



**Please note:**

Enrolment will be made through ESSARP's web page. If you have enrolled for a course and will not be able to attend a single session or the whole course, please advise at the Centre as soon as possible. Please ensure a prompt start by planning to arrive in advance of the beginning of the session.

### D1242 - Webinar - Revisiting The Merchant of Venice

**Dates:** 07 May from 17:30 hs. to 19:30 hs. - 2026

**Venue:** Distance

**Sessions:** 1

**Minimum attendance for certificates:** 1

**Vacancies per school:** 5

**For:** This course is directed to Literature, Language and Drama Teachers. Reading and introducing Shakespeare to their students. Preparation for AS&A level 2026. Set Text.

Please enrol before: **2026, May 4th**

**Facilitator(s):** *Ms. Susan Cocimano*

Drama Teacher/Trainer, Susan specialises in drama and creativity; tools that enable a novel insight for teaching and learning creatively across the curriculum. She holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching Shakespeare from the University of Warwick. Her aim is to encourage both teachers and students to experience Shakespeare in a more dynamic and challenging manner, introducing new techniques and skills. Susan was Coordinator of the Arts Department in secondary at Cardinal Newman (2009-2016) and taught Drama in Education at St. Trinnean Teacher's College (2001-2017). She is a Cambridge Speaking Examiner and co-founder of Full Circle English.

**Objectives:** To approach *The Merchant* from a different perspective: Is this solely the question of race or the question of money?

To discover unexpected themes and key moments

To explore and try out a pack of activities that will challenge, engage and enable students to improve their:

Knowledge and understanding of the play and appreciation of relevant contexts

Ability to read closely and cite evidence from the text.

Analyse the characters more in depth.

Discuss and evaluate different opinions and interpretations of texts

**Contents:** When Shakespeare wrote "*The Merchant of Venice*" he chose one of the richest cities in Europe as a setting for his play about wealth, friendship, love and greed.

We meet characters who have little reason for being miserable: Antonio has many ships and much wealth.

Portia has many good fortunes. Yet their discontent should give us a clue to one of the important ideas of the play: that money can't buy you happiness.

Friendship is an important part too: Bassanio and Antonio. On the other hand, Shylock, the money lender, an outsider embittered and isolated – a rich Jew, who despises Christian society and its codes and values. In the characters of Shylock and the merchant Antonio, Shakespeare gives us two extreme positions on money.

Where one is monstrously grasping, the other is admirably generous but hopelessly naive.

As we read, we must ask ourselves: What is this play really about? Moneylending? What is it like to feel persecuted for being different? What does friendship mean—to risk death? Can love change a person?

Learning not to judge by appearances? Is this play about greed or revenge?

**Bibliography:** Gibson, R., 1998. *Teaching Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Shakespeare, William, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Complete Works*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Winston, J. and Tandy, M. 2012. *Beginning Shakespeare 4-11*. UK: Routledge

*The RSC Shakespeare Toolkit for Teachers*, 2010. UK: Methuen Drama

*Teaching Shakespeare, Themes in the Merchant of Venice*. The University of Warwick.

**Methodology:** During this workshop, teachers will go through a wide range of activities, techniques and strategies that will foster student involvement and allow them not only to take action: encourage/challenge students to play with the text but also become part of the action and plunge into the play.

Establishing the world, key themes and images, telling the story, discovering characters and exploring language. This pack of activities will provide the students with a better understanding of the play and its context.

Please bring your copy of the play