

10 - GOSSIP

How does the point of view that Shakespeare creates affect the audience's understanding of the play?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A copy of Act 2 Scene 8 from *The Merchant of Venice*, to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Read Act 2 Scene 8, from the beginning to Salarino's line, "*Crying his stones, his daughter and his ducats.*"
- Write a list of all the events that are gossiped about in this section, including everything Salarino and Solanio say has been done or said.
- Think about what Shylock and the Duke might have been experiencing during those events. Bear in mind that the Duke is Christian, and it is his job to rule Venice.
- Imagine you are Shylock. Now write the story of what has happened, as if you are Shylock speaking to his friend Tubal.
- Now imagine you are the Duke. Write the story of what has happened, as if you are the Duke speaking to another important gentleman of Venice.
- Compare the ways in which the story changed according to whose point of view it was told from.
- Continue reading Act 2 Scene 8, from Solanio's line "*Let good Antonio look he keep his day*" to the end of the scene.
- Salarino reports Bassanio and Antonio parting. Write a new scene between Bassanio and Antonio, no more than ten lines long, showing that parting in more detail. Use Salarino's speech as inspiration. You can include stage directions to help the audience to understand exactly where, and how the scene takes place.

EXTENSION

- Imagine you are a gossip columnist writing about the events in Act 2 Scene 8.
- First decide which newspaper you write your column for. Are you writing for a paper funded by The Duke, or are you writing for a paper read by the Jewish community?
- Write your gossip column, bearing in mind who will read it. Remember to include all the events in Act 2 Scene 8.