**First *Othello* Essay. Due in Monday 20th April:**

**What has Shakespeare established by the end of the first scene of the play?**

**500 words only.**

*You may have some ideas of your own about how you want to write the essay, but if not, here are some prompts to help you. Try to weave an essay around your responses. I don’t want a series of numbered answers, but a fluent piece of prose.*

**Introduction**

Point out what you think a first scene should do. Introduce characters? Themes? Language? Introduce plot elements? Provide a dramatic ‘hook’? Make the audience worry/feel frightened? All of these? Then give an overview (see below) of some of the features you think scene one of *Othello* has. You will go on to expand on these ideas in the main body of your essay so it is fine to list them for now.

1. **Setting.**

Where are we? What time of day is it? Why is this significant? Remember that in Shakespeare’s day there was very little scenery. Scene-setting is achieved through language. What does the language of scene one contribute to our sense of where it is set?

1. **Character**

How does Iago come across? Give evidence for your answer (quote and analyse.) And Roderigo? It is interesting that we do not meet Othello, Desdemona or Cassio in in the first scene but we do hear about them. How does Iago colour our judgement/create expectations of the characters? What function does Brabantio serve here?

1. **Plot**

What idea of the future plot do we get from scene one? Look at the situation with Iago and Roderigo and consider how Shakespeare might shape this into a story. Would this be the main plot or the subplot do you think? Is there any evidence of another plot line in this scene?

1. **Themes**

What themes are present in the first scene and how does Shakespeare set up a future development of them?

1. **Tragedic tropes.**

Remind yourself of the key characteristics of tragedy. Are any of these tropes in evidence in scene one of *Othello*? Give evidence.

**Conclusion.**

Now sum up what has been established. A nice way to end would be to conjecture how these features are going to develop later in the play.