

9 - JESSICA LEAVES HOME

How and why does Jessica leave home?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 2 Scenes 4, 5 and 6 from *The Merchant of Venice*, to read either on the page or on a screen.

ACTIVITY

- Visit the Relationships page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#). Click to view the information and scroll down to read information and key quotes to help you interpret Jessica and her actions.
- Read Lorenzo's last speech in Act 2 Scene 4, which begins, "*I must needs tell thee all*".
- Using the clues in Lorenzo's speech, imagine you are Jessica and write the letter she sends to Lorenzo, outlining her plan to leave home.
- Read aloud Act 2 Scene 5, from where Jessica enters to the end of the scene. As you read, imagine the secret thoughts and feelings that Jessica has during this scene, and write them down.
- Shylock goes out at the end of Scene 5, and Scene 6 opens with Lorenzo and his friends gathering outside Shylock's house. There is a 'masque' in Venice, a street party in which the partygoers wear masks to disguise their identity.
- Read Act 2 Scene 6, from where Jessica enters 'above', wearing boy's clothes, to where Jessica and Lorenzo exit.
- Choose 10 words which you think are the most important in the scene.
- Speak your chosen words aloud and make a strong gesture to go with each word, using your tone of voice and body language to express the meaning of each word.
- Ask yourself: Why does Jessica decide to leave home? How does she go about making that happen?

EXTENSION

- Design a costume for Jessica to wear when she leaves home. She is in boy's clothes and wearing a mask. Do some research online to find out more about Venetian masks and think carefully about Jessica's character, and the situation she is in, before you choose your final design.
- Visit the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#). Click on 'family and loyalty' to ask yourself some of the questions that would be asked in the RSC rehearsal room when staging a performance of the play.