



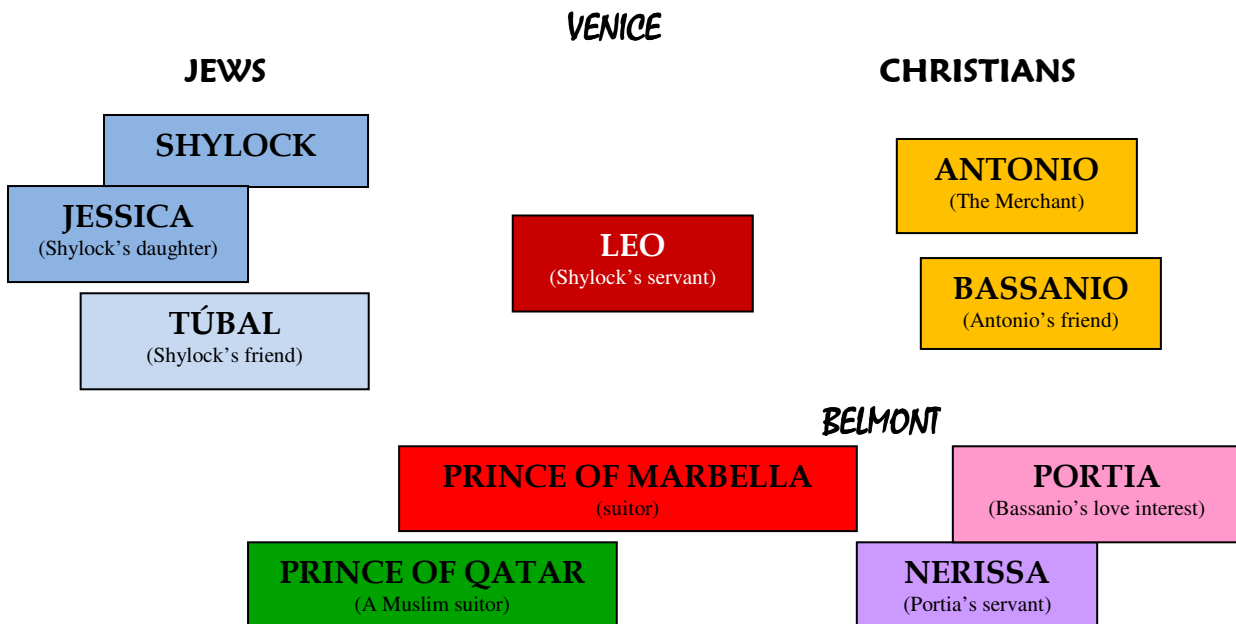
# MATERIAL FOR THE CLASSROOM



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## WHO'S WHO?

See below the characters in our play. There are two main religious types: **the Christians** (on the right) and **the Jews** - *judíos* (left). We also have Portia's suitors. There are two main locations: **Venice** and **Belmont**.



- **BASSANIO** owes<sup>1</sup> a lot of people a lot of money, including his good friend Antonio. He wants to borrow even more from Antonio so that he can woo<sup>2</sup> the wealthy heiress<sup>3</sup> Portia. A marriage to Portia will help Bassanio pay off all his debts<sup>4</sup>.
- **ANTONIO** is a shipping merchant. He's very generous with his close friend Bassanio, but acts cruelly towards Jews, especially Shylock. To help Bassanio, he borrows<sup>5</sup> three thousand ducats from Shylock.
- **PORTIA** is the heroine of the play. She is very wealthy<sup>6</sup> and beautiful and is desired by many suitors<sup>7</sup>. More importantly, she is extremely intelligent and her clever mind helps to save Antonio from Shylock when she pretends to be Antonio's defense lawyer.
- **SHYLOCK** is a Jewish moneylender<sup>8</sup> in Venice. Although he is successful, he is treated as a second-class citizen by the Christians simply because he is a Jew. Shylock also suffers greatly when his daughter runs away to marry a Christian. However, Shylock acts very cruelly towards Antonio. He is prepared to see Antonio die by cutting out a pound of his flesh simply because Antonio did not pay back his money.
- **JESSICA** is Shylock's daughter. She's in love with a Christian man and runs away with him to get married and to convert to Christianity. She also steals part of her father's riches when she escapes.
- **TÚBAL** is a young Jew and friend of Shylock. He is also tired of the way Jews are treated by Christians.
- **LEO** is a servant in the house of Shylock, but he wants to leave Shylock to go and work for Bassanio.
- **NERISSA** is Portia's secretary and her loyal confidante.
- **THE PRINCE OF QATAR** is an Arab Prince and one of Portia's suitors.
- **THE PRINCE OF MARBELLA** is a Spanish Prince and another of Portia's suitors.

<sup>1</sup> to owe = *deber (dinero)*

<sup>2</sup> to woo = *cortejar*

<sup>3</sup> heiress = *heredera*

<sup>4</sup> debts = *deudas*

<sup>5</sup> to borrow = *pedir prestado*

<sup>6</sup> wealthy = *rico / a*

<sup>7</sup> suitor = *pretendiente*

<sup>8</sup> moneylender = *prestamista*

**THE STORY.** Read this synopsis of the play and then do the exercise which follows...

Bassanio wants to travel to Belmont to court the beautiful heiress, Portia. He asks his friend Antonio, a shipping merchant, for three thousand ducats to make the journey. Antonio cannot lend<sup>9</sup> him this sum as all of his finances are invested in ships at sea, so to help his friend, Antonio borrows the money from Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, and a man Antonio hates. Antonio hates the Jew because he makes a profit<sup>10</sup> from lending money with interest. (usury<sup>11</sup>). Shylock also hates Antonio which is why he sets the following condition: if Antonio cannot pay back the money by a certain date, Shylock will take a pound of flesh<sup>12</sup> from the merchant's body<sup>13</sup>. Antonio agrees and signs the contract or bond<sup>14</sup>. Bassanio then takes the money from Antonio and leaves for Belmont.

On the island of Belmont, Portia has many suitors. Portia's dead father, however, has indicated in his will<sup>15</sup> that each suitor must choose<sup>16</sup> one of three caskets<sup>17</sup> – a gold, silver and a lead<sup>18</sup>. If he chooses correctly and finds a portrait<sup>19</sup> of Portia inside, he can marry his daughter. After two suitors, the Prince of Marbella and the Prince of Qatar, choose incorrectly, Bassanio selects the correct casket and marries the heiress. Portia is extremely happy about this.

Meanwhile, in Venice, all of Antonio's ships are reported lost at sea. He is now bankrupt<sup>20</sup> and he cannot pay back the money he borrowed from the old Jew. Shylock now has two reasons to be furious with Christians: one: his daughter Jessica has run away<sup>21</sup> from home to marry her Christian lover, taking with her part of her father's wealth, and two: Antonio has broken his promise. Shylock seeks revenge<sup>22</sup>. He has Antonio brought to court<sup>23</sup> insisting on his "pound of flesh" from the merchant.

In Belmont, Portia and Bassanio hear the bad news. Shocked, Bassanio leaves with money from his new wife to pay Antonio's debts<sup>24</sup> and try to save his life. Then Portia secretly plans a way to help her husband's friend. She disguises herself as a lawyer to defend Antonio in the trial<sup>25</sup>.

Back in Venice, Shylock refuses Bassanio's offer of six thousand ducats (double the original sum.) The Jew still insists on his pound of flesh. Then a mysterious young lawyer<sup>26</sup> enters the scene. This "lawyer" (who, of course, is Portia in disguise) asks Shylock to show mercy<sup>27</sup>, but again the Jew refuses. The law is on Shylock's side, so he takes a knife and prepares to cut into Antonio's flesh...

**QUESTION:** How many words related to MONEY and FINANCE can you find in the Story? (*Example: to lend*)

**WHAT HAPPENS?**

Number the main events below from 1 to 10 in the correct order they appear in the story. The 1st one is done.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>BASSANIO CHOOSES THE CORRECT CASSET</b>             | <b>PORTIA PRETENDS TO BE A LAWYER</b>        |
| <b>SHYLOCK IS GOING TO CUT ANTONIO'S FLESH</b>         | <b>ANTONIO SIGNS A CONTRACT WITH SHYLOCK</b> |
| <b>BASSANIO ASKS ANTONIO FOR MONEY (1)</b>             | <b>ANTONIO BECOMES BANKRUPT</b>              |
| <b>THE PRINCE OF MARBELLA CHOOSES THE WRONG CASSET</b> | <b>SHYLOCK REFUSES TO SHOW MERCY</b>         |
| <b>JESSICA STEALS HER FATHER'S MONEY</b>               | <b>BASSANIO AND PORTIA MARRY</b>             |

<sup>9</sup> to lend = *prestar*

<sup>10</sup> to make a profit = *obtener beneficios*

<sup>11</sup> usury = *usura*

<sup>12</sup> a pound of flesh = *una libra de carne*

<sup>13</sup> body = *cuerpo*

<sup>14</sup> bond = *contrato, acuerdo*

<sup>15</sup> will = *testamento*

<sup>16</sup> to choose = *elegir*

<sup>17</sup> casket = *cofre*

<sup>18</sup> gold, silver and lead = *oro, plata y plomo*

<sup>19</sup> portrait = *retrato*

<sup>20</sup> bankrupt = *en bancarrota*

<sup>21</sup> to run away = *escaparse, huir de casa*

<sup>22</sup> to seek revenge = *vengarse*

<sup>23</sup> to bring to court = *llevar a juicio*

<sup>24</sup> debts = *deudas*

<sup>25</sup> trial = *juicio*

<sup>26</sup> lawyer = *abogado, letrado*

<sup>27</sup> mercy = *clemencia*

**EXTRACT 1 - Scene II** *In this scene, Antonio seems depressed and Bassanio asks him what is wrong. Bassanio then talks about money problems. Read it and answer the TRUE/FALSE questions below.*

BASSANIO: .... Why the long face? Something's troubling you. Are you in love?

ANTONIO: Don't be ridiculous! Enough of me. Who's this girl you wanted to talk to me about?

BASSANIO: You know I owe a lot of people a lot of money, including you.

ANTONIO: I'm not worried about my money Bassanio. I know I'll get it back.

BASSANIO: Well, she could be the solution to all my problems. Her name's Portia, an heiress who lives on the island of Belmont. Her father died recently and left her a fortune. She must be the richest woman in Italy. Plus she's extremely beautiful, and single.

ANTONIO: All the better.

BASSANIO: Her father stipulated in his will that all her suitors must participate in a sort of competition to try and win her hand. You see, if I succeed<sup>28</sup>, as her husband I'll have one half of her fortune for the rest of my life. I could pay you back<sup>29</sup> double, triple even.

ANTONIO: But first you need money to get to Belmont?

BASSANIO: You know me too well, old friend.

ANTONIO: How much?

BASSANIO: I want to make a good impression when I arrive, so I'm thinking of hiring a private jet?

ANTONIO: A what?

BASSANIO: A private yacht, then, but a big one...

ANTONIO: How much?

BASSANIO: Three thousand ducats.

ANTONIO: Is that all? The problem is all my finances are tied up with my ships. I have no ready money... But I'm sure a merchant like myself can raise<sup>30</sup> some credit around Venice. Why don't you go off and speak to the moneylenders in the Jewish quarter? I'll ask around too. Don't worry, we'll see you get to Belmont and to your rich heiress.

|   | TRUE | FALSE |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Antonio confesses that he is in love.                        |      |       |
| 2. Bassanio has borrowed money from many people.                |      |       |
| 3. Bassanio owes Antonio money.                                 |      |       |
| 4. Portia was left a lot of money in her father's will.         |      |       |
| 5. Bassanio doesn't want to marry Portia:                       |      |       |
| 6. Bassanio must win a competition before he can marry Portia.  |      |       |
| 7. If Bassanio marries Portia, he will get half of her riches.  |      |       |
| 8. Bassanio does not need money to make the journey to Belmont. |      |       |
| 9. Bassanio will travel to Belmont by air.                      |      |       |
| 10. Antonio can lend Bassanio money immediately.                |      |       |
| 11. Antonio is going to look for credit to help Bassanio.       |      |       |

<sup>28</sup> to succeed = *tener éxito*

<sup>29</sup> to pay back = *devolver (el dinero)*

<sup>30</sup> to raise credit = *recabar / reunir el crédito (dinero, fondos)*

**EXTRACT 2** Scene III *In this scene, we see Portia complain (quejarse) to Nerissa about her dead father's will. She is angry that she is not free to choose her future husband. The two women discuss the suitors who are waiting outside. Read the scene and answer the questions below.*

PORTIA: So, the man chooses me, but I don't choose the man. Thank you very much father. Nerissa, this is ridiculous. I am tired of father's stupid game, and I'm tired of this stupid world.

NERISSA: The world isn't good enough for you, is it? You have a mansion on this island; three, sorry, four other houses around Europe; servants galore and all the money you can spend<sup>31</sup>....

PORTIA: I can hear you, Nerissa.

NERISSA: You can hear me but you don't listen to me.

PORTIA: Just shut up and tell me who's waiting outside.

NERISSA: The Prince of Naples arrived this morning.

PORTIA: The Prince of Stables more like. He does nothing but talk of his horses. He even looks like one.

NERISSA: What do you think about the Scotsman, Lord MacIntosh?

PORTIA: He has nothing to say! He speaks no Italian, no French. He doesn't even speak English! And hasn't he ever heard of fashion? Look, he's wearing a skirt<sup>32</sup>.

NERISSA: I quite like the skirt.

PORTIA: Nerissa, you would. (*Nerissa is called to the door.*) What is it?

NERISSA: Don't worry, there will be no caskets today. They've read your father's conditions and refuse<sup>33</sup> to sign. They're all going home.

PORTIA: Thank God for that! The cowards<sup>34</sup>! Goodbye! Goodbye! Have a safe journey, you fools and drunks. Aren't there any normal men around, like that young Venetian I met last month? You know the one... Bassanio?

NERISSA: He's too poor, remember. He lost all his money in business ventures.

PORTIA: Oh yes, that's true. I forgot about that....

1. Does Nerissa believe that Portia has too much or too little?
2. How many suitors are waiting outside?
3. What countries do they represent?
4. Why doesn't Portia like the Prince of Naples? *Because* .....
5. Why doesn't Portia like Lord MacIntosh? *Because*.....
6. There is a second reason why Portia doesn't like the Scotsman. What is it?
7. Is there a man that Portia likes?
8. Do any of these suitors who are waiting outside choose a casket?
9. Why / Why not?

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<sup>31</sup> to spend = *gastar*

<sup>32</sup> skirt = *falda*

<sup>33</sup> to refuse = *negarse*

<sup>34</sup> coward = *cobarde*

**EXTRACT 3** Scene IV **“A Pound of Flesh”**

Bassanio and Antonio have gone to Shylock’s office to borrow money. Shylock agrees to lend the money, but he sets the condition of the payment of a **pound** of Antonio’s **flesh** if the merchant does not pay him back in time. There are 8 different parts to the dialogue. Can you put them into an order that makes sense to you? You can check the order **AFTER** you have seen the play. We have given you the first one.

**ANTONIO:** And if it pleases me, I may well spit on you and call you a dog again. If you have the money surely it's better to lend it not your friends, but to your enemies, for if your enemies break their bond, it will be easy for you to exact the penalty.

**BASSANIO:**  
That's a kind offer.

**ANTONIO:** What are you afraid of? My ships will return within three months and I expect to make at least twenty thousand ducats from their cargo.

**BASSANIO:**  
That's madness, Antonio. Don't sign any such thing.

**SHYLOCK:** We can go to the notary today to sign the papers... However, I want the following terms: if you do not repay me in three months time, I will demand a pound of your own flesh to be cut off from whatever part of your body I choose.

**ANTONIO:** It is a good offer, Jew. I will sign it.

**SHYLOCK:** Do not be so angry! I want to be friends with you. I have already forgotten your insults. I will lend you the money and what is more, I will not charge one cent of interest.

**NUMBER 1**

**SHYLOCK:** Signior Antonio, you have often insulted me in the past and I have born your comments with great patience. But just last week, you spat on me and you called me a dog... and why? Because I am a Jew and a money-lender. Now it appears that you need my help. So should I not ask you - can a dog lend you three thousand ducats? “

**TRUE / FALSE QUESTIONS in Spanish**

|  | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Antonio cree que es más fácil prestar dinero a los enemigos que a los amigos. |      |       |
| 2. Antonio espera obtener grandes beneficios económicos de sus barcos de carga.  |      |       |
| 3. Shylock decide prestar a Antonio tres mil ducados sin interés                 |      |       |
| 4. Antonio cree que la oferta de Shylock es muy mala.                            |      |       |
| 5. Shylock impone a Antonio una condición muy dura.                              |      |       |
| 6. Antonio nunca ha insultado a Shylock.   |      |       |
| 7. Shylock dice que nunca olvidará los insultos de Antonio.                      |      |       |
| 8. Shylock quiere que se devuelva el dinero prestado dentro de tres años.        |      |       |

**EXTRACT 4** Here are the three conditions that Portia's suitors must sign in Spanish. Can you translate them into English? We have started the sentences for you...

**“ Me comprometo bajo juramento a tres cosas: la primera, si me equivoco de cofrecito, a no pedir nunca la mano de ninguna otra señorita; la segunda, a no revelar jamás a nadie el cofrecito que elija; la tercera, a despedirme de inmediato de vos si la fortuna me es contraria.”**

Condition Number ONE: If I choose the wrong casket, I promise never to .....

Condition Number TWO: If I choose the wrong casket, I promise never to.....

Condition Number THREE: If I choose the wrong casket, I promise to .....

**EXTRACT 5** Shylock le cuenta a Antonio porque le va a exigir **una libra de carne** del cuerpo del mercader en el caso de que ese último no le devuelva el dinero en el tiempo acordado...

SHYLOCK: You have disgraced me, signior. You have laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, scorned my nation, and for what reason? I am a Jew. Has not a Jew eyes? Has not a Jew hands, organs, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as a Christian is? If your prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not take revenge? If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his desire? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, we will follow the Christian's example... The villainy you teach me, I will execute. And it will go hard for I will better the instruction.

Here is the translation in Spanish. Read it and discuss in class the points below.

*Me ha arruinado, signior. Se ha reído de mis pérdidas, burlado de mis ganancias y afrentado a mi nación, ¿y cuál es su motivo? Que soy judío. ¿El judío no tiene ojos? ¿El judío no tiene manos, órganos,, pasiones? ¿No es alimentado con la misma comida y herido por las mismas armas, víctima de las mismas enfermedades, no tiene calor en verano y frío en invierno, como el cristiano? Si nos pincháis, ¿no sangramos? Si nos hacéis cosquillas, ¿no nos reímos? Si nos envenenáis, ¿no nos morimos? Y si nos ultrajáis, ¿no nos vengaremos? Si un judío insulta a un cristiano, ¿qué es lo que desea? La venganza. Si un cristiano ultraja a un judío, seguiremos el ejemplo del cristiano. La villanía que me enseñáis la pondré en práctica, y malo será que yo no sobrepase la instrucción que me habéis dado.*

**DISCUSS:** In Shakespeare's days, the Jews were treated as second-class citizens throughout Europe. In the play, Antonio feels superior to Shylock just because he is a Jew. Here are two examples (in more modern times) of the practice of discrimination against a race or a religion:

- **South Africa** The Apartheid system discriminated against the black population. (Apartheid ended in 1994.)
- **Nazi Germany** (1933-1945) This regime killed 6 million Jews and many thousands of gypsies, homosexuals, and physically and mentally handicapped people. The Nazis wanted to create "a Master race".

### **QUESTIONS**

- Can you think of any societies today where people are discriminated against because of their RACE / RELIGION / LANGUAGE / NATIONALITY / CLASS / SEX ?
- Have you ever encountered any personal discrimination? If so, how did it feel?
- Look at Shylock's speech again in English. Replace the word **JEW** with a word of your choice that is **TRUE** for you. For example, CATHOLIC / MUSLIM / GIRL / BOY / BLACK / WHITE / HISPANO / ASIAN / MADRILEÑO / CATALAN / MURCIANO / ARAB / SHORT / TALL / THIN / FAT / POOR , etc, etc.....

Repeat the speech several times with the word you choose. Now try to imagine how Shylock felt living in a society where the Jews were persecuted and considered "second-class citizens".

**i OJO ! ¿Crees que el deseo de Shylock de vengarse tan cruelmente ayudará a resolver el problema de la discriminación?**



**EXTRACT 6** Scene IX The trial. Bassanio tries to persuade Shylock to accept more money. Then a lawyer (*Portia in disguise*) enters the scene. Some of the words are missing. Can you find them below and put them in the correct place? When you have completed the dialogue, answer the questions.

BASSANIO: Will this persuade you? Instead of the three thousand ducats Antonio \_\_\_\_\_ (1) you, here's six.

SHYLOCK: If you gave me twelve thousand, I still would not touch them. This \_\_\_\_\_ (2) of flesh which I demand is dearly bought and paid for by me. It is \_\_\_\_\_ (3) and I will have it!

ANTONIO: You cannot reason with a Jew, Bassanio. Let him have his flesh; I am prepared.

BASSANIO: Come Antonio, be strong. He will not have your blood.

JUDGE: Can I have the attention of the court? I have here a letter from Signior Belario, Antonio's defence lawyer. He cannot attend the session today; he is ill - but he sends another \_\_\_\_\_ (4) in his place, a Signiorina Baltazar. Antonio, are you happy with this situation?

ANTONIO: Yes, I am.

JUDGE: She may enter... Signiorina Baltazar, you are welcome.

LAWYER: Thank you, Your Honour. Which is the Merchant and which is the \_\_\_\_\_ (5)?

JUDGE: Antonio and Shylock, please step forward.

LAWYER: Antonio, is it true you are in \_\_\_\_\_ (6) to Shylock here?

ANTONIO: It is.

LAWYER: And that you signed a \_\_\_\_\_ (7) promising a pound of your own \_\_\_\_\_ (8) if you did not pay by the agreed date?

ANTONIO: Yes, this is true.

**PUT THESE WORDS INTO THE CORRECT PLACE.**

**mine                      flesh                      debt**  
**owes                      lawyer                      pound**  
**bond                      Jew**

**TRUE / FALSE QUESTIONS:**

|  | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Shylock accepts Bassanio's offer of six thousand ducats.                  |      |       |
| 2. Antonio is resigned to his fate.  |      |       |
| 3. Antonio describes Shylock as a wild animal.                               |      |       |
| 4. The Judge receives a phone call.  |      |       |
| 5. Antonio's normal lawyer will not come to the trial today.                 |      |       |
| 6. The new lawyer is to defend Antonio.                                      |      |       |
| 7. The lawyer asks Antonio three questions.                                  |      |       |
| 8. Antonio admits that he promised to give Shylock a pound of his own flesh. |      |       |



### FINANCIAL WORD SOUP

Try to find the words on the right (all related to aspects of MONEY and FINANCE) in this WORD SOUP... We have circled one for you. (*moneylender*) Some words are also diagonal. Find out what they mean in Spanish

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | B | O | N | D | R | G | S | P | E | N | D | V | I | Y | R |
| N | J | F | E | M | Z | M | R | R | E | I | V | Z | N | L | O |
| C | R | H | X | R | V | O | B | A | I | D | U | X | T | A | V |
| T | A | D | F | H | M | N | O | W | D | U | K | P | E | U | B |
| M | T | I | E | R | G | E | S | L | E | N | D | R | R | M | S |
| W | E | A | L | T | H | Y | U | H | X | B | P | S | E | D | J |
| U | Q | J | Z | O | Z | L | B | T | M | I | V | N | S | A | R |
| B | O | W | E | P | H | E | N | H | Y | Q | B | Z | T | M | P |
| D | V | I | S | H | G | N | E | V | S | A | Z | Q | A | N | D |
| B | Q | P | D | B | F | D | Q | P | A | R | I | C | H | D | I |
| H | O | D | Z | H | N | E | N | Y | J | L | M | P | Y | U | P |
| J | E | R | G | U | A | R | A | N | T | E | E | L | G | C | N |
| V | X | S | R | G | E | J | D | S | D | C | H | X | M | A | G |
| H | Q | F | Z | O | J | R | U | P | Y | E | D | E | B | T | H |
| R | E | O | J | B | W | O | Q | V | I | B | B | I | M | S | U |
| B | A | N | K | R | U | P | T | Z | U | F | A | X | R | B | M |

- ducats
- borrow
- owe
- interest
- rich
- bond
- wealthy
- bankrupt
- rate
- moneylender
- guarantee
- lend
- debt
- spend

### MORE VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Look at the two columns below. On the left, you have the NOUNS and on the right, the ADJECTIVES. For example Noun: INTELLIGENCE v's Adjective: INTELLIGENT. Fill in the blanks with correct word. Do you know what they mean in Spanish? This vocabulary is important for the understanding of the play. Can you make sentences with these words? For example: *There is a lot of POVERTY in the world.*

| NOUN         | ADJECTIVE   |
|--------------|-------------|
| intelligence | intelligent |
| depression   |             |
|              | beautiful   |
|              | just        |
|              | patient     |
| poverty      |             |
|              | friendly    |
| blood        |             |
| youth        |             |
|              | generous    |
| mercy        |             |
|              | wealthy     |
| Jew          |             |
|              |             |

## THEMES

It is important for your understanding of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE to learn about its main themes (*temas*).....

- MONEY and WEALTH** Todos los personajes están relacionados de un modo u otro con el dinero o el mundo de las finanzas. Bassanio le encanta el dinero tanto que esta en deuda con mucha gente, incluyendo Antonio. Se casa con la rica heredera Portia con el fin de utilizar su fortuna para pagar sus deudas. En cuanto a Portia, no le da mucha importancia al dinero, siendo tan rica. Shylock se dedica profesionalmente a obtener beneficios de la práctica de prestar dinero con interés (*la usura*). De hecho, Antonio odia al judío precisamente porque practica la usura, pero aún así, el mercader se endeuda con Shylock para ayudar a su amigo, Bassanio.
- PARENT and CHILD RELATIONSHIP** El padre de Portia todavía manda sobre su hija desde la tumba - en su testamento, le ordena con quién se tiene que casar - y Portia cede a su deseo. En principio Jessica, la hija de Shylock, es sumisa y dócil, pero luego comete dos actos de brutal traición: uno, se escapa de Venecia para casarse con un cristiano, renunciando a la vez a su fe judía; y dos, roba parte de las riquezas de su padre, incluyendo joyas que pertenecían a su difunta madre. Son dos hijas bien distintas - uno obedece a un padre muerto; y otra desobedece a un padre vivo.
- RACE and RELIGION** En la época de Shakespeare, los sentimientos en contra de la raza judía eran muy extendidos. Algunos críticos acusan a Shakespeare de ser anti-semita porque el autor creó en el personaje de Shylock un personaje vengativo y terriblemente cruel; otros, sin embargo, mantienen que Shylock es una figura trágicamente humana y una víctima del racismo de su tiempo. En la sociedad actual, desgraciadamente el racismo nos sigue afectando. Por ejemplo, aun existen sentimientos anti-semitas, aunque a menor escala. A su vez, y a raíz de los ataques terroristas del 9/11 en Nueva York, la discriminación en contra del Islam y la raza árabe va en auge.
- MERCY and JUSTICE** A través de los personajes Shylock y Portia, Shakespeare explora la tensión que existe entre los conceptos de la clemencia y de la justicia. Durante el juicio, Portia le dice a Shylock: "*La propiedad de la clemencia (mercy) es que no sea forzada; bendice al que la concede y al que la recibe.*" Dado que la ley esta de su parte, Shylock tiene el derecho de pedir la justicia; pero por otro lado, Portia le ruega que muestre clemencia porque sino, Antonio morirá. Un tema importante de esta obra se plantea con la pregunta, ¿por dónde acaba la justicia y por dónde empieza la clemencia?
- APPEARANCE versus REALITY** En esta obra a veces las apariencias contrastan con la realidad. Vemos que Portia se porta educadamente con sus pretendientes, pero en el fondo los desprecia. Y a la hora de convencer a Antonio de firmar el contrato Shylock le dice, "*I want to be friends with you..*" ... cuando segundos más tarde le llama; "*Cristiano hipócrita.*" Portia se disfraza de abogado para engañar a Shylock y salvar a Antonio. En otro ejemplo, las apariencias externas de los tres cofres (oro, plata y plomo) contrastan radicalmente con lo que llevan dentro. En otras palabras, las apariencias, a veces, pueden engañar.

**EXERCISE ON THEMES.** The above THEMES are numbered from 1 to 5. Look below at five dialogues from the play. Can you match the dialogue with the THEME? For example **B** → **2** (Parent & child relationship).

**-A-**

**PORTIA:** The law is on the side of the Jew. Shylock can now claim Antonio's pound of flesh, to be cut off nearest the merchant's heart.  
**SHYLOCK:** ¡Gracias al cielo!  
**ANTONIO:** When is this to be done?

**-B-**

**SHYLOCK:** Déjame, Jessica. ¿Has hecho la compra?  
**JESSICA:** Si padre. Lo hizo Leo.  
**SHYLOCK:** ¡Quiero que lo hagas tú! Ya te lo he dicho. Ese vago siempre compra cosas inútiles. ¿Por qué no los has hecho tú?...

**-C-**

**BASSANIO:** This is Signior Antonio?  
**SHYLOCK:** Yes, we have met.  
**ANTONIO:** Shylock, you know I'm against the practice of lending or borrowing with interest. I never do it. However, on this occasion I'll break a custom to help my good friend.

**-D-**

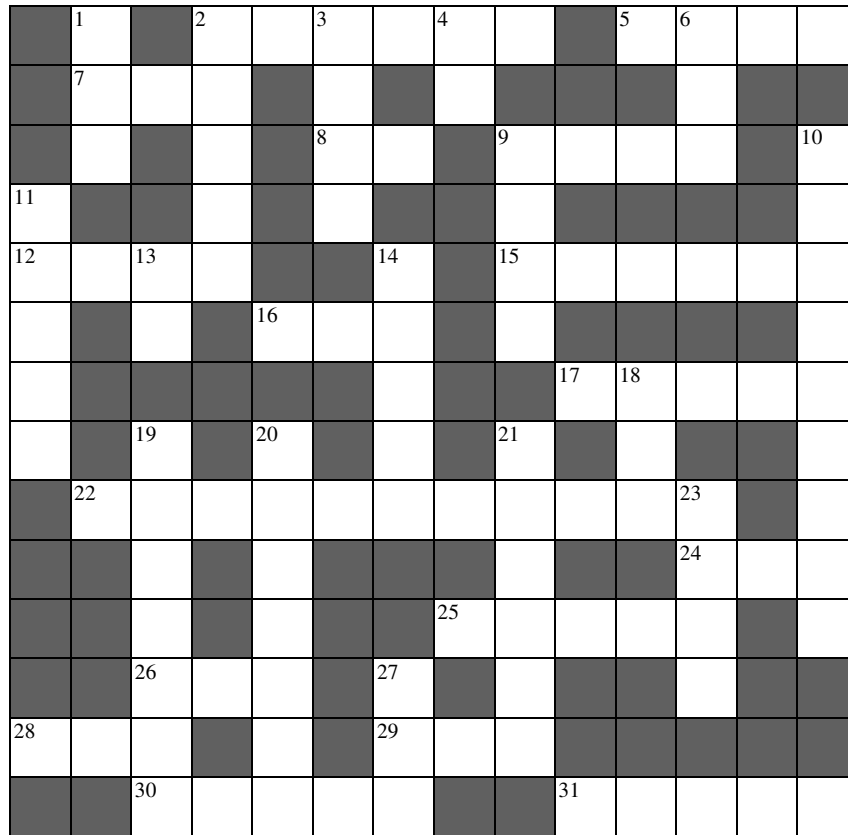
**SHYLOCK:** Signior Antonio, you have often insulted me in the past, and I have born your comments with great patience. But just last week, you spat on me and you called me a dog, and why? Because I am a Jew and a moneylender.

**-E-**

**PRINCE OF MARBELLA:** Pero, veamos el oro, the gold. "Who chooses me shall gain what many men desire." – ¿que ganaré lo que muchos desean? ¡Claro! Many men desire the lady!... Yes, I am sure. It is the gold.. The key. (*He opens casket*) Pero, what is here? ¿Un mensaje? ¿Y una calavera?

## A CROSSWORD

Do this crossword after you see the play.



### Clues Across

2. In the play, Shylock asks Antonio, "How can I \_ \_ \_ \_ from a man's flesh?" Or, "How can I gain from a man's flesh?"
5. The metal of the most expensive casket.
7. The word for this metal in Spanish (See 5)
8. Bassanio travels \_ \_ Belmont to win Portia's hand.
9. Portia decides to \_ \_ \_ \_ Bassanio a ring as a symbol of their love.
12. The metal of the least expensive casket.
15. A person who practices law is a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
16. The female version of "his".
17. Shylock \_ \_ \_ \_ Antonio because he insulted him. (opposite of *loves*)
22. Shylock's profession.
24. The God of the Muslims in Spanish.
25. The money currency used in "The Merchant of Venice".
26. Shylock describes his daughter as, "My \_ \_ \_ flesh and blood." (*propio*)
28. Shylock is not a Christian; he is a \_ \_ \_ .
29. Shylock takes the knife to \_ \_ \_ into Antonio's flesh.
30. This means "*dulce*" in English.
31. Antonio has three \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ at sea.

### Clues Down

1. Antonio calls Shylock this as an insult.
2. Shylock demands a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of Antonio's flesh – the equivalent of about half a kilo.
3. Portia's suitors must sign an \_ \_ \_ \_ before they choose a casket.
4. Portia's portrait can be found \_ \_ one of the caskets.
6. "*Deber dinero*" in English is to \_ \_ \_ money.
9. The same as 5 across.
10. Antonio isn't Jewish. He's \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
11. Another word for "meat".
13. Bassanio visits Portia \_ \_ her home in Belmont.
14. The word for "*juicio*" in English.
18. Finish this word. Three letters are missing. Bassanio makes a voy\_ \_ \_ in a private yacht to Belmont.
19. The opposite of "lends".
20. Shylock wants \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ against Antonio. (*venganza*)
21. Antonio called Shylock a "dog". This is a very bad \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
23. "*La tasa de interés*" in economic terms means the \_ \_ \_ \_ of interest.
27. This is what an actor does.

## WHO SAYS WHAT?

Guess **who** you think says **what** during the play. Which character was it? Write their names next to the sentences, and then CHECK it again AFTER you have seen the play..... Were you correct?

1) *What's this one like? Is he handsome, at least?*

2) *What ridiculous rate are you charging today? Do you want to put us merchants out of business?*

3) *I am not obliged to give an answer that pleases you.*

4) *I understand it all perfectly. I have signed the papers. I am impatient. Show me the caskets.*

5) *Prepare yourself for Shylock's knife.*

6) *Seguramente el Mercader está arruinado.*

7) *Thanks a million, Antonio. I'll finish this business quickly and be back in Venice by next week.*

8) *Lady Portia, an enormous yacht has just arrived in the harbour. Oh, it's lovely!*

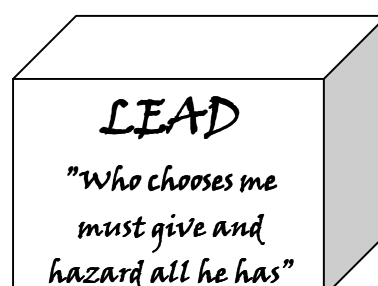
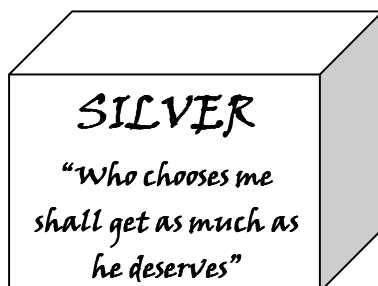
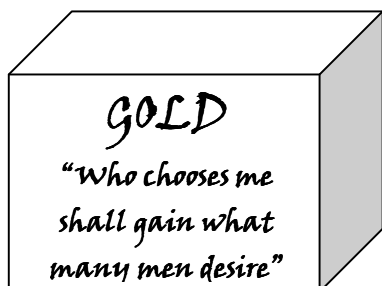
9) *And if I find your beautiful picture, you are mines for always?*

10) *I've got something to tell you. I'm taking another job, with Sianior Bassanio.*

11) *Take this letter to Signior Lorenzo. He's staying at Bassanio's house. Do it now and then come back immediately. I'll need your help again.*

### THE THREE CASKETS – Gold, Silver and Lead

Los tres cofres (oro, plata y plomo) simbolizan no sólo el dinero, sino la importancia que las personas dan al dinero. Cada cofre lleva una adivinanza que ayudará a los tres pretendientes a escoger el cofre correcto.



**GOLD** – *"Quien me escoja ganará lo que muchos desean"*. The Prince of Marbella chooses the gold because it is the most expensive metal and because he adores money and everything that money can buy. He believes everyone desires money, just like him.

**SILVER** - *"Quien me escoja obtendrá tanto como merece"*. The Prince of Qatar chooses the silver because he is in love with himself more than he is in love with money. He believes he deserves only the best because he is a "noble prince from noble family", and for him Portia is the best woman to marry.

**LEAD** - *"Quien me escoja debe dar y arriesgar todo lo que tiene"*. Bassanio chooses the least expensive metal, the one that implies the most risk. It is true that he has taken a big risk in attempting to marry Portia - he has no money (not like the other two suitors) and he borrows money from Antonio to make the journey. Bassanio chooses lead because, he says, it is not pretentious, like silver or gold. Bassanio wants to appear "unpretentious" and a "good man" to impress Portia. (But do you think Bassanio is really a good man?)

**Mira a los adjetivos abajo. ¿En qué columna crees que corresponden? Ya hemos dado un ejemplo.**

(Por cierto, tus respuestas son sólo una opinión. Aquí no existen respuestas correctas o incorrectas.)

- unpretentious      greedy      spiritual      materialistic      hypocritical  
 honest      deceitful      pretentious      wealthy      privileged  
 intellectual      false      truthful      dishonest  
 beautiful      superficial      deep      compassionate      poor  
 mean      simple      luxurious      kind      generous      ugly

| GOLD | SILVER | LEAD          |
|------|--------|---------------|
|      |        | unpretentious |
|      |        |               |
|      |        |               |
|      |        |               |
|      |        |               |

## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE - Important information

Lee con cuidado esta información sobre la obra y toma nota de dos preguntas importantes planteadas. Además, estudia y aprende el vocabulario; es importante para poder entender bien la obra que vas a ver.

### Is it a **COMEDY** or a **TRAGEDY**?

(Decide for yourself after you see the play.)



The Merchant of Venice is one of William Shakespeare's most famous plays, written between 1596 and 1598. Although it is sometimes classified as a comedy (there is a lot of comedy in the play), people remember it more for its dramatic scenes and elements of tragedy. The most prominent figure in "The Merchant of Venice" is the tragic character of the Jewish moneylender, Shylock, and not the title character - the merchant, Antonio.

There are two main storylines in the play: one is COMIC and the other is TRAGIC. These two stories are intertwined (*entrelazados*)...

**The comedy:** The comic, or funny, characters in this play are two of the suitors who want to marry Portia: the Prince of Marbella and the Prince of Qatar. There is also a lot of comedy in the relationship between Portia and Nerissa, Portia's female secretary. We also have the character of Leo, who is Shylock's servant and who helps the Jew's daughter, Jessica, to run away with her Christian lover.

**The tragedy:** The two main tragic figures are **Antonio**, the Christian merchant and **Shylock**, the Jewish moneylender. Antonio risks his life when he agrees to give Shylock a pound of his own flesh. If you cut a pound (medio kilo) of flesh from a person's body, that person will surely die. Why does he agree to such a dangerous thing? He wants to help Bassanio and so borrows the money from Shylock to give to his young friend.

**Shylock**, on the other hand, demands the flesh from Antonio. This is an extremely cruel action because he knows that Antonio will die. Why does Shylock act so cruelly? Perhaps he has his reasons (*motivos*). From the beginning of the play, Shylock is treated badly. Antonio calls him a dog and spits on him. Then his daughter, Jessica, runs away from home to marry a Christian and also steals from him. For Shylock, this is a tragedy. At the end of the play, Shylock is left with nothing, not even his Jewish faith. Shylock is a very tragic figure. AFTER you see the play, ask yourself this question and discuss it in class...

### IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

**DO YOU THINK SHYLOCK IS A VILLAIN OR A VICTIM? – OR BOTH?  
FOR YOU, IS "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE" A COMEDY OR A TRAGEDY?**

### More important vocabulary

blood – *sangre*  
business – *negocio(s)*  
dead – *muerto*  
destiny – *destino*  
finances – *finanzas*  
fool - *imbécil*  
generous – *generoso*  
harbour – *puerto*  
in trouble – *en apuros*  
Jew, Jewish – *judío/a*  
jewels – *joyas*  
offer – *oferta*  
patience – *paciencia*  
pork – *cerdo*

reason – *motivo*  
smug – *engreído*  
terms – *condiciones*  
to appear – *aparecer*  
to be worth – *valer (de dinero)*  
to cut off – *cortar*  
to deserve – *merecer*  
to hazard, to risk – *arriesgar*  
to insult, an insult – *insultar, un insulto*  
to lose – *perder (past tense – lost)*  
to search – *buscar, registrar (una casa)*  
to spit – *escupir*  
yacht – *yate*

## **The Merchant of Venice - TEACHERS' NOTES and ANSWERS to the STUDENTS' EXERCISES**

**Treatment** One of the main themes of this play is RACISM reflected in the Christians' treatment of Shylock. As the problem of racism never seems to disappear from our world, we have decided to give The Merchant of Venice a modern treatment. In other words, we have set the action in the PRESENT DAY so that your students can more easily identify with the UNIVERSAL themes Shakespeare is so famous for. (See page10). In addition, we have simplified the storyline slightly, reducing the original 18 characters to 10 – these characters being played by 4 only actors who NEVER leave the stage. When an actor is not in a scene, he or she will sit upstage outside of the main action. This way, the audiences can see how the actors change from one character to another in the hope that they can better appreciate the skills of our actors.

**Language** We have also simplified and modernized most of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Shakespearian English. As such, there is very little of the original text by the Bard left as we realize it is very difficult for the majority of the students. We have, however, maintained the famous monologue delivered by Shylock. (See page 7 – extract 5) "Hath not a Jew eyes?"

**Bilingualism** More than 80% of the play is in English, and a modern English at that. The rest is in castellano. In general, the Jews speak amongst themselves in Spanish (Shylock, his daughter, Jessica, and Túbal) and when they speak to the Christians, it is in English. All the other characters speak English, except the Prince of Marbella, who speaks both English (badly) and Spanish.

### **CONTENTS: MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM**

- Page 2 WHO'S WHO? A description of the characters + vocabulary help.
- Page 3 THE STORY A detailed synopsis with vocabulary help + comprehension exercise (ordering events in the story).
- Page 4 EXTRACT 1 + TRUE / FALSE comprehension questions + vocabulary help.
- Page 5 EXTRACT 2 + Comprehension questions in English + vocabulary help.
- Page 6 EXTRACT 3 Putting the dialogue into the correct order + TRUE / FALSE questions in Spanish.
- Page 7 EXTRACT 4 Translate this very small extract into Spanish (with some help from us.)
- Page 7 EXTRACT 5 Shylock's famous monologue + translation into Spanish + discussion points.
- Page 8 EXTRACT 6 Gap filler. Students must find the correct words to complete the dialogue + TRUE / FALSE comprehension questions.
- Page 9 VOCABULARY PRACTICE with a Word Soup exercise on "financial language" + NOUN and ADJECTIVE practice.
- Page 10 THEMES Themes are detailed in Spanish + comprehension exercise (which dialogue matches which theme?)
- Page 11 A CROSSWORD practising the language of the play.
- Page 12 WHO SAYS WHAT? An exercise to do AFTER seeing the play.
- Page 13 Explanation of the storyline of the THREE CASKETS + practice of adjectives. NOTE. There are no right or wrong answers here. The students only give their opinion about what adjectives describing people can match the three metals: gold, silver and lead.
- Page 14 DISCUSSION points for AFTER the play.

### **ANSWERS TO THE EXERCISES AND CROSSWORD**

**Page 3** – 1. Bassanio asks Antonio for money 2. Antonio signs a contract with Shylock 3. The Prince of Marbella chooses the wrong casket. 4. Bassanio chooses the correct casket 5. Bassanio and Portia marry 6. Antonio becomes bankrupt 7. Jessica steals her father's money 8. Shylock refuses to show mercy 9. Portia pretends to be a lawyer 10. Shylock is going to cut into Antonio's flesh

**Page 4** - 1. FALSE 2. TRUE 3. TRUE 4. TRUE 5. FALSE 6. TRUE 7. TRUE 8. FALSE 9. FALSE 10. FALSE 11. TRUE



## Page 6

- SHY: Signior Antonio, you have often insulted me in the past, and I have born your comments with great patience. But just last week, you spat on me and you called me a dog, and why? Because I am a Jew and a money-lender. Now it appears that you need my help. So should I not ask you, "Can a dog can lend you three thousand ducats?"
- ANT: And if it pleases me, I may well spit on you and call you a dog again. If you have the money, surely it's better to lend it not your friends, but to your enemies, for if your enemies break their bond, it will be easy for you to exact the penalty.
- SHY: Do not be so angry! I want to be friends with you. I have already forgotten your insults. I will lend you the money and what is more, I will not charge one cent of interest.
- BAS: That's a kind offer.
- SHY: We can go to the notary today to sign the papers... However, I want the following terms: if you do not repay me in three months time, I will demand a pound of your own flesh to be cut off from whatever part of your body I choose.
- ANT: It is a good offer, Jew. I will sign it.
- BAS: That's madness, Antonio. Don't sign any such thing.
- ANT: What are you afraid of? My ships will return within three months and I expect to make at least twenty thousand ducats from their cargo.

**Page 8** – Extract 6: 1. owes 2. pound 3. mine 4. lawyer 5. Jew 6. debt 7. bond 8. flesh

**Page 9** intelligence / depressed / beauty / justice / patience / poor / friend / bloody / young / generosity / merciful / wealth / Jewish

**Page 10** A = 4, B = 2, C = 1, D = 3, E = 5

## Page 11 (CROSSWORD)

### Clues Across

- 2) profit 5) gold 7) oro 8) to 9) give 12) lead 15) lawyer 16) her 17) hates 22) moneylender 24) Alá  
25) ducat 26) own 29) cut 30) sweet 31) ships

### Clues Down

- 1) dog 2) pound 3) oath 4) in 6) owe 9) gold 10) Christian 11) flesh 13) at 14) trial 18) age  
19) borrows 20) revenge 21) insult 23) rate 27) act

## Page 12

- 1) Portia 2) Antonio 3) Shylock 4) Prince of Qatar 5) Portia, as the lawyer 6) Túbal 7) Bassanio 8) Nerissa 9) Prince of Marbella 10) Leo 11) Jessica