

# Merchant of Venice: As/A-level English Literature (As/a-Level Photocopiable Teacher Resource Packs)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: Portia's Speech**



In this speech, comedy *The Merchant of Venice*, the merchant Antonio has taken a loan from the moneylender Shylock when Shylock has very much. The terms of the loan say that if Antonio does not pay the loan back on time, Shylock may take a pound of Antonio's flesh which would certainly be fatal, if not for Antonio. Antonio loans the money to him in the final 2 hours of the play. Antonio dies when the loan deadline, and Shylock demands the pound of flesh.

Antonio appeals to the Duke of Venice, who refers the case to court. Portia disguises herself as a man and persuades Shylock to the court in a lawyer's robes to defend Antonio. Below is part of her speech to Shylock.

Answer the questions below:

1. What is the simile in the speech?
2. Why is money "more than life"?
3. What does it mean money is not "human"?
4. What is money "hellishness"?
5. What does Portia say is more important than "human" or money?

*The Merchant of Venice*

By William Shakespeare

Act IV, Scene I

The quality of money is not made's,  
It suppleth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath it a more blent,  
It bleeds him that grows and has that takes:  
The neighbor as the neighbor in business  
The second monarch better than his crown,  
His weight shows the force of temporal power,  
The statute to awe and repress,  
Shadows both the soul and law of kings,  
But money is above this royal power,  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an absolute 'God himself'.

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