

# ACT THREE

# IDENTITY

AND

# EQUALITY

Are all people born equal ?

## Objectives

To consider what defines who we are and examine issues related to identity, equality and diversity. To explore Shakespeare's use of language and how many of his words and idioms have become embedded into the language we speak today.

## Curriculum links

English, Personal, Social and Health Education, Citizenship, Art and Design.

## Citizenship skills and outlooks

Communicating, collaborating, creative thinking, developing empathy.

## Resources required

Large open space for practical work, scrap paper, copies of newspapers, internet access, text extracts, work sheets, scissors and envelopes.





## EXPLORING CITIZENSHIP THEMES, SKILLS AND VALUES

### ? KEY QUESTIONS

**What different roles and identities do we take on?**

Our sense of identity can also be related to our feelings of belonging to particular groups and communities. In **The Merchant of Venice**, Shylock is seen as a father, a member of the Jewish community and a moneylender. In **Romeo and Juliet**, Juliet is a Capulet, daughter and young wife. What communities or groups do you associate with other Shakespearean characters?

Focusing on a particular play, ask your pupils to create an illustrated mind map of the different groups that characters from the play belong to. Are there any groups that the characters are excluded from? How does that affect them? How does disguise contribute to their sense of identity? In **Twelfth Night**, Viola has to disguise herself as a man in order to survive the new court that she finds herself in. This happens in a number of Shakespeare's plays. In what ways do people hide their true identity today? Why do they do this?



Discuss moral issues relating to identity and equality such as the representation of women, status or religion that students have encountered in the Shakespeare play they are studying. The same themes continue to reverberate in modern life. Give out copies of national or local newspapers. Ask your pupils to find contemporary news stories that are still concerned with the same issues related to identity and equality 400 years after Shakespeare was writing.





## IN DEPTH ANALYSIS – RESPECT AND EMOTIVE LANGUAGE

Watch a clip and read together the excerpt from **Act 1 Scene 3** of **The Merchant of Venice**, which reveals the cruel treatment Shylock has experienced on the streets of Venice because of his identity as a Jew. Discuss the meaning behind the lines and the motivation of each character involved.

Then look at Shylock's famous speech from **Act 3 Scene 1** that eloquently argues that all people are equal. Discuss why the images contained in this passage are so powerful. You could also ask pupils to look at specific lines and create physical images to represent them, reflecting on any similarities or differences in their choices. Do they think Shylock is wrong to seek revenge when the money cannot be paid back?



### EXPLORING CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

**Imaging can be a great way of exploring motivations at pivotal moments. Here the activity looks at the meaning behind the lines and the motivations of each character, which can be adapted to help pupils think about Shylock's feelings and respond to the way he is treated by others in The Merchant of Venice. You can see an example of how this might work with Julius Caesar on page 55 as part of a series of activities, but it can be used with any text.**

Alternatively show your pupils a copy of Viola and Duke Orsino's dialogue about love in **Act 2 Scene 4** of **Twelfth Night**. Try reading it in pairs standing back to back. How does the fact that Viola is disguised as a man change the conversation? What does the audience understand from her emotional speech that Orsino cannot? How does this change the impact of the language?



### EXPLORING DIALOGUE

**You can see an example of this and other Scene Studies using Julius Caesar on page 59, but it can be used with any text.**



## APPLY YOUR LEARNING – CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### Quoting Shakespeare

The famous images and phrases contained in these speeches are some of many new words and phrases attributed to Shakespeare that are still in common usage today. Some of his most well-known sayings and phrases can be seen in the following passage by the writer Bernard Levin:

'If your lost property has **vanished into thin air**, you are quoting Shakespeare. If you have ever refused to **budge an inch** or suffered from **green eyed jealousy**, if you have played **fast and loose**, if you have been **tongue tied, a tower of strength, hoodwinked** or **in a pickle** you are quoting Shakespeare... if you think it is **high time** and that is the **long and short of it**, if you believe the **game is up** and that **truth will out**, even if it involves your own **flesh and blood** you are quoting Shakespeare.'

How many of these phrases do your pupils recognise? Cut up the examples of some well-known Shakespearean idioms on **Activity Sheet 2**. Ask your pupils to work in pairs to match the beginning and the end of these famous quotations. Try writing some simple explanations of these phrases for your partner school. Do they have equivalent sayings or idioms in their own language?

For home learning ask your pupils to collect some favourite Shakespearean quotations from their families, teachers, friends or neighbours. These may be things that they themselves learned at school. Ask them to find out about the play and scene that these quotations come from and then copy out and illustrate in a media of their choice to make a beautiful illustrated book of Shakespearean quotations.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Encourage your pupils to write a **Biopoem**. This is a simple poem or self-portrait in words that follows a predictable pattern. Encourage them to include imaginative and interesting details about their identity and what makes them unique using the following pattern:

- First name.
- Relationships in your life: 'Relative of...' or 'friend of...'
- Three character traits.
- Three things you love e.g. fan of... chocolate, windy walks on the beach, theatre.
- Three important memories.
- Three groups you belong to e.g. footballer, guitarist and runner.
- Three accomplishments.
- Three hopes or wishes.
- Home (location): 'Resident of...' or 'attends ... school'.
- Surname.

Then try writing a Biopoem about a Shakespeare character they know well.

Your pupils could also work in small groups to devise the plot of a short story about a person who is treated differently in some way. How could/should the issues be resolved? Present these short stories to the rest of the class.





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## AND FINALLY...

### ? KEY QUESTIONS

**Do you think we now live in a more equal society than Shakespeare? Explain why.**

**What else could be done to promote equality of opportunity for all?**

In 2010, the Equality Act was passed by Parliament in the UK to bring together over 100 laws into a single Act to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promote a fair and more equal society for all. Encourage your pupils to research other measures that have been taken in your country to promote equality such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by 193 countries in September 2015.

## PARTNER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Compare your individual descriptions and class word clouds with that of your partner school class.
- Create an illustrated book of your class's favourite Shakespeare quotations and exchange them with your partner school quoting the play, act and scene where they are found.
- Investigate the life and works of major writers from your partner school country who also wrote on similar themes.



### GLOSSARY

**Wordle:** a tool for generating word clouds from text. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text.

**Biopoem:** Biopoems follow a specific 11-line format. Writers can use these poems to better understand an historical figure, a fictional character, or themselves.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### The Merchant of Venice Act 1 Scene 3

**Shylock** Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
In the Rialto you have **rated** me  
About my moneys and my usances.  
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,  
For **sufferance** is the badge of all our tribe.  
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog  
And spit upon my Jewish **gabardine**,  
And all for **use** of that which is mine own.  
Well then, it now appears you need my help.  
**Go to**, then. You come to me and you say  
Shylock, we would have moneys' – you say so,  
You that did **void** your **rheum** upon my beard.  
And **foot** me as you spurn a **stranger cur**  
Over your threshold. Moneys is your **suit**.  
What should I say to you? Should I not say,  
'Hath a dog money? Is it possible  
A cur should lend three thousand ducats?' Or  
Shall I bend low and in a **bondman's key**,  
With **bated** breath and whisp'ring humbleness,  
Say this: 'Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last;  
You **spurned** me such a day; another time  
You called me dog, and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much moneys?'



## ! OVERVIEW

In Act 1 Scene 3 of *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio, a merchant, has requested money from Shylock who is a Jewish moneylender. In this speech Shylock responds to his latest request.

## ✍ NOTES

**rated**: berated, reproached (puns on rate)

**sufferance**: endurance

**gabardine**: loose cloak or coat

**use**: employment (puns on sense of 'financial interest')

**Go to**: expression of impatient dismissal

**void**: discharge, empty

**rheum**: spit

**foot**: kick/reject

**stranger cur**: unknown dog

**suit**: request

**bondman's key**: servant's tone

**bated**: subdued

**spurned**: despise/reject

# The Merchant of Venice

## Act 3 Scene 1

**Shylock** 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?



### ! OVERVIEW

**In Act 3 Scene 1 of The Merchant of Venice, Shylock is explaining to two Christians that he is serious about the terms of his loan to Antonio, and that all people experience the same emotions, including the desire for revenge.**

### ✍ NOTES

**dimensions:** parts of the body

**affections:** emotions/love

**passions:** powerful emotions



# Twelfth Night

## Act 2 Scene 4

**Viola** Ay, but I know—

**Orsino** What dost thou know?

**Viola** Too well what love women to men may owe:

In faith, they are as true of heart as we.

My father had a daughter loved a man,

As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,

I should your lordship.

**Orsino** And what's her **history**?

**Viola** A blank, my lord. She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,

Feed on her **damask** cheek: she pined in thought,

And with a **green and yellow** melancholy

She sat like **patience on a monument**,

Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?

We men may say more, swear more: but indeed

Our **shows** are more than will; for still we prove

Much in our vows, but little in our love.

### ! OVERVIEW

**In Act 2 Scene 4 of Twelfth Night, Viola is dressed as a man. She has been working for Duke Orsino, who hired her as a manservant, Cesario, but has fallen in love with him.**

### 📖 NOTES

**history:** story

**damask:** pink, like the damask rose

**green and yellow:** sickly, pale and sallow

**patience... monument:** carved figure on a memorial

**shows:** outwards displays



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## RESOURCES

- Scissors
- Envelopes
- Pens
- Paper

Photocopy and cut up the following Shakespearean quotations and place them in envelopes. Give each group an envelope and ask them to match the beginning and end of the phrase.

 All that glisters...	...is not gold
All's well that...	...ends well
Brave new...	...world
Budge an...	...inch
Eaten me out of...	...house and home
If music be the food of love...	...play on
Be all...	...and the end all
Dead as a...	...doornail
Knock knock...	...who's there
Wild goose...	...chase
Break the...	...ice
Own flesh...	...and blood