

THE
DUSTON ^{TDS} ₄₋₁₉
SCHOOL

Knowledge Organiser

Year 9: Unit 4

The Merchant of Venice
by William Shakespeare



Name:

Class:

Big Questions

Week 1	BQ: How is Antonio presented at the start of the play?
	BQ: How is Bassanio presented at the start of the play?
	BQ: How is Shylock presented at the start of the play?
	BQ: How is Shylock presented at the start of the play?
Week 2	BQ: How can I improve my analytical writing? [Whole Class Feedback]
	BQ: How are gender expectations presented in the play?
	BQ: How are rumour and reputation presented in the play?
Week 3	BQ: How is discrimination presented in the play?
	BQ: How are revenge and justice explored in the play?
	BQ: How can I improve my analytical writing? [Whole Class Feedback]
Week 4	BQ: How are gender expectations explored throughout the play?
	BQ: How does Shakespeare build tension at the climax of the play?
	BQ: How does Shakespeare build tension at the climax of the play?
Week 5	BQ: Does Shakespeare present Shylock as a victim or a villain?
	BQ: How does Shakespeare present the character of Shylock throughout the play? [Summative Assessment]
	BQ: How does Shakespeare present the character of Shylock throughout the play? [Summative Assessment]
	BQ: How does Shakespeare introduce elements of comedy at the end of the play?
Week 6	BQ: Who is the main protagonist in the play?
	BQ: To what extent do you agree that revenge can be justified?
	BQ: To what extent do you agree that revenge can be justified?

Key Vocabulary

Anti-Semitism	hostility towards or discrimination against Jewish people
Aside	A device used when a character speaks to the audience without the other characters onstage being able to hear.
Contemporary	belonging to the time it was made (i.e- the views from Shakespeare's time)
Depiction	The way in which something is presented/ described/ portrayed in a piece of art
Discrimination	the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability.
Dramatic Irony	where the audience is aware of information that the characters are not.
Ducats	a coin previously used in Venice in the 13 th to 19 th century.
Gender Expectations	the roles, dress, behaviour, and appearance society expects people of certain genders to have
Greed	intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power or food.
Heiress	A woman who has inherited money, property or rank due to the death of a relative
Humiliated	made to feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and pride
Indebted	owing money or owing gratitude for a service or favour
Justified	declared as right or having a good or legitimate reason
Merchant	A merchant is a person who trades in commodities produced by other people, especially one who trades with foreign countries. Historically, a merchant is anyone who is involved in business or trade.
Patriarchal	A <u>patriarchal</u> society is one that is ruled and controlled by men.
Persecution	(to persecute) hostility and ill-treatment, often due to race, political or religious beliefs
Rhetoric	the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing
Segregation	(to segregate) the action or state of separating certain groups of people, for example into racial or ethnic groups.

Example analytical writing

How does Shakespeare present the character of Shylock throughout the whole play?

Shylock is presented as committing some heinous acts and of forming a savage contract with Antonio which reflect his desire to physically hurt Antonio. However, Shylock only acts in this barbaric manner because of the years of torment that he has endured and, at the end of the play, the revenge that is served out to him is too extreme.

In Act 1 Scene 3, Shylock simply declares about Antonio that he “hates him for he is a Christian.” The emotive verb “hate” has connotations of extreme disdain for somebody and not of a simple dislike. Shylock explains this extreme feeling by simply asserting that he is a “Christian”, suggesting that no further explanation is needed- his Christian identity is enough of a reason. Clearly Shylock is presented as being a villain in this exchange but the ruthless side of Shylock’s character is further highlighted through his assertion that if Antonio cannot pay Shylock then he is entitled to a pound of flesh that he will “cut off and taken In what part of your body pleaseth me”. Shylock resorting to taking human flesh from Antonio is extremely barbaric and serves to present Shylock as a remorseless and vicious character capable of repugnant acts. The fact that Shylock states that he will take the flesh from wherever “pleaseth” him suggests that he will get some enjoyment out of the act which only strengthens the interpretation that Shylock is a savage villain.

Despite Shylock’s vile claims, it seems fair to argue that he only acts this way because of the persecution that he has himself experienced. In Act 1 Scene 3, Shylock has a heated exchange with Antonio where he accuses Antonio of calling him a “dog” and of “spitting” on him. These are clearly repugnant acts but Antonio does not apologise, instead he asserts that “I am as like to call thee so again, To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too”. Antonio does not even defend his actions he simply states that he will “call thee”, “spit on” or “spurn thee [again]”. The list of barbaric actions serves to highlight the extent of the persecution that Shylock experiences which is reinforced by Antonio’s lack of compassion.

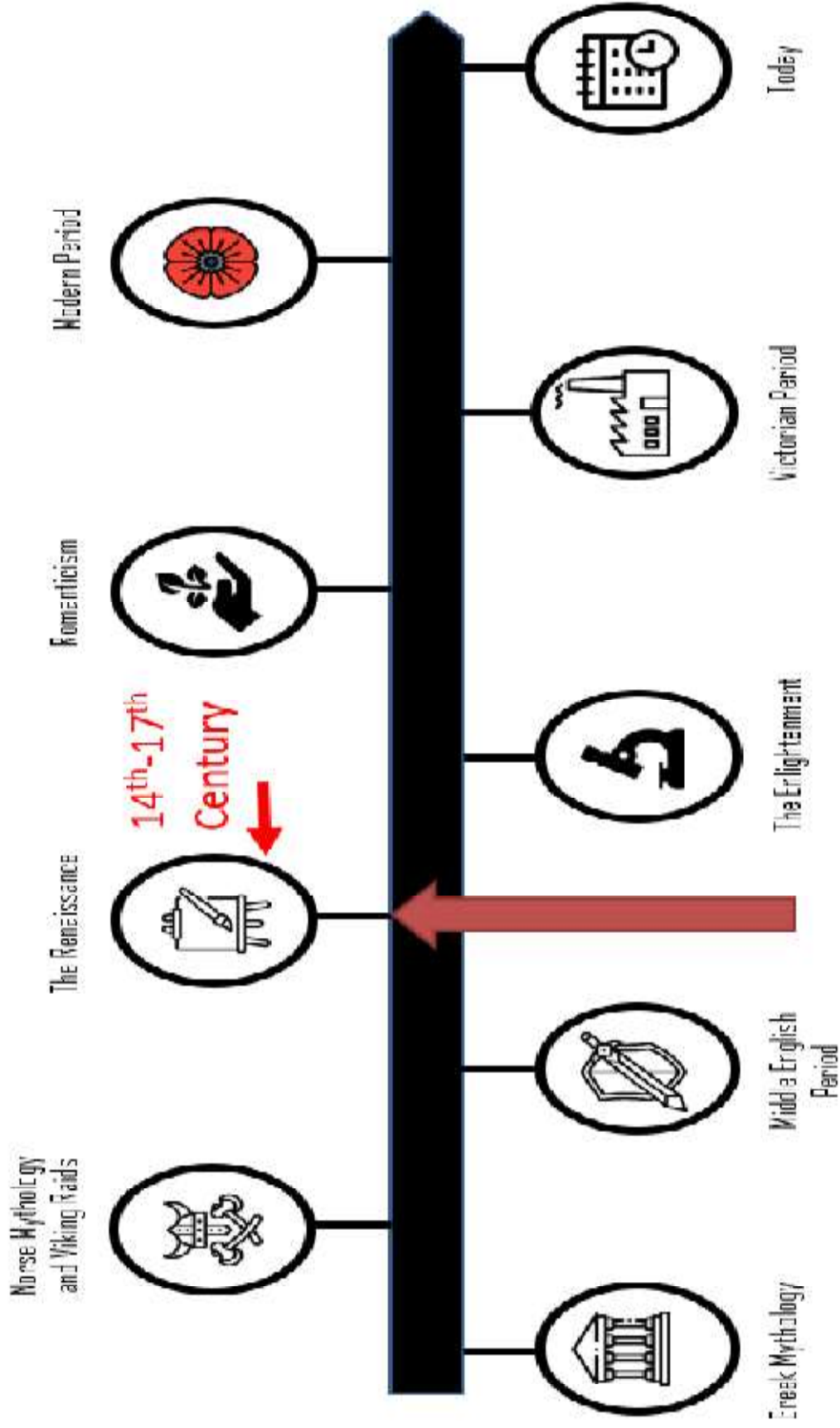
The sympathy that is created for Shylock is heightened when Shylock appeals to Antonio on a human level- a level that goes beyond religion or race and connects them to the basics of what makes a human being. Shylock asks multiple rhetorical questions and asks Antonio “If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?” The multiple rhetorical questions are Shylock appealing to Antonio’s fundamental human compassion. However, through Antonio’s dismissal of this, the sympathy that we feel for Shylock increases despite the morally dubious acts that he has carried out. Shylock asks Antonio to consider the fact that they are the same in so many ways, which in turn makes the reader consider the bonds that unite the entire human race: We all laugh. We all bleed. We all feel pain. Race and religion do not affect these basic human characteristics.

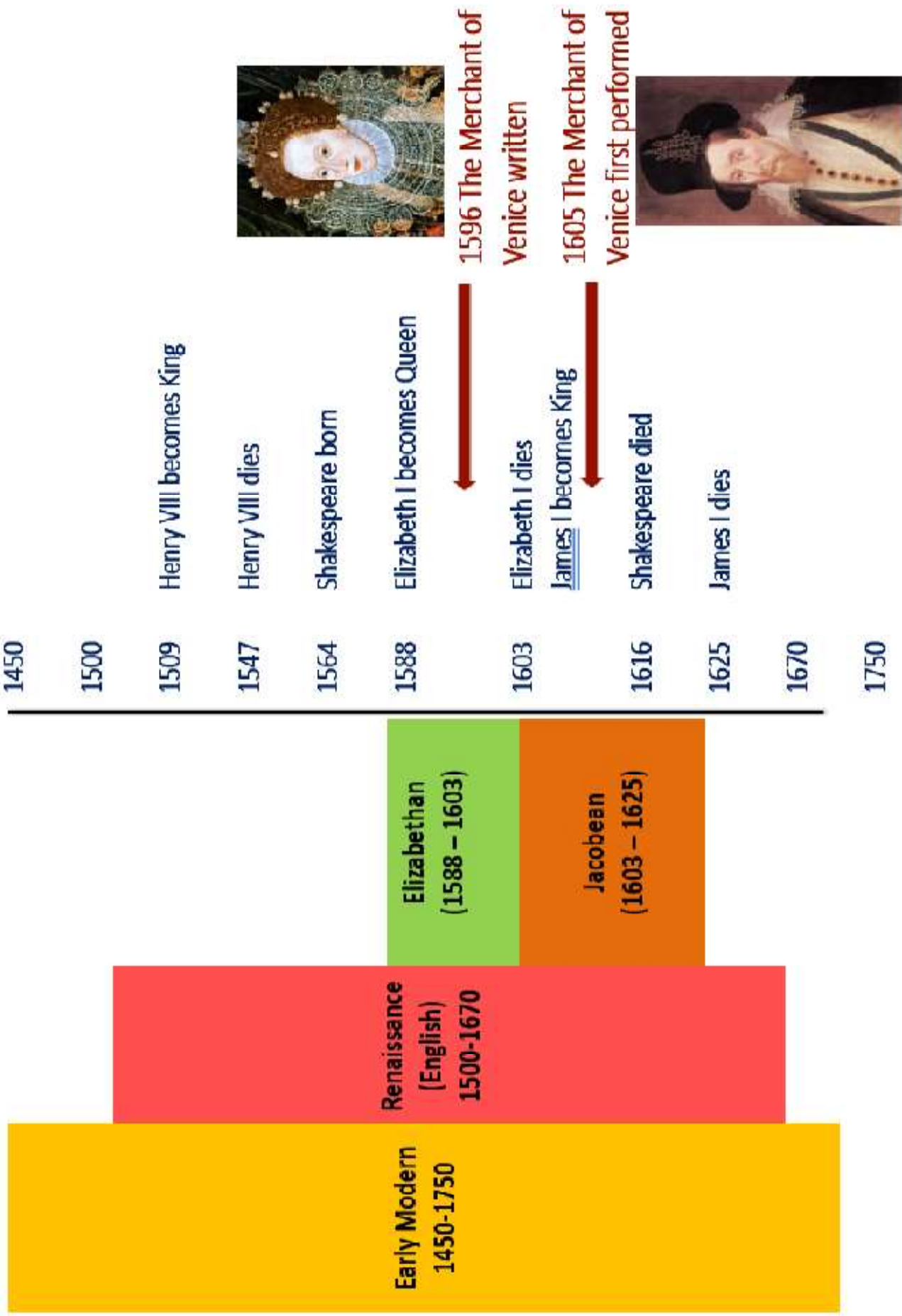
Shylock’s desire to cut a pound of flesh out of another living man is undoubtedly barbaric and inexcusable. However, it can be partly understood through the vile persecution that he is subjected to throughout the play; Shylock is a complex character but it seems fair to assert that some sympathy is felt for him at the end of the play, even after taking into account his own morally dubious actions

KS3 READING MARK SCHEME [Y7, 8, 9]

Success Criteria	Nothing to reward (0 marks)	(1 mark)	(2 marks)	(3 marks)	
1 – Task and Big Ideas	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Some relevance to big ideas and task. Simple approach to task and discussion.	Clear, relevant and supported approach to task and big ideas.	Thoughtful, developed approach to task and big ideas. Engages fully with the task.	
2 – Quotations and references	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Some quotations and/or references used but will be limited.	Relevant, clear quotations that are embedded into sentences.	Fully embedded, judicious quotations and consistent references with more than one explored per paragraph.	
3 – Subject Terminology and writers' methods	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Identification of some methods used by the writer with some possible use of subject terminology.	Subject terminology is used to explore a range of writers' methods.	Sophisticated and ambitious use of subject terminology to explore writers' methods. Consideration of language, structure and form.	
4 – Zoom on key words + discuss effect	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Some exploration and discussion exploring single words.	Clear exploration and discussion considering the connotations of single words.	Perceptive and insightful exploration linked clearly to the big ideas.	
5 – Analysis of writer's purpose/intentions	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Some understanding although often explains rather than analyses. Simple comment on writer's intentions.	Clear understanding and analysis shown. Clear and relevant ideas and comments on writer's intentions.	Developed interpretation of the text. A considered and exploratory approach where layers of meaning and links between context and text are consistent.	
6 – Focus on the question	<i>Not evidenced</i>	Little focus on the argument throughout – tends to drift off topic at times.	Some clear focus on the argument throughout – although this is not sustained and can lose focus at times.	Consistent focus on the argument throughout – clearly addresses the question.	

Literary Timeline





The Merchant of Venice:

- This term you will study the play *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare. The central plot of the play focuses on a bond, or deal, between a Jewish moneylender and a Christian merchant in Venice.
- It was first performed in 1605
- The play is described as a Shakespearean comedy, or tragicomedy by some.
- Comedy: *a drama or any literary work which any conflict in the play is resolved in happy conclusion, such as in a marriage or engagement.*

Why study a play written over 400 years ago?

- Because issues explored in the play are still relevant today: discrimination, justice, greed and gender expectations.
- Because Shakespeare was one of many writers who used different settings outside of England as an opportunity to critique his contemporary society; this is something we see again in gothic writing, science fiction. In this way, Shakespeare's plays allow us an insight into Renaissance England.
- Because Shakespeare wrote for the masses, not just the educated elite. However, with private institutions focusing more on this playwright and other classic writers, his texts are often seen as inaccessible for the rest of society.

William Shakespeare:

- 1564 William is born in Stratford-Upon-Avon, to Mary and John Shakespeare, a glove-maker.
- Shakespeare attended a local grammar school, where he was taught how to write, read, as well as studying Latin and Greek – this explains his many classical references in his plays.
- However, unlike many other playwrights of the time, he did not attend university.
- 1580s After marrying his wife Anne, Shakespeare travelled to London and started working in the theatre. He left his family behind in Stratford-Upon Avon.
- 1616 Died at the age of 52

Plays in performance:

- Shakespeare worked as both a playwright and a performer for a group of actors later known as 'The Chamberlain's Men', or later as 'The King's Men' – this is because they were commissioned to perform for King James I himself.
- They performed both at Blackfriars's Theatre and the Globe.
- Before these venues appeared, many of the early theatres in the 1570s were converted inns: The Bull, The Bell, The Cross Keys. This tells us a little about the expected audiences of the time.



Blackfriars theatre

The Globe

Plays in performance:

- Shakespeare wrote 38 plays and 150 poems that we know of between ...
- Tragedies: Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.
- Comedies: The Tempest, Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice.
- Histories: Henry V, Richard III.

William Shakespeare: a playwright for everyone.

- His audiences came from all social classes because it only cost a penny to stand in the 'yard' of the theatre and watch a play. The higher up you wanted to sit, the more you had to pay, so the higher the class.
- Other performances took place in the inns of court and the private houses of the gentry and nobility: Sometimes, Shakespeare's troupe would also perform for the monarch: Queen Elizabeth I and then, after 1603, King James I.
- In its various forms, therefore, the theatre industry infiltrated the lives of Londoners of all ranks.

A hidden critique of Renaissance England:

- Shakespeare set 13 of his plays in Italy – and mentioned the location in many more. Some suggest that he did this so he could tackle sensitive political topics without risking the displeasure of England's rulers. Francesco da Mosto, a Venetian writer said, 'In Shakespeare's time, Italy was a place where anything could happen', he says. 'It contained both warring city-states and sophisticated political entities like the Venetian Republic. By setting his plays in Italy, Shakespeare could deal with issues – including political assassinations such as the one in Julius Caesar – that would have landed him in trouble if he'd set them in England.

Other Shakespearean plays set in Italy (at least in part):

- Romeo and Juliet
- Othello
- The Taming of the Shrew
- Much Ado About Nothing
- Julius Caesar
- Antony and Cleopatra
- Two Gentlemen of Verona
- All's Well that Ends Well
- The Winter's Tale
- Titus Andronicus
- Coriolanus
- Cymbeline



16th & 17th century Venice:

Jacobean dramas were often set in Italy; dramatists used this setting to explore themes related to appearance and reality, hypocrisy and corruption, but also for the dramatic potential of the multi-cultural society.

Venice in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was home to people of a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds: Carpaccio's late 15th century painting shows not only nobles, clerks and church officials, but also Turkish traders (in white turbans) and an African gondolier.

The Rialto Bridge

The figures in Carpaccio's painting are gathered at the Rialto, which was the economic center of the city and where a great variety of different ethnic communities lived and conducted business.



Homework Tasks

Knowledge is power, so the more you know, the more secure you will be in your learning.

Year 9: Unit 4 Homework: <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>		
Task 1: Week 2	Due date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read background information to the play on pages 13-16• Answer the 10 question quiz on page 17
Task 2: Week 4	Due date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read 'Wider Reading 2 on page 18-19• Answer the 10 question quiz on page 20.
Task 3: Week 6	Due date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read 'Wider Reading 3 on page 21-23.• Answer the 10 question quiz on page 24.





If you have 'no homework', or you have finished all of the above, try these tasks on a weekly basis to ensure your understanding of the play is secure.

1. Create a timeline of the 5 most important events in the play's plot. Explain what each moment shows you about the play's main theme of discrimination.
2. Create character profiles for each of the main characters- include key characteristics and quotations. Bullet point 3 key moments in each character's journey and explain what they reveal about the character.
3. Research William Shakespeare's life and work. These notes could include information about the writer's personal and professional life, themes associated with his plays and any context linked to the period he wrote in.

Key information

<p>Title: The Merchant of Venice</p> <p>Playwright: William Shakespeare</p> <p>Genre: Comedy (or tragi-comedy)</p> <p>Written: suspected around 1596</p> <p>First performed: 1605</p>	<p>The plot</p> <p>The central plot of the play focuses on a bond, or deal, between a Jewish money-lender and a Christian merchant in Venice.</p>
<p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Renaissance, Jewish people had been banned from living England and, in Venice, were confined to just one area of the city at night. • There has been some speculation that Portia was written to either flatter Queen Elizabeth I, or to express Shakespeare's complex feelings about the Queen and her rule. • Similarities between the two women include her physical description, her rejection of suitors, and her use of rhetoric – particularly in the trial scene at the end of the play. • Jacobean dramas were often set in Italy; dramatists used this setting to explore themes related to appearance and reality, hypocrisy and corruption, but also for the dramatic potential of the multi-cultural society. <p>Characters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonio: a wealthy merchant • Bassanio: indebted friend of Antonio's • Gratiano: friend of Antonio and Bassanio • Salerino: friend of Antonio • Salanio: friend of Antonio • Shylock: Jewish money lender • Tubal: Jewish friend of Shylock • Jessica: Shylock's daughter, in love with Lorenzo • Lorenzo: A Christian friend of Antonio • Portia: a wealthy heiress • Nerissa: waiting woman to Portia 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prejudice and discrimination • hatred and revenge • power, hierarchy and gender • appearance and reality <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespeare's audiences came from all social classes because it only cost a penny to stand in the 'yard' of the theatre and watch a play. The higher up you wanted to sit, the more you had to pay, so the higher the class. • Other performances took place in the inns of court and the private houses of the gentry and nobility: Sometimes, Shakespeare's troupe would also perform for the monarch: Queen Elizabeth I and then, after 1603, King James I. • It is difficult to know whether Shylock was played for comedy or tragedy in Jacobean England, but he certainly was presented as a more malicious character in 18th century productions. From the 19th century onwards, more sympathetic portrayals of Shylock began to emerge.

Characters

 A close-up portrait of a man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a dark cap and a dark, textured coat over a white ruffled shirt. He has a serious, somewhat melancholic expression.	<p>Antonio</p> <p>The merchant whose love for his friend Bassanio prompts him to sign Shylock's contract and almost lose his life. Antonio is something of a mercurial figure, often inexplicably melancholy and, as Shylock points out, possessed of an incorrigible dislike of Jews. Nonetheless, Antonio is beloved of his friends and proves merciful to Shylock, albeit with conditions.</p>
 A man with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a dark blue or black doublet with a white ruffled collar and a white sleeve. He is looking slightly to the right with a neutral expression.	<p>Bassanio</p> <p>A gentleman of Venice, and a kinsman and dear friend to Antonio. Bassanio's love for the wealthy Portia leads him to borrow money from Shylock with Antonio as his guarantor. An ineffectual businessman, Bassanio proves himself a worthy suitor, correctly identifying the casket that contains Portia's portrait.</p>
 A man with a dark beard and mustache, wearing a red cap and a dark, textured coat. He is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression.	<p>Shylock</p> <p>A Jewish moneylender in Venice. Angered by his mistreatment at the hands of Venice's Christians, particularly Antonio, Shylock schemes to eke out his revenge by ruthlessly demanding as payment a pound of Antonio's flesh. Although seen by the rest of the play's characters as an inhuman monster, Shylock at times diverges from stereotype and reveals himself to be quite human. These contradictions, and his eloquent expressions of hatred, have earned Shylock a place as one of Shakespeare's most memorable characters.</p>
 A young woman with long, dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark, textured garment. She is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression.	<p>Jessica</p> <p>Although she is Shylock's daughter, Jessica hates life in her father's house, and elopes with the young Christian gentleman, Lorenzo. The fate of her soul is often in doubt: the play's characters wonder if her marriage can overcome the fact that she was born a Jew, and we wonder if her sale of a ring given to her father by her mother is excessively callous</p>



Portia

A wealthy heiress from Belmont. Portia's beauty is matched only by her intelligence. Bound by a clause in her father's will that forces her to marry whichever suitor chooses correctly among three caskets, Portia is nonetheless able to marry her true love, Bassanio. Far and away the most clever of the play's characters, it is Portia, in the disguise of a young law clerk, who saves Antonio from Shylock's knife.

Shylock: discrimination & justice:

- You will see examples in the play of characters being anti-Semitic in their treatment of Shylock.
- During the Renaissance, Jewish people had been banned from living England and, in Venice, were confined to just one area of the city at night. We will explore this discrimination and its roots further during the course.
- Shylock also seeks justice for a broken bond, or deal, with the Christian Antonio. Through his actions, Shakespeare poses the question, when does the search for justice become the search for revenge?
- In Western cultural tradition, this hatred is rooted in a religious rivalry. It's rooted in the sense that Christianity developed from Judaism; those people who clung to Judaism were then seen as dangerous to the faith of the people who had not, who had embraced Christianity. And thus these people were regarded as contaminating. They had to be kept at a distance. They had to be confined.
- In 1218, in what became the precursor of anti-Jewish laws all over the world, Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, made Jews wear a badge - an oblong white patch of two finger-lengths by four - to identify them.
- In 1290 (-1656), the entire Jewish population of England (about 3,000 people) was expelled from the country on the orders of Edward I. Jewish people had only been in England since the Norman Conquest, invited to settle there by William the Conqueror. From the late eleventh century onwards, the Jewish community quickly became an essential part of the English economy: Jews were permitted to loan money at interest, something Christians were forbidden from doing. Jewish settlements in important towns such as London, Norwich and Lincoln prospered. England's Jews were skilled individuals, who worked as doctors, goldsmiths and poets. But lending money was their primary source of income, and Jewish people were fundamental to the working of the English economy. Jewish lenders provided loans for many of the most important figures at the royal court (for the purchase of castles,

payment of dues to the king, etc). They were also exploited by kings, who were often in dire need of money.

Greed:

- Antonio and Bassanio first approach Shylock to ask for a loan, so that Bassanio can use the money to woo Portia.
- Bassanio wants to marry Portia because she is a wealthy heiress: her future husband will have control of this vast wealth and Bassanio has many debts to pay.
- Interestingly, greed is the sin most associated with Jewish stereotypes. Shylock later appears greedy when he refuses to let Antonio out of the bond they have made.
- Portia's father's challenge also tests the greed of her suitors.

Gender expectations:

- Portia's future is to be controlled by the will of her deceased father: he will choose her husband through challenging her suitors to solve a riddle in which they must select the correct casket, or box.
- Despite living in a patriarchal society under the control of her father, Portia displays wit and eloquence.
- There has been some speculation that Portia was written to either flatter Queen Elizabeth I, or to express Shakespeare's complex feelings about the Queen and her rule.
- Similarities between the two women include her physical description, her rejection of suitors, and her use of rhetoric – particularly in the trial scene at the end of the play.

Homework quiz 1

	<u>Question/ Answer</u>	<u>Mark</u>
1.	When was the play The Merchant of Venice first written?	
2.	What is the central plot of the play?	
3.	Why, 400 years later, is it still relevant to study The Merchant of Venice?	
4.	Why did Shakespeare set his plays outside of England in other countries?	
5.	How is Shakespeare different from his contemporaries/ playwrights of the time?	
6.	Name three other plays that Shakespeare sets in Italy?	
7.	Where is the economic centre of Venice?	
8.	During the Renaissance period which country banned Jewish people from living there?	
9.	There is 'speculation' about Portia's character, what is that?	
10.	What is the most sinful sin associated with Jewish stereotypes?	

Homework 2: Wider reading 2: RSC Character Profiles

1 Shylock is a moneylender who lives in Venice. He is Jewish and receives a great deal of abuse for his religion.
2 Shylock lends money to Antonio on the condition that if Antonio cannot pay him back by the appointed time
3 then Shylock will cut away a pound of Antonio's flesh. As the play progresses, Shylock becomes completely
4 fixated on his 'bond' with Antonio and desperate to claim revenge on the merchant, who has treated him
5 badly in the past.

Facts we learn about Shylock at the start of the play:

- 6▪ He is Jewish.
- 7▪ He is the father of Jessica.
- 8▪ He doesn't have 3,000 ducats himself, but knows he can borrow them from his friend Tubal.
- 9▪ Antonio is the Venetian merchant described in the title of the play. He is extremely well liked by most
10 characters apart from Shylock. Although Antonio is inexplicably sad at the start of the play, he is in a
11 relatively secure position. Although he has no readily available cash, he has plenty of ships carrying fortunes
12 at sea. As the play goes on his position becomes increasingly precarious as he has entered into a dangerous
13 deal with Shylock, which nearly costs him his life.

Facts we learn about Antonio at the start of the play:

- 14▪ He is a Christian.
- 15▪ His wealth is spread across a number of cargo ships.
- 16▪ He is very close friends with Bassanio.
- 17▪ He has a passionate dislike for Shylock, a Jewish moneylender.

18 Bassanio is a young Venetian gentleman who is a close friend of Antonio's and in love with Portia. In order to
19 woo Portia he needs money and so asks Antonio for a loan. It is this request which results in Antonio
20 becoming 'bound' to Shylock and in danger of losing his life.

Facts we learn about Bassanio at the start of the play:

- 21▪ He is a scholar and a soldier.
- 22▪ He is a close friend of Antonio's.
- 23▪ Bassanio has lost his own wealth.
- 24▪ He needs money to go to Belmont and woo Portia.

25 Portia is a wealthy heiress who lives in Belmont. Her father has died and in his will wrote that anyone
26 wanting to marry his daughter must succeed in a specially designed challenge. Suitors have to choose
27 between three caskets (either gold, silver or lead), guessing which one holds Portia's portrait. Portia is not at
28 all keen on most of the men who have tried to win her, however she does fall in love with Bassanio.
29 Ultimately she plays an essential role in ensuring that Antonio's life is saved, as she prevents Shylock from
30 claiming his 'pound of flesh'.

Facts we learn about Portia at the start of the play:

- 31▪ She lives in Belmont.
- 32▪ Her father has died.
- 33▪ She is considered to be very beautiful by lots of men.
- 34▪ She is unable to choose her own husband.

35

36 Nerissa is Portia's waiting woman and friend. They have a close relationship and Nerissa both teases and
37 advises her boss. She also assists Portia in helping to get Antonio freed and goes with Portia to Venice,
38 dressed as a lawyer's clerk. Nerissa falls in love with Bassanio's friend Gratiano, who asks for her hand in
39 marriage after Bassanio 'wins' Portia.

Facts we learn about Nerissa at the start of the play:

- 40▪ She lives in Belmont.
- 41▪ She is Portia's waiting woman.
- 42▪ She has been working for Portia since Portia's father was alive.
- 43▪ She has a close friendship with Portia.

44 Jessica is Shylock's daughter and at the start of the play is living in his house. She is in love with a Christian,
45 Lorenzo. Jessica knows that her father will never give his consent for her to marry a Christian and so she
46 plans to secretly escape one night in order to run away with Lorenzo, marry him and convert from Judaism
47 to Christianity.

Facts we learn about Jessica at the start of the play:

- 48▪ She is Shylock's daughter.
- 49▪ She is Jewish, but determined to convert to Christianity.
- 50▪ She is friends with Lancelot, Shylock's (Christian) servant.

51 Lorenzo is a Venetian and a Christian, who is friends with Bassanio, Gratiano and Antonio. Lorenzo is in love
52 with Jessica, Shylock's daughter and helps her to escape from her father's house so that they can run away
53 and marry.

Facts we learn about Lorenzo at the start of the play:

- 54▪ He is a Christian.
- 55▪ He is a friend of Bassanio's.
- 56▪ He is in love with Jessica.
- 57▪ He dislikes Shylock.

58 Gratiano is a Venetian man who is friends with Bassanio and Antonio. He is renowned for his wild and
59 boisterous behaviour and heavily insults Shylock at the start of the play. Gratiano accompanies Bassanio to
60 Belmont and falls in love with Nerissa, Portia's waiting woman.

Facts we learn about Gratiano at the start of the play:

- 61▪ He lives in Venice.
- 62▪ He is friends with Bassanio and Antonio.
- 63▪ He is known for his wild behaviour.
- 64▪ He falls in love with Nerissa.

Homework Quiz 2

	<u>Question/ Answer</u>	<u>Mark</u>
1.	Why does Shylock receive a great deal of abuse?	
2.	What does Shylock want if the loan can not be paid back?	
3.	Who treated Shylock badly in the past?	
4.	Where is Antonio's wealth held?	
5.	Why does Bassanio need a loan?	
6.	How does Portia feel about the men who have tried to woo her?	
7.	How is Nerissa disguised when they go to Venice?	
8.	Why does Jessica escape from her father's house?	
9.	Who does Jessica want to marry?	
10.	What is Gratiano renowned for at the start of the play?	

Homework 3: Wider reading 3:

Recognizing Shylock's Humanity in The Merchant of Venice

Source: <https://teachingshakespeareblog.folger.edu/>

May 11, 2016 | By Amber Phelps

1 "I don't have to condone it to understand it. The pain that people feel is real."

2 While most watched DeRay McKesson, Baltimore native and #blacklivesmatter activist, deliver these words
3 in April 2015 (describing the unrest that occurred shortly after Freddie Gray's funeral through the screens of
4 their television), my students and I watched it live while on the front lines of the unrest in Baltimore; our
5 school located just a few, short miles from both Baltimore's City Hall and the Sandtown-Winchester
6 community.

7 During the unrest, we also happened to be analysing Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in preparation
8 for our production of the play.

9 One of the formative assignments that my seniors complete while we are in our "second-draft reading" of
10 the text—a deeper, analysis driven reading of the text that occurs after we have read it for plot—is to have
11 them explore LUNA (the Folger's digital image database) and search for various renderings of the play's
12 main characters. We observe costuming, posture, proxemics, props, and other items to inspire the portrayal
13 of our characters, unearth possible ideas for set design, and consider the socio-political context's impact on
14 various productions.

15 I've done this lesson for the past three years and the Folger's rich (and growing) LUNA digital collection is
16 certainly a reason for me to continue. We careen through images of Charles Macklin's 18th century
17 portrayal of Shylock as a merciless miser and artist E.G. Lewis' 1863 painting of Shylock that portrays him as
18 a cruel caricature of Jewish culture—an archetypal portrayal of Jews common during Elizabethan theatre.

19 Below are the images we encountered:



Charles Macklin as Shylock; ca. 1777-1780
(Image: Folger Shakespeare Library)



Shylock, from Merchant of Venice by E.G.
Lewis, 1863. (Image: Folger Shakespeare
Library)

20 A final, familiar image that the students select is John Gilbert’s visceral painting of an angry Shylock storming
21 out of the courthouse after Portia’s verdict stripped Shylock of his religion and wealth in Act IV, scene i.

22 Usually students are very quick to write this image off and merely describe it as a visual rendering of
23 Shylock’s rage after he loses his wealth. However, in 2015, my seniors, immersed in the aftermath of Freddie
24 Gray funeral, saw this image differently.



Shylock After the Trial by John Gilbert. (Image: Folger Shakespeare Library)

25 The other LUNA images that positioned Shylock as a merciless monster felt so limited in attempting to
26 capture the scope of that character and his pain. We saw this painting as an image capturing the
27 consequences of when we fail to recognize each other’s humanity. As the media shone an unforgiving light
28 on Baltimore, my students recognized Freddie Gray and Shylock were the same in this moment. Both were
29 convicted before the trial ever began. It was understood by everyone that neither Freddie Gray nor Shylock
30 would receive unbiased justice, but it was the status quo’s dehumanizing failure to recognize The Other’s
31 actual right to exist that inspires outrage. In that courtroom, Shylock is not only stripped of his wealth and
32 religion—he is officially stripped of what makes him human, and the court that was meant to deliver
33 impartial justice was positioned to deliver this verdict before Shylock entered the room. Shylock is stripped
34 of his life because he was never considered to be human.

35 Shylock’s rage and fury is captured so well in this image such that it enriches our understanding of the rage
36 and fury that we saw in Baltimore’s Sandtown-Winchester community in April 2015 when a community
37 recognized that for decades Baltimore governmental institutions and elected leaders failed to recognize
38 their voices, their humanity, their pain.

39 McKesson’s words were now apt to describe our new understanding of Shylock’s unquenchable thirst for
40 revenge: “I don’t have to condone it to understand it. The pain that people feel is real.”

41 Ask the communities that still remain just below boiling point because of the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric
42 Garner, Tamir Rice and Sandra Bland.

43 The following week, I divided my seniors into groups of 3-4 and had them do a close-reading exercise using
44 Shylock’s monologues in the play. They first read the speeches to full stops, paraphrased, and annotated for
45 figurative language, imagery, sound, and structure.

46 Although some of Shakespeare's most eloquent writing exists in verse throughout the play (including
47 Portia's famous "quality of mercy" monologue in Act IV, scene i), Shylock's monologues show Shakespeare's
48 ability to use prose to do some serious heavy lifting in developing the character of Shylock. He packs his
49 speeches full of rhetorical questions, vivid images, parallel structure, and striking metaphors; many of the
50 same tools that we see utilized in some of the prominent speeches that sprouted from the Civil Rights
51 movement.

52 Shylock's monologues read as pieces of rhetoric—tools for Shylock to make his case for the Venetian
53 community to recognize his humanity and see him as a whole human. A case that goes unacknowledged and
54 unheard in the streets and markets of Venice.

55 In Act III, scene i we see Shylock switching from first-person pronouns to the collective plural pronoun of
56 "we" to suggest that he is not only pleading for the Venetian community to recognize *his* humanity, he's also
57 pleading for them to see the pain that was inflicted upon the entire Jewish community at the hands of the
58 Venetian Christians.

59 His monologues are pieces of rhetoric that serve in the name of social justice.

60 Prior to the court scene, Shylock warns the Venetians: "The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall
61 go hard but I will better the instruction" (Act III, scene i).

62 We certainly do not have to condone Shylock's course but we can certainly understand it and use it to
63 enhance our students' understanding of the rhetoric used to sustain social justice movements throughout
64 history and the consequences that appear as a direct result of a community feeling that their pain and
65 humanity has gone unrecognized. If we don't, history teaches us that pain can easily become unmitigated
66 rage.

Homework quiz 3

	<u>Question/ Answer</u>	<u>Mark</u>
1.	What was the class preparing during the unrest?	
2.	How did E.G Lewis' 1863 painting portray Shylock?	
3.	Why were Freddie Gray and Shylock the same?	
4.	What inspired outrage at the status quo?	
5.	Why was Shylock stripped of his life?	
6.	How did the students first approach Shylock's monologues?	
7.	What does Shakespeare include in Shylock's speeches?	
8.	Which pronouns does Shylock use in Act III Scene I?	
9.	Fill in the missing words: "The villainy you _____ me, I will _____, and it shall go _____ but I will _____ the instruction"	
10.	What can pain easily turn into?	



Wider reading list

Other Shakespeare plays—full texts available online

Tragedies:

Hamlet— The story of Hamlet, the young Prince of Denmark, who vows to avenge his father's murder at the hand of his brother, Claudius.

Othello - The story of Othello, the Moor of Venice, who is manipulated by the vengeful Iago into believing his wife Desdemona has been unfaithful.

Comedies:

Much Ado About Nothing— a play about misunderstandings, love and deception. Soldiers Benedick, Claudio and Don Pedro arrive at Leonato's house in Messina. Claudio falls for Leonato's daughter, Hero., and together they plot to make the bickering Benedick and Beatrice fall in love.

A Midsummer Night's Dream — A story of order and disorder, reality and appearance and love and marriage. Four Athenians facing romantic troubles run away into the forest only to have fairies intervene in their relationships.

Useful Websites for Research:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/>

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/>

<https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/>

<https://www.bl.uk/>

<https://www.sparknotes.com/>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com/>

[teaching-resources-expulsion-jews](https://www.teaching-resources-expulsion-jews.com/)