othello is increasingly convinced that Desdemona is unfaithful.

Iago pretends to be shocked/disturbed/outraged by the intensity of Othello's passion, when this is the outcome he fully expects. He feigns concern for Othello. This is typical of Iago's manipulative strategy to gain people's trust and create the impression that he has their best interests at heart, while, in reality, he intends to destroy them.

At the beginning of the play, when Iago advises Othello to avoid confrontation with Brabantio, he appears to be anxious about Othello, but in reality he has informed Brabantio about the elopement. When Othello has a fit, Iago pretends to be concerned about Othello's well-being although he has contributed to Othello's condition.

[For full marks, candidates must comment on 'the effectiveness of the manipulative technique'.]
14.8 In Extract A, Othello is calm/dignified/controlled/commanding. He rebukes Brabantio for resorting to violence and defuses the situation with a few well-chosen, elegant expressions ('Keep up your bright swords or the dew will rust them'). Othello is polite and deferential in his attitude towards Brabantio. This is typical of him.

In Extract B, Othello is no longer in control of his emotions and is ruled by passion. He has become violent. He threatens to kill Iago if it is proven that he has been lying/cannot provide the 'ocular proof' of Desdemona's guilt. There is a lack of emotional control in his use of language and he starts to use crude animal imagery. His language deteriorates as is evident in his use of the word, 'whore' – this signifies his change from the loving husband. There is a major shift from the controlled, dignified man at the beginning of the play.

[For full marks, candidates must refer to both Othello's language and his behaviour.]