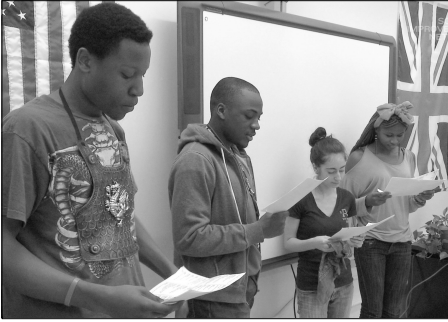


# Words, Words, Words: Determining Contextual Meaning



## Standards-Focused Classroom Series

The *Standards-Focused Classroom* series was created to provide educators with actual classroom examples of lessons that target 21st century learning standards.

### Pre-viewing Discussion Prompt

1. How do you situate vocabulary in the context of your lessons to make it meaningful to the students within the unit of study?

### Lesson Evaluation

Rate the lesson's effectiveness (1 = not effective; 5 = very effective), and use your results to facilitate discussion and reflection.

1. Student learning targets were clearly communicated.  
1 2 3 4 5
2. Instructional activities led students toward meeting the objectives.  
1 2 3 4 5
3. Students were actively engaged.  
1 2 3 4 5
4. Teacher differentiated instruction.  
1 2 3 4 5
5. Assessments effectively monitored student progress.  
1 2 3 4 5

## About this Segment

In this segment, Ms. Alyssa Montooth, an ELA teacher at Druid Hills High School in Atlanta, Georgia, and interrelated teacher, Ms. Cassandra Domineck, help students master unfamiliar vocabulary encountered in their study of Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello*. Students identify specific context clues to determine which vocabulary word has the appropriate connotative and denotative meaning to fit in sentences.

### Post-viewing Discussion Prompts

1. If you were the instructional coach observing this classroom, what 2-3 strengths in this lesson could you help the teacher identify?
2. What evidence of critical thinking and problem solving did the students demonstrate?
3. What constructive feedback could you give this teacher?

### Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants can answer the following questions to reflect on new learning:

1. How can you include visual or experiential components in a lesson built around a literary text?
2. What learning activities increase the relevance of classic literary texts to your students?
3. What 21st century skills can students develop through collaboration and class discussion centered around a literary text?

## Teacher Lesson Plan

<b>Teacher:</b> Alyssa Montooth, Cassandra Domineck		<b>School Name:</b> Druid Hills High School	<b>Location:</b> Atlanta, Georgia
<b>Grade Level:</b> 12	<b>Content Area:</b> ELA	<b>Lesson Duration:</b> 90 min., part 1 of 1	<b>Lesson Date:</b> March 13, 2013
<b>Summary/ Overview</b>	<p>In order to appreciate Shakespeare’s drama <i>Othello</i>, with its dense wordplay, psychologically complicated characters, and searing social statements, students will need to understand vocabulary found in the play and encountered in critical discussions of Shakespeare and his work.</p> <p>From a pre-determined vocabulary list, students will select a word whose connotative and denotative meaning best fits the context of a given sentence. Students will also identify context clues within the sentence that help them recognize the meaning of the selected vocabulary word.</p>		
<b>Skill-Based Objectives &amp; Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to recognize the linguistic thumbprint of Renaissance English on modern English and identify words that are archaic and words that are still in use today.</li> <li>• Students will be able to identify contextual clues in a sentence.</li> <li>• Students will be able to determine the meaning of unknown words based on contextual clues.</li> </ul>		
<b>Standard(s) Addressed</b>	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11-12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.		
<b>Materials &amp; Resources</b>	Assigned vocabulary list, overhead of corresponding assignment sheet—sentences in which a word is missing, interactive whiteboard, teacher-edited excerpts from <i>Othello</i> , “scholar dollars”		
<b>Differentiating the Learning</b>	The version of <i>Othello</i> given to the class has been abridged by the teacher to facilitate understanding by students at various reading levels. The version retains Shakespeare’s language but omits content unessential to a solid appreciation of the play.		
<b>Extending the Learning</b>	Students act out scenes from the play for the class. This is a demanding activity that benefits both the actors and the audience, and it provides natural opportunities for class discussion.		
<b>Procedures</b>	<p><u>Vocabulary Review:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will have completed the vocabulary assignment as homework the night before.</li> <li>• Display vocabulary assignment sheet (sentences) on the interactive whiteboard.</li> <li>• Students take turns coming to the front and sharing their answers with the class. Students identify the correct vocabulary word for each sentence as well as the contextual clues in the sentence.</li> </ul> <p>Enacting the Play: Continue from previous days the students’ enactment of selected scenes from <i>Othello</i>.</p>		
<b>Assessment</b>	Add student scores on vocabulary assignment to the overall class tallies. Display class averages on the whiteboard and discuss progress of the class.		

### Resources from School Improvement Network

12th grade: Plot, symbolism, & character in *Othello*. Edivate. <http://www.pd360.com/-resources/videos/7081>

Differentiated literacy instruction - secondary. Edivate. <http://www.pd360.com/-resources/videos/5053>

### Resources for Classroom Practice

Scurletis, G. (2011). No holds bard: Overcoming barriers to teaching Shakespeare. Retrieved March 3, 2015 from the VisualThesaurus website: <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/wordshop/no-holds-bard-overcoming-barriers-to-teaching-shakespeare/>