



## Approaching a Poem – MESSAGE, TONE, LANGUAGE and STRUCTURE, CONTEXT

### MESSAGE

- What is the poem about?
- Are meanings clear or ambiguous? Literal or figurative?
- Who is the speaker? What are their thoughts?
- Are there any alternative interpretations?
- What is the key message/ moral of the poem?
- Who is the poem written to?
- What themes are in the poem? Why are these significant?
- How is the reader intended to react?
- How does the poem make you feel?

### TONE

- How does the speaker/subject feel?
- What is the feeling that you get when reading the poem?  
What attitudes does the poem express?
- What mood runs through the poem? Why has the poet done this? What is the poet trying to say?
- Does the mood stay the same throughout the poem, or does it change?

### LANGUAGE & STRUCTURE

- Where are key words and why are they significant?
- Are there any effective language technique uses by the poet?  
**(See the 'Language Techniques section of the Knowledge Organiser).**
- What do you notice about the structure of the poem? **(See the 'Structural Information/Techniques section of the Knowledge Organiser).**
- Link back: how do the language or structural choices made by the poet lead you to your understanding of the MESSAGE and TONE?

### CONTEXT

- Who is the poet and when did they live?
- What happened in the poet's life? Did this influence their poetry?
- What social/political ideas did the poet hold? How do these affect his/her poetry?
- What styles/forms/language is the poet known for? Are these evident in this poem?
- When/where do you think the poem was set/written?
- What were the main attitudes at the time? What clues in the poem are there for this?
- Is the poem linked to any historical events? How is this significant?



**Structural Information/Techniques – the form (style) of the poem, its rhyme, rhythm and metre, and how it is set out on the page**

**Form**

The **form** of a poem is its physical structure. A poem's form is dictated by its stanza structure, line lengths, and rhyme scheme, amongst other features. Here are some common forms of poetry:

- **Sonnet** – A short rhyming poem with 14 lines. Sonnets use iambic metre in each line, and use line-ending rhymes.
- **Elegy** – A poem of serious reflection, normally about the dead.
- **Narrative** – Narrative poems tell the story of events through poetry. There are clear narration, characters and plot.
- **Epic** – A lengthy poem celebrating adventures and accomplishments.
- **Free Verse** – Free verse poems do not follow any rules.
- **Ballad** – A long poem in short stanzas – normally quatrains (4 lines) – that tells a story. They often use repetition.

**Stanzas**

A **stanza** is a grouped set of lines in a poem, set apart from other lines by a blank line of indentation.

- Stanzas are often used to group related ideas, or show content related to a particular time or place.
- Poets manipulate the number, type and length of stanzas to aid meaning.
- Names of stanzas of different lengths are shown on the right.

**Rhyme**

**Rhyme** is the 'correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry.'

Poets use rhyme for a number of reasons:

- To make a poem more musical and give it a 'beat' or 'rhythm, or to show creativity and sophistication in language'.
- To emphasise particular words/sounds that hold value or add meaning to the poem/its messages.
- Aid the memory for recitation purposes.

**Poets organise the rhyme in their poems using Rhyme Schemes:**

- This can help to establish the form – for example, the English sonnet traditionally holds an ABAB-CD-CD-EFEF-GG rhyme scheme.

**Metre/Rhythm**

The **metre** of a poem is the measured pattern of rhythm created by stressed and unstressed syllables. **Rhythm** refers to the overall tempo, or pace, at which the poem unfolds.

Poets who write free verse often tend to ignore metre and focus instead on the content and tone of their poem. However, many poems follow a clear metre throughout.

Common metres are below:

- **Iambic:** Metre which starts with an unstressed and then a stressed syllable.
- **Trochaic:** Metre which starts with a stressed and then an unstressed syllable.
- **Dactylic:** Metre which starts with a stressed and then 2 unstressed syllables.
- **Anapestic:** Metre which has 2 unstressed and then a stressed syllable.

## Structural Information/Techniques – the form (style) of the poem, its rhyme, rhythm and meter, and how it is set out on the page

### Key Questions Regarding Structure

- What is the form of the poem? How do you know?
- Does the poem have a regular or irregular structure? Why?
- How many stanzas does it have? What can be read from this?
- Does the poem rhyme? What rhyme scheme does it use? What is the effect of this? Is the rhyme regular or irregular?
- What can be noted about the line length/metre?
- What rhythm (if any) runs through the poem? Why did the poet include this line length/metre/rhythm in the poem?

### Line Type/Length

**Lines of poetry can end in two ways – enjambment (the sentence runs over two lines) or end-stopped.**

Unlike prose, writers of poetry can end lines where they choose, meaning that the line type and length is often employed to support meaning.

- The use of long lines, containing enjambment, for example, can reflect complex or even confusing ideas.
- Short, end-stopped lines may be used for dramatic effect, or to allow the reader to dwell on ideas.

## Language Techniques – vocabulary, phrases, techniques and devices used by the poet

<b>Interesting Adjectives</b>	Describing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	“Parting with his poison – Flash of <u>diabolic</u> tail In the <u>dark</u> room – he risked the rain again”
<b>Interesting Verbs</b>	Doing words that are specific or beyond the most obvious, creating a clear effect.	“ <u>Stumbling</u> across a field of clods towards a gree hedge That <u>dazzled</u> with rifle fire, hearing Bullets <u>smacking</u> the Belly out of the air”
<b>Imagery</b>	Words or phrases that appeal to any sense or any combination of senses.	“Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed”
<b>Similes</b>	A comparison between two objects using “like” or “as”.	“O my Luve is <u>like</u> a red, red rose That’s newly sprung in June O my Luve is <u>like</u> the melody That’s sweetly played in tune”



### Language Techniques – vocabulary, phrases, techniques and devices used by the poet

<b>Metaphors</b>	A comparison between two things in order to give clearer meaning to one of them.	“Hope’ <u>is</u> the thing with features - / That perches in the soul And sings the tune without the words / and never stops – at all”
<b>Alliteration</b>	The repetition of initial consonant sounds	“With <u>swift</u> , <u>slow</u> , <u>sweet</u> , <u>sour</u> ; adazzle, dim; He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change”
<b>Assonance</b>	The repetition of vowel sounds	“With its <u>leaping</u> , and <u>deep</u> , cool murmur ... <u>White</u> and <u>shining</u> in the silver-flecked water”
<b>Repetition</b>	The repeating words, phrases, lines or stanzas	Keeping <u>time, time, time</u> In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells From the <u>bells, bells, bells, bells</u>
<b>Onomatopoeia</b>	The use of words which imitate sound	“A child sitting under the piano, in the <u>boom</u> of the <u>tingling</u> strings And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as she sings”
<b>Oxymoron</b>	A figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear together	“Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way To the siding-shed, And lined the train With faces <u>grimly gay</u> ”
<b>Personification</b>	A figure of speech which gives animals, ideas, or inanimate objects human traits or abilities	“ <u>Death, be not proud</u> , though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art no so”
<b>Hyperbole</b>	Exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally	“The sea him <u>lent</u> those bitter tears Which at his eyes he always wears/And from the Wind the sighs he bore, Which through his <u>surging breast do roar</u> ”

# Year 9: Shakespeare's Study Overview

## Key Terms

**Tragedy** - a play dealing with tragic events and having an unhappy ending, especially one concerning the downfall of the main character.

**Prologue** - a separate introductory section of a play.

**Protagonist** - the leading character or one of the major characters in the play.

**Antagonist** - a person who actively opposes or is hostile to someone or something.

**Monologue** - long speech by one actor in a play or film.

**Soliloquy** - an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any hearers, especially by a character in a play.

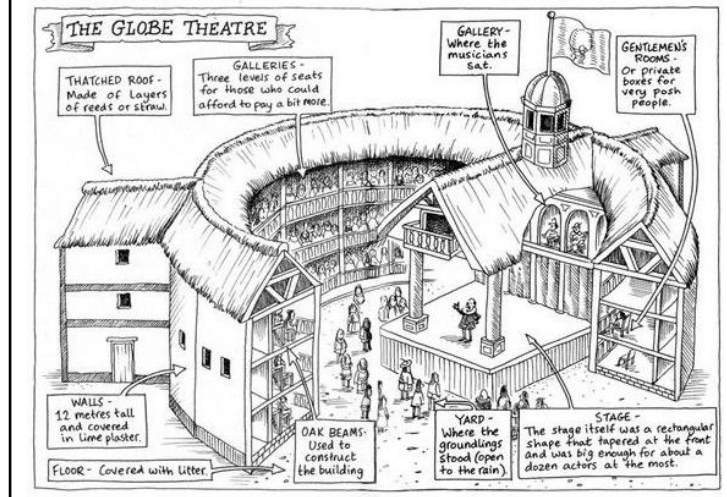
**Dramatic irony** - a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.

**Juxtaposition** - two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.

**Iambic pentameter** - a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of one short (or unstressed) syllable followed by one long (or stressed) syllable, for example *Two households, both alike in dignity.*

**Prose** - written or spoken language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure.

## The Globe Theatre



## A selection of comedies

<b>Much Ado About Nothing</b>	A comedy of errors resulting in a happy ending. Written in 1598.
<b>The Tempest</b>	First performed in 1611. It is one of Shakespeare's only original stories!
<b>A Midsummer Night's Dream</b>	Written in 1595, it has multiple plots all tangled together.
<b>The Merchant of Venice</b>	First performed in 1605, money causes downfall in this comedy.

## Key Facts

### Full name:

William Shakespeare

### Also known as:

The Bard of Avon

### Born:

Exact date unknown, but baptised 26 April 1564

### Hometown:

Stratford-upon-Avon

**Occupation:** Playwright, actor and poet

**Died:** 23 April 1616

### Parents:

John & Mary Shakespeare

### Wife:

Anne Hathaway

### Children:

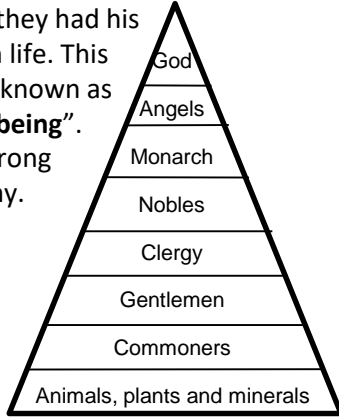
Susanna, Hamnet & Judith

### Works:

37 plays (at least), 154 sonnets, many poems.



# Year 9: Much Ado About Nothing

Brief Plot Summary	Key Characters	Context
<p><b>Act 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don Pedro, Claudio and Benedick arrive in Messina.</li> <li>• Claudio and Hero falls in love.</li> <li>• Benedick and Beatrice tease each other.</li> <li>• Don John plans revenge on his brother.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benedick:</b> a lord, a soldier and Don Pedro’s friend. Known for his quick-wit. He is in love with Beatrice but doesn’t realise it.</p>	<p><b>Philosophy:</b> Everyone believed that they had his or her place in life. This <b>hierarchy</b> was known as “<b>the chain of being</b>”.</p> <p>There was a strong social hierarchy.</p> 
<p><b>Act 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During a masked ball, Claudio and Hero get engaged.</li> <li>• Don John plots to disgrace Hero.</li> <li>• Benedick is tricked into thinking that Beatrice is in love with him.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Beatrice:</b> Leonato’s niece. Quick-witted and intelligent. She is in love with Benedick but doesn’t realise it.</p>	<p><b>Religion:</b> People were deeply religious. Belief in God and heaven and hell affected people’s choice and the way they behaved.</p>
<p><b>Act 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beatrice is tricked into thinking that Benedick is in love with her.</li> <li>• Don John tells Claudio that Hero is unfaithful.</li> <li>• The Watch arrest Conrad and Borachio.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Claudio:</b> a lord, a soldier and Don Pedro’s friend. Young and naïve. Falls in love with Hero.</p>	<p><b>Gender:</b> It was a patriarchal society. Women were ruled by men and were expected to be submissive and meek. Sexual relationships before marriage were seen as a sin and socially unacceptable, particularly for women. Children conceived out of wedlock were illegitimate and were looked down upon by society and were unable to inherit their father’s wealth and titles. Unfaithful women and women who had a sexual relationship before marriage (especially those of noble birth) compromised their position within the social hierarchy. Men were supposed to be strong, brave and masculine (to be called feminine was an insult). It was acceptable for men to be sexually experienced before marriage.</p>
<p><b>Act 4:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claudio accuses Hero of being unfaithful at their wedding</li> <li>• Hero collapses and is believed dead.</li> <li>• Benedick and Beatrice declare their love for one another.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hero:</b> Leonato’s daughter. Young and naïve. Falls in love with Claudio and is accused of being unfaithful.</p>	
<p><b>Act 5:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don John’s plot is discovered.</li> <li>• Claudio finds out Hero was innocent, grieves and, believing her to be dead, he agrees to marry Leonato’s ‘niece’.</li> <li>• Hero and Claudio are reunited when it is revealed that she the ‘niece’.</li> <li>• Benedick and Beatrice agree to marry.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Don Pedro:</b> Prince of Aragon.</p>	
	<p><b>Don John:</b> the half-brother of Don Pedro. He is resentful and angry because of his status. He plots to destroy the happiness of others.</p>	
	<p><b>Leonato:</b> Governor of Messina. Old and wise but easily swayed by the opinions of others – he believes that Hero has been unfaithful when she is first accused.</p>	
	<p><b>Antonio:</b> Leonato’s brother. He provides a steadying influence.</p>	
	<p><b>The Watch:</b> lead by Dogberry. He is assisted by Verges and Sexton.</p>	
	<p><b>Conrad and Borachio:</b> followers of Don John who help him to discredit Hero.</p>	
	<p><b>Margaret:</b> Hero’s flirtatious serving lady who unwittingly helps in Don John’s evil plan.</p>	
	<p><b>Ursula:</b> Hero’s serving lady and friend.</p>	
	<p><b>Friar Francis:</b> the priest who is supposed to marry Claudio and Hero. He advises Hero to pretend to be dead.</p>	



## Year 9: The Tempest

### Brief Plot Summary

**The Tempest (I.i)** Alonso, the King of Naples, is on a ship with his son Ferdinand and his companions. They are struck by a terrifying storm and are washed ashore in different places. The island seems to be abandoned.

**After the Storm (I.ii)** Miranda watches the huge tempest. She lives with her father Prospero. Prospero tells his daughter of their past. Prospero has created the storm to bring his brother to the island.

**Ariel and Caliban (I.ii. cont./II.i)** Prospero is a powerful magician who controls the spirit Ariel who completes tasks for him. Prospero has agreed to release Ariel after this last mission. Caliban is also under Prospero's control. He is the son of an old witch, Sycorax, and is a native of the island. Prospero taught Caliban how to speak but Caliban resents the control Prospero has over him.

**Kind Alonso (II.i)** King Alonso and his brother Sebastian, as well as Antonio wander around the island. King Alonso weeps as he believes his son Ferdinand is dead. Sebastian and Antonio plot to kill Alonso so that Sebastian can be king. They are stopped by Ariel's magical intervention.

**Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo (II.ii, III.ii)** Caliban is found by Stephano and Trinculo. They give him alcohol to drink and he gets drunk. Caliban offers to serve Stephano because he believes he is a god because of the heavenly drink! Caliban explains to them how Prospero has treated him and that he will be their guide on the island if they overthrow him. The three drunks go to find and kill Prospero.

**Ferdinand and Miranda (I.ii, III.i)** Ferdinand has survived the storm. He is safely on the island and is found by Miranda. They fall instantly in love. Prospero wants to test that the love is real. Ferdinand has to endure hard labour to prove his intentions are honourable. Miranda pities Ferdinand and wants to marry him. Prospero blesses their marriage.

**The End (IV.i, V.i)** A marriage for Ferdinand and Miranda is arranged. It is interrupted when Prospero recalls the threat from Trinculo, Stephano and Caliban. Prospero and Ariel send spirit dogs to scare them away. King Alonso, Sebastian and Antonio meet Prospero. He explains what has been happening on the island. He shows them Ferdinand and Miranda who are now married. King Alonso is filled with regret and asks for forgiveness from Prospero which he grants.

**Epilogue** Prospero declares that he will be giving up his magic. Ariel is released from his service. The party travel back to Milan. We do not know what has happened to Caliban.

### Key Characters

**Alonso** – King of Naples

**Antonio** – Prospero's brother. Antonio stole Prospero's title as Duke of Milan.

**Ariel** – an airy spirit. A slave of Prospero's who earns his freedom

**Caliban** – a native of the island. Being kept as a slave by Prospero because he tried to attach Miranda.

**Ferdinand** – Alonso's son

**Gonzalo** – the old counsellor to the King of Naples

**Miranda** – Prospero's daughter

**Prospero** – the rightful Duke of Milan

**Sebastian** – Alonso's brother

**Stephano** – a drunken butler

**Trinculo** – a jester

### Context

*The Tempest* probably was written in 1610–1611, and was first performed at Court by the King's Men in the fall of 1611. It was performed again in the winter of 1612–1613 during the festivities in celebration of the marriage of King James's daughter Elizabeth.

*The Tempest* is most likely the last play written entirely by Shakespeare, and it is remarkable for being one of only two plays by Shakespeare (the other being *Love's Labor's Lost*) whose plot is entirely original.

The play does, however, draw on travel literature of its time—most notably the accounts of a tempest off the Bermudas that separated and nearly wrecked a fleet of colonial ships sailing from Plymouth to Virginia.

The English colonial project seems to be on Shakespeare's mind throughout *The Tempest*, as almost every character, from the lord Gonzalo to the drunk Stephano, ponders how he would rule the island on which the play is set if he were its king.

Shakespeare seems also to have drawn on Montaigne's essay "Of the Cannibals," which was translated into English in 1603. The name of Prospero's servant-monster, Caliban, seems to be an anagram or derivative of "Cannibal."

# Year 9: A Midsummer Night's Dream

## Brief Plot Summary

### Act 1:

- Hermia and Lysander love each other but are not allowed to marry so decide to run away to the forest to get married in secret.
- Demetrius wants to marry Hermia. Helena loves Demetrius. They follow Hermia and Lysander into the forest.

### Act 2:

- In the forest, Oberon and Titania are arguing.
- Oberon sees Demetrius and Helena arguing and commands Puck to use the potion on the Athenian man to make him fall in love with Helena.
- However, the first Athenian man Puck sees is Lysander, so he puts the love potion on him.
- Lysander falls madly in love with Helena.

### Act 3:

- Puck sees Bottom in the forest and transformed his head into a donkey's head.
- He puts the love potion on Titania, who falls in love with Bottom.
- Puck puts the love potion on Demetrius so that he falls back in love with Helena.
- As a result, both men love Helena so there is chaos.
- Puck eventually drops a herb in Lysander's eyes to put him back to normal.

### Acts 4 and 5:

- Oberon finds Titania and Bottom and decides that he has had enough fun.
- Puck drops a herb in her eyes, she wakes and leaves with Oberon.
- The lovers return to Athens where Bottom and the other actors perform their play at the wedding of the three happy couples: Egeus and Hippolyta, Lysander and Hermia and Demetrius and Helena.

## Key Characters

**Theseus:** The duke of Athens. He is a strong and strict ruler of the city.

**Hippolyta:** Theseus's bride. She was a fearless warrior

**Egeus:** Hermia's stubborn father who wants her to marry Demetrius or be put to death

**Hermia:** Egeus's daughter who is in love with Lysander.

**Lysander:** He is in love with Hermia and runs away to the forest with her.

**Demetrius:** He wants to marry Hermia and is disgusted by Helena's love for him.

**Helena:** Hermia's friend who is desperately in love with Demetrius.

**Oberon:** The king of the fairies who controls the love potion.

**Titania:** The fierce queen of the fairies who falls in love with Bottom when the love potion is put on her.

**Bottom:** A weaver and actor who has his head turned into a donkey. Titania falls in love with him when she is under the love potion's influence.

**Puck:** Oberon's mischievous servant who puts the potion on people's eyes.

## Context

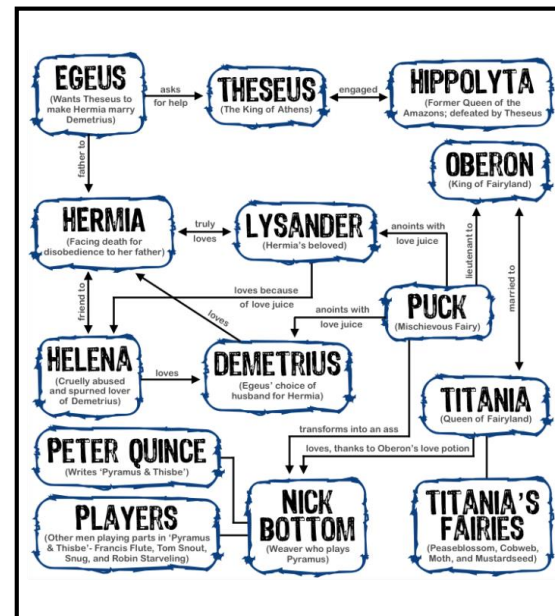
Shakespeare went to a grammar school where he was taught Ancient Greek.

The play is set in Ancient Greece and follows the rules of a comedy from Ancient Greece.

When the play was written, Elizabeth 1st was Queen. She decided not to get married which many people disagreed with.

Many Elizabethans believed in and feared magic.

Cupid is the ancient god of love. He is usually presented as a baby whose arrows make people fall in love.





## Brief Plot Summary

**Act I:** Bassanio asks Antonio for a loan of 3,000 ducats. Antonio has to borrow from Shylock and the bond is a pound of flesh. Portia complains to Nerissa about the way her father has insisted she find a husband – by choosing one of three caskets – and mocks the suitors so far.

**Act II:** The Prince of Morocco arrives and chooses the gold casket and so fails to win Portia's hand. Jessica steals money and jewels and escapes from Shylock with Lorenzo. Shylock is enraged. We find that some of Antonio's ships have been lost. The Prince of Arragon arrives and chooses the silver casket so he does not marry Portia either.

**Act III:** More of Antonio's ships have been lost. Shylock says he will have his pound of flesh. Bassanio arrives to woo Portia. He chooses the lead casket and is able to marry her – the two declare their love. Nerissa and Gratiano reveal their love also. Portia and Nerissa give each man a ring. Bassanio hears that Antonio is ruined and leaves to help his friend. Antonio is in prison and Shylock will show no mercy. Portia and Nerissa say they are retiring to a convent but secretly go to Venice to help Antonio.

**Act IV:** Antonio is on trial. Bassanio begs Shylock to be merciful. Balthasar, who is really Portia dressed as a man, arrives at court to help Antonio. Bassanio offers ten times the debt or his own life but Shylock will not yield. Balthasar/Portia insists that Venetian law is followed. Antonio and Bassanio say goodbye. Shylock is about to cut Antonio when Balthasar /Portia reminds him that the bond mentioned no blood and he must not spill a drop. Shylock says he'll take the money. Portia insists he have his bond. Shylock drops the case. He is then punished for attempting to take the life of a citizen of Venice. The Duke is merciful and gives Shylock a fine. Bassanio wants to give Balthasar/Portia a token of appreciation. Portia asks for his ring and gets it. Nerissa also gets Gratiano's ring.

**Act V:** Portia and Nerissa arrive home just before their husbands. Bassanio, Antonio and Gratiano arrive and give the good news. Portia and Nerissa 'find out' that the men have given their rings away and pretend to be cross. Eventually, the two women give their husbands back their rings and all is revealed. Antonio hears that some of his ships are safely home. Lorenzo hears he will inherit Shylock's fortune.

## Key Characters

**Antonio:** Will do anything for Bassanio. He is a merchant.

**Bassanio:** is a man who spends more than he has. He is similar to the Prodigal Son. He borrows money so that he can win Portia.

**Gratiano:** is a joker and very good friends with Bassanio. He marries Nerissa.

**Jessica:** is a Jew who loves Lorenzo, a Christian. She changes her religion to be with him, something the audience would have been very happy about.

**Lancelot Gobbo:** At first he is Shylock's servant and then he works for Bassanio. He provides comedy for the audience by misusing the English language. His father is Old Gobbo.

**Lorenzo:** is a Christian who wins Jessica's heart and steals her away from her father.

**Nerissa:** Portia's lady-in-waiting. She has a dry sense of humour and marries Gratiano.

**Portia:** Represents Queen Elizabeth with her power. She does not get to choose who she marries. Luckily, she marries Bassanio who she loves.

**Shylock:** is a Jew who is discriminated against by the Christians. He wants revenge on them. Is he the victim or the villain?

**Morocco and Arragon:** Princes from other countries who want to win the casket lottery for Portia. They are stereotyped and mocked.

## Context

### Queen Elizabeth

When the play was written, Elizabeth 1st was Queen. She decided not to get married which many people disagreed with.

### Patriarchal Society

Women were considered inferior to men and belonged to their fathers (or brothers if their fathers had died) and then their husbands. Portia would have been expected to obey her father's commands. Portia refuses to be passive and submissive like women were expected to be at that time. This could be because Shakespeare would have also had to please Queen Elizabeth and Portia was used as a representation of her.

### Religion

Jews had to live in ghettos and were discriminated against. It was a very anti-Semitic time. In England, during the time this was written, Jews had been banished for the past 300 years so the audience would not know any Jews. Violent, racist and insulting behaviour was deemed funny to the Elizabethan era. Shakespeare would have made Shylock, the Jew, the antagonist of the play to provide humour for the audience. He would have also mocked other countries for the same reason. However, there are some areas where Shylock appears this victim. Maybe Shakespeare also pities the Jews because of how they have been treated by society.