

CONTENTS

How to Use This Study Guide With the Text	4
Notes & Instructions to Teacher	5
Taking With Us What Matters	7
Four Stages to the Central One Idea.....	9
How to Mark a Book.....	11
Introduction	12
Basic Features & Background.....	14
ACT 1	15
Pre-Grammar Preparation.....	16
Grammar Presentation.....	17
Logic Dialectic.....	22
Rhetoric Expression.....	24
ACT 2	31
Pre-Grammar Preparation.....	32
Grammar Presentation.....	33
Logic Dialectic.....	39
Rhetoric Expression.....	43
ACT 3	51
Pre-Grammar Preparation.....	52
Grammar Presentation.....	53
Logic Dialectic.....	59
Rhetoric Expression.....	61
ACT 4	69
Pre-Grammar Preparation.....	70
Grammar Presentation.....	71
Logic Dialectic.....	75
Rhetoric Expression.....	80
ACT 5	87
Pre-Grammar Preparation.....	88
Grammar Presentation.....	88
Logic Dialectic.....	92
Rhetoric Expression.....	95
Memorization & Recitation	101
Master Words-to-Be-Defined List.....	104

INTRODUCTION



In The Merchant of Venice: Ignatius Critical Editions, read the Introduction, pp. ix–xxii, marking the text in key places, and then answer the following questions.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Merchant of Venice* was first registered in the year _____.
2. Inspiration for *The Merchant of Venice* may in part be the executions of two men by the names of _____ and _____.
3. The former (the gentleman mentioned first in the above sentence) was Queen Elizabeth's _____ and the latter was a Jesuit priest and _____.
4. The writing of this play took place during a time of anti-semitism. During this time of anti-semitism, Shakespeare's contemporary, _____, wrote a play called _____, which packed the play house.
5. Shakespeare's company of actors was called _____.
6. The "shadow of Southwell" in this play are the many allusions to Southwell's _____, which Shakespeare must have known rather well.
7. Shakespeare borrowed plot for *The Merchant of Venice* from the following three texts:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
8. The three main events of plot are the test of the _____, the test of the _____, and the test of the _____.
9. The moral concerns of this play focus on _____ and _____.
10. The author of the essay argues against focusing on _____ because the play's pivotal moments do not greatly hinge upon Shylock.

11. According to Pearce, Shakespeare saw his play as “a work overflowing with _____
_____ (p. xix).”
12. _____ is generally accepted as the heroine of the play rather than the drama’s eponymous character, Antonio.
13. Belmont literally means “_____.”
14. Belmont offers a _____ from which to view the world, whereas Venice is the “gutter” of vice.
15. Portia speaks about _____ in contrast with unruly
_____, whereas Bassanio acts virtuously by selecting the _____
casket of poverty rather than the gold and silver caskets of worldly riches.

ACT 1

Central Quote:

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

Prepare the student for understanding by drawing upon his or her prior knowledge or experience.

1. In one or two sentences, give a synopsis of "Little Red Riding Hood."

2. Though the story seems fantastic on some level, what truth about life does the tale communicate?

GRAMMAR | Presentation

The student is presented with and discovers essential facts, elements, and features of the play.

READING NOTES

1. **Antonio** – a merchant of Venice; friend of Bassanio
2. **Bassanio** – an Italian lord; suitor to Portia
3. **Salerio, Solanio, Lorenzo, Gratiano** – all are gentlemen of Venice; friends of Bassanio
4. **Portia** – a rich Italian lady
5. **Nerissa** – lady-in-waiting to Portia
6. **Shylock** – a wealthy Jewish man; a moneylender
7. **simile** – a figure of speech comparing two unlike things using “like” or “as”
8. **setting** – the time and place in which a story takes place
9. **conflict** – the established problem that gives rise to dramatic action in a drama or fiction
10. **plot** – the series of events in a literary work
11. **sub-plot** – a secondary story line in a literary work
12. **prose** – writing that corresponds closely to the patterns of everyday speech and that is distinctly not poetic verse
13. **character** – an artistically rendered person of a literary work
14. **pun** – a play on words
15. **metaphor** – a comparison of two terms that uses neither “like” nor “as”
Ex: My daughter is an angel.

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

accusation	free	massive building
carelessly spending money	gladness or gaiety	reject with disdain
a charge for borrowed money	inferior dog	repay; offer in return
a depression of spirits; gloominess	journey	risk
former European gold coins	language intended to encourage	trouble

1. I have much **ado** to know myself (1.1.7) _____
2. And see the holy **edifice** of stone (1.1.30) _____
3. With **mirth** and laughter let old wrinkles come (1.1.80) _____
4. But fish not with this **melancholy** bait (1.1.101) _____
5. I'll end my **exhortation** after dinner (1.1.104) _____
6. you swore a secret **pilgrimage** (1.1.120) _____
7. Wherein my time something too **prodigal** (1.1.129) _____
8. Or bring your latter **hazard** back again (1.1.151) _____
9. if he love me to madness, I shall never **requite** him (1.2.65) _____
10. Three thousand **ducats** for three months (1.3.9) _____
11. Have you heard any **imputation** to the contrary? (1.3.13) _____
12. He lends out money **gratis** (1.3.44) _____
13. [Antonio] brings down the rate of **usance** ... in Venice (1.3.45) _____
14. And foot me as you **spurn** a stranger cur (1.3.118) _____
15. And foot me as you spurn a stranger **cur** (1.3.118) _____

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Act 1, scene 1

1. How do Salerio and Solanio explain Antonio's melancholy state?

2. Why do Salerio and Solanio leave Antonio?

3. Describe Bassanio's financial condition and how it came to be.

4. Why does Bassanio want to borrow again from Antonio?

5. How does Antonio respond to Bassanio's plan?

Act 1, scene 2

6. Why is Portia upset about choosing a husband? Explain the test devised by her deceased father.

7. Who are the suitors Nerissa names, and, in a sentence, what does Portia conclude about each man?

8. What do readers learn about Bassanio when Nerissa speaks about him to Portia?

Act 1, scene 3

9. What does Bassanio ask of Shylock?

10. Explain why Shylock feels justified in disliking Antonio.

11. Antonio reiterates that he does not pay interest when he borrows or charge interest when he lends, but he will break with his own policy on this occasion? Why?

12. When asked what the terms will be on Bassanio's loan, what does Shylock say?

13. Bassanio does not want Antonio to commit to the loan. Why does Antonio accept the terms despite Bassanio's hesitation?

LOGIC | Dialectic

The student reasons with the facts, elements, and features of the play.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the point of Gratiano's pond and fishing **metaphors** (1.1.79-104)?

2. What is the **simile** Bassanio uses to comment upon Gratiano's dialogue in 1.1.116? The simile makes what point about this garrulous character?

3. Does Bassanio love Portia? Use specific lines from the play to support your opinion thus far.

4. Identify the two **settings** established by Act 1, and the conflict established for each setting.

5. The primary tool of Shakespeare's art is words! Using **puns**, he is able to take a single word and employ its multiple definitions. Puns create a surplus of meaning that can be directed toward deepening our understanding of a moment within a scene. Consider the pun with the word *kind/kindness* that begins on 1.3.142 (the term is used at least four subsequent times). How do the meanings of "kind" and "kindness" (generosity/natural inclination; type) shed light on the interaction between Shylock and Antonio?

6. Should readers rely on Nerissa's good opinion of Bassanio?

RHETORIC | Expression

The student uses his or her own words to express understanding of the play as he or she moves toward the Central One Idea.

1 CENTRAL ONE IDEA

1. In a sentence or two, **summarize** each scene in Act 1.

Scene 1: _____

Scene 2: _____

Scene 3: _____

2. Act 1 introduces many characters. Thus far, what do you think of each **character**? List two or three features from Act 1 that helped you to draw your first impression of the following:

Antonio is _____.

Proof #1: _____

Proof #2: _____

Portia is _____.

Proof #1: _____

Proof #2: _____

Shylock is _____.

Proof #1: _____

Proof #2: _____

ESSAY OPTION

Choose a topic below and respond with a 3-paragraph essay that includes an Introduction with a clear thesis; a Body with organized, logical, and specific support of the thesis; and a Conclusion that discusses the significance of the thesis.

The essay should feature appropriate tone, voice, and point of view; correct grammar, usage, and mechanics; a variety of sentence structures enhanced by subordination and parallelism; a balance of general and specific detail; and enhanced rhetorical effect through transition words, appropriate diction, strong verbs, descriptive adjectives, and other rhetorical devices.

1. One of the primary sources from which Shakespeare drew inspiration for this play was a fairy tale. Write a 3-paragraph essay where you explain how *The Merchant of Venice* is like a fairy tale in this first act.
2. During Shakespeare's time, few Jewish people lived in London, and the majority of theater-goers would not have known anyone from the Jewish faith. Write a 3-paragraph essay about how Shylock's character embodies the stereotype of a Jewish person.
3. Bassanio compares himself to the prodigal son. Write a 3-paragraph essay about the **character** of Bassanio that uses support from the first act to illustrate the accuracy of the comparison.
4. Which **plot** do you find most compelling, the main plot that takes place in Venice or the sub-plot in Belmont? Support your thesis with thoughtful reasons for your preference in a 3-paragraph response essay.