

ENGLISH



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE: 16 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

SCORE

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PERCENTAGE

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STEMUP

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Antonio, a Venetian merchant, meets his friends Salarino and Salanio and admits that he is sad for no clear reason.

ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

SALARINO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Antonio in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Antonio cannot explain his sadness, while his friends suggest he is worrying about his ships at sea.

Explain the importance of sadness and isolation elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how sadness and isolation is presented
- the effects sadness and isolation has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

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(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents sadness and isolation in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

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(b) In this extract, Antonio cannot explain his sadness, while his friends suggest he is worrying about his ships at sea.

Explain the importance of the character of Antonio elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Antonio is presented
- the effects Antonio has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 3 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Bassanio has asked Shylock for a loan of three thousand ducats on Antonio's credit, and Antonio has just arrived.

SHYLOCK

Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Say this;
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Shylock in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Shylock lists the insults Antonio has heaped on him and mocks the idea of now lending him money politely.

Explain the importance of prejudice and religious hatred elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how prejudice and religious hatred is presented
- the effects prejudice and religious hatred has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

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You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
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(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents prejudice and religious hatred in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Shylock lists the insults Antonio has heaped on him and mocks the idea of now lending him money politely.

Explain the importance of the character of Shylock elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Shylock is presented
- the effects Shylock has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 2 Scene 8 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Jessica has run away with Lorenzo, taking Shylock's money and jewels, and Salanio describes Shylock's reaction to Salarino.

SALANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

SALARINO

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Shylock in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Salanio mockingly reports how Shylock cried out in the street for his daughter and his ducats, and the boys of Venice followed him.
Explain the importance of greed and family loss elsewhere in the play.
In your answer, you must consider:

- how greed and family loss is presented
- the effects greed and family loss has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

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SALARINO

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Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents greed and family loss in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

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(b) In this extract, Salanio mockingly reports how Shylock cried out in the street for his daughter and his ducats, and the boys of Venice followed him.
Explain the importance of the character of Shylock elsewhere in the play.
In your answer, you must consider:

- how Shylock is presented
- the effects Shylock has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Shylock has learned that Antonio's ships are lost, and Salarino has asked what good a pound of Antonio's flesh would be.

SHYLOCK

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else,
it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and
hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses,
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my
bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine
enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath
not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs,
dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with
the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject
to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as
a Christian is? If you 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
revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will
resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian,
what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by
Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you
teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I
will better the instruction.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Shylock in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Shylock explains that Antonio's hatred of him as a Jew has made him seek revenge, and insists that Jews feel as Christians do.

Explain the importance of revenge and shared humanity elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how revenge and shared humanity is presented
- the effects revenge and shared humanity has within the play

(20)

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(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents revenge and shared humanity in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

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(b) In this extract, Shylock explains that Antonio's hatred of him as a Jew has made him seek revenge, and insists that Jews feel as Christians do.

Explain the importance of the character of Shylock elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Shylock is presented
- the effects Shylock has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 2 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Bassanio is choosing between the gold, silver and lead caskets to win Portia, who watches nervously.

BASSANIO

So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I; joy be the consequence!

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Bassanio in this extract.

Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Bassanio argues that beauty and ornament can hide falseness, rejects gold and silver, and chooses the plain lead casket.

Explain the importance of appearance and reality elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how appearance and reality is presented
- the effects appearance and reality has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

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(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents appearance and reality in this extract.
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(b) In this extract, Bassanio argues that beauty and ornament can hide falseness, rejects gold and silver, and chooses the plain lead casket.

Explain the importance of the character of Bassanio elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Bassanio is presented
- the effects Bassanio has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 4 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Portia, disguised as a lawyer, has told Shylock that he must be merciful, and Shylock has asked what forces him to be.

PORTIA

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Portia in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Portia describes mercy as a divine quality greater than kingly power and urges Shylock to show it.

Explain the importance of mercy and justice elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how mercy and justice is presented
- the effects mercy and justice has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

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Explain the importance of the character of Portia elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Portia is presented
- the effects Portia has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 4 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Shylock is about to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio when Portia stops him.

PORTIA

Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh':
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

GRATIANO

O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

SHYLOCK

Is that the law?

PORTIA

Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Portia in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Portia points out that the bond gives Shylock flesh but no blood, so he will lose everything if he sheds a drop of Christian blood.

Explain the importance of law and justice elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how law and justice is presented
- the effects law and justice has within the play

(20)

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(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents law and justice in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Portia points out that the bond gives Shylock flesh but no blood, so he will lose everything if he sheds a drop of Christian blood.

Explain the importance of the character of Portia elsewhere in the play.

In your answer, you must consider:

- how Portia is presented
- the effects Portia has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 5 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Lorenzo and Jessica wait at Belmont on a moonlit night for Portia to return, and Lorenzo calls for music.

LORENZO

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
[Enter Musicians]
Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents the character of Lorenzo in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Lorenzo describes the beauty of the night and the music of the stars, which mortals cannot hear while they are weighed down by the body.
Explain the importance of love and harmony elsewhere in the play.
In your answer, you must consider:

- how love and harmony is presented
- the effects love and harmony has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)

Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice

Read the following extract from Act 5 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice* and then answer both parts of the question.

At this point in the play, Lorenzo and Jessica wait at Belmont on a moonlit night for Portia to return, and Lorenzo calls for music.

LORENZO

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Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
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There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
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But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
[Enter Musicians]
Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

(a) Explore how Shakespeare presents love and harmony in this extract.
Refer closely to the extract in your answer.

(20)

(b) In this extract, Lorenzo describes the beauty of the night and the music of the stars, which mortals cannot hear while they are weighed down by the body.
Explain the importance of the character of Lorenzo elsewhere in the play.
In your answer, you must consider:

- how Lorenzo is presented
- the effects Lorenzo has within the play

(20)

(Total for this question = 40 marks)