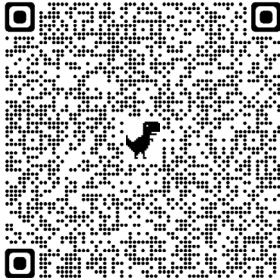


Year 8 – *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare

Plot	Literary Techniques	QR Codes
Act 1 Bassanio asks his friend Antonio for a loan of 3,000 ducats so that he can propose to Portia. Antonio borrows the money from Shylock, promising to pay him a pound of his flesh if he is unable to repay the loan. Portia complains to her maid, Nerissa, about her father’s command that she marry the man who passes the casket test. Act 2 The Princes of Morocco and Aragon both fail the casket test. Shylock’s daughter, Jessica, steals money and jewels from her father and elopes with Bassanio’s friend, Lorenzo. Shylock is enraged. Some of Antonio’s trading ships are lost at sea. Act 3 More of Antonio’s ships are lost and Shylock looks forward to getting his pound of flesh. Bassanio passes the casket test which means he can marry Portia. Nerissa and Graziano (another friend of Bassanio) also fall in love and marry. Bassanio hears that Antonio is ruined and returns to Venice to help him. Portia and Nerissa secretly follow. Act 4 At Antonio’s trial, Bassanio begs Shylock to be merciful but he insists of getting his pound of flesh. Portia arrives disguised as a lawyer called Balthazar. She seems to uphold Shylock’s right to the pound of flesh but then tricks him by insisting that he must not spill any blood as this was not part of the bargain. Shylock is fined for wanting to kill Antonio. Act 5 Portia and Nerissa return home and meet up again with Bassanio and Graziano. They play a trick on their husbands involving a couple of rings, but all is revealed in the end. Antonio hears that some of his ships are safe after all.	Alliteration – repetition of initial syllable sounds in a series of words. Aside – where a character speaks to the audience, unheard by other characters on stage. Blank verse – unrhymed iambic pentameter. Comedy – the genre of play that <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> is part of. Dramatic irony – when the audience is aware of something that the characters are not. Hyperbole – exaggerated language, e.g. The Prince of Morocco uses hyperbole when describing his love for Portia. Iambic pentameter – five pairs of unstressed/stressed syllables. Noble characters use this rhythm. Irony – when someone deliberately says something when they mean something else. Juxtaposition – when two ideas or events are placed side by side for dramatic effect. Metaphor - where an object is said to be something that isn’t literally true. Monologue – a long speech by one character in which they express their views about something. Personification – where something non-human is given human characteristics. Prose – written or spoken form of language that follows the natural flow of the way we speak. Pun – a joke based on the different possible meanings of words or words that sound similar. Rhyme / rhythm – the pattern of stresses or beats in a line. Rhetoric – the art of using language to persuade. Rhyming couplet – a pair of lines that rhyme. Simile – when two things are directly compared using ‘like’ or ‘as’. Soliloquy – when a character speaks directly to the audience, voicing their thoughts & feelings.	Punctuation Guide  Thinking and Writing about Texts using WHAT – HOW – WHY 
Characters	Themes and Ideas	Spark Revision Notes 
Antonio – The merchant of Venice who is good friends with Bassanio and often lends him money. He is, however, an anti-semite, and has often abused Shylock in public. Bassanio – A young gentleman who is good-hearted but rather feckless with money. He has fallen in love with Portia and is desperate to pass the casket test and marry her. Shylock – A Jewish money-lender who hates Christians such as Antonio who have abused him and his fellow Jews down the years. Portia – A wealthy and very clever young woman whose father ruled (before he died) that she could only marry the man who passed the casket test. Graziano – A friend of Bassanio who is fun-loving but drinks a bit too much. He accompanies Bassanio to Belmont where Portia lives and there meets and falls in love with her maid, Nerissa. Jessica – Shylock’s daughter. She falls in love with another of Bassiano’s Christian friends – Lorenzo – and elopes with him, having stolen money and jewels from her father. Lorenzo – Another of Bassiano’s friends who falls in love with Jessica.	Usury – In modern times, usury means lending money at excessive rates of interest. In Shakespeare’s time, it meant any kind of money lending. Money lending was seen as disreputable mainly because Christians thought that it was forbidden by the Bible. In reality, however, most merchants (like Antonio) would borrow money to make trade investments. Anti-Semitism – This is the term for prejudice against Jewish people. In Shakespeare’s time, very few people in the audience would have ever met a Jew as they had been expelled from England 300 years previously. Elizabethans were, therefore, extremely anti-semitic, believing all kinds of ridiculous stories about Jewish people. They would have had much less sympathy for Shylock than we do today. Love – The play explores various different types of love including romantic love (Bassanio and Portia), friendship (Bassanio and Antonio), and love for one’s family and one’s community. Money – A major theme in the play, money is key to the plot with Bassanio having to borrow from Antonio who has to borrow from Shylock. Jessica steals money, whereas Portia is very wealthy. Women in society – Women were not free to marry, even when their parents had died. However, in the play, women are shown to be strong and clever, including Portia and Jessica – although they have to disguise themselves or act in secret.	