



**The Grammar Dog Guide to
The Merchant
of Venice
by William Shakespeare**

**All quizzes use sentences from the play.
Includes over 250 multiple choice questions.**

About Gramwardog

Gramwardog was founded in 2001 by Mary Jane McKinney, a high school English teacher and dedicated grammarian. She and other experienced English teachers in both high school and college regard grammar and style as the key to unlocking the essence of an author.

Their philosophy, that grammar and literature are best understood when learned together, led to the formation of Gramwardog.com, a means of sharing knowledge about the structure and patterns of language unique to specific authors. These patterns are what make a great book *a great book*. The arduous task of analyzing works for grammar and style has yielded a unique product, guaranteed to enlighten the reader of literary classics.

Gramwardog's strategy is to put the author's words under the microscope. The result yields an increased appreciation of the art of writing and awareness of the importance and power of language.



ISBN 978-1-60857-065-2

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - THE MERCHANT OF VENICE by William Shakespeare

EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

Identify the complements in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

d.o. = direct object

i.o. = indirect object

p.n. = predicate nominative

o.p. = object of preposition

p.a. = predicate adjective

ACT I

- ___1. In sooth I know not why I am so sad.
- ___2. Sometimes from her eyes I did receive fair speechless messages.
- ___3. This kindness will I show: go with me to a notary; seal me there your single bond . . .

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

Identify the phrases in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

par = participial

ger = gerund

inf = infinitive

appos = appositive

prep = prepositional

ACT I

- ___1. My wind cooling my broth would blow me to an ague when I thought what harm a wind too great might do at sea.
- ___2. I know Antonio is sad to think upon his merchandise.
- ___3. But fish not with this melancholy bait for this fool gudgeon, this opinion.

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Identify the figurative language in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

p = personification

s = simile

m = metaphor

h = hyperbole

ACT I

- ___1. 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.
- ___2. An evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain with a smiling cheek, a goodly apple rotten at the heart.
- ___3. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them they are not worth the search.

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EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS

Identify the type of allusion in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

a. history b. mythology c. religion d. literature

ACT I

- ___1. Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued to Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.
- ___2. Many Jasons came in quest of her.
- ___3. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will.

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

Salerio. Why, I am sure if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?

Shylock. To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hind' red 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 villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. (III, i, 46-64)

Read the passage a second time, marking figurative language, sensory imagery, poetic devices, and any other patterns of diction and rhetoric, then answer the questions below.

- 1 *Salerio.* Why, I am sure if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. What's that good for?
- 2 *Shylock.* To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced
- 3 me and hind' red me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation,
- 4 thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies – and what's his reason? I am a Jew.
- 5 Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? -- fed
- 6 with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means,
- 7 warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
- 8 If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not

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9 revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian what
10 is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian
11 example? Why revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better
12 he instruction.

- ___1. Shylock blames his enemy for ALL of the following actions EXCEPT . . .
a. embarrassed him at social functions
b. laughed at his business setbacks
c. made fun of his success
d. interfered with his business deals
- ___2. The word *nation* in Line 3 most likely means ALL of the following EXCEPT . . .
a. ethnicity b. culture c. country of origin d. religion
- ___3. Line 5 contains an example of . . .
a. allegory b. anaphora c. allusion d. antiphrasis

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