**Ms. McLeod**

**ELA B10**

The Merchant of Venice

***-William Shakespeare-***

**Structure of the Shakespearean Play**

**Every one of Shakespeare’s plays contain five acts with the following plot structure:**

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| **Act One**  **Introduction**(Exposition)- The setting is introduced, important characters are introduced; key notes to characters are given; and the groundwork of the plot is played. |
| **Act Two**  **Growth**- The plot and the characters are further developed often revealing motives. New characters may be introduced (also called conflict). |
| **Act Three**  **Climax**-The turning point of the play where the hero is confronted with his guilt. If he does not repent, he goes on to the end and tragedy results. |
| **Act Four**  **Consequence**- The consequence of the decision in Act III is worked out. |
| **Act Five**  **Conclusion**- Where the plot works out to its ending, the tragic character gets his reward and harmony is restored by the destruction of the individual. |

**Style of the Shakespearean Play**

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| * The plays are written in blank verse (no set rhyme scheme). * Prose is used whenever the characters belong to a lower class of society. * Poetry is used chiefly for the purpose of giving emphasis to those lines in which the speaker expresses a purpose or decision and it frequently marks the closing of a scene. |

**Dramatic Devices in the Shakespearean Play**

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| **Conflict**  Clash of opposing forces without which there is no drama. It could be a clash of wills, a physical clash, a clash between man and himself. |
| **Crisis**  Turning points of the play. |
| **Coincidence**  The occurrence of events without apparent connection. |
| **Contrast**  Within character, between characters and atmosphere of the play. |
| **Parallelism**  The fact that characters and events in the earlier part of the play are balanced against those on the latter part. |
| **Principle of Alternation**  A humorous scene following a tragic scene. |
| **Nemesis**  Principle of retribution (get what you deserve). |
| **Foreshadowing of Events**  A warning of what may happen. |
| **Irony**  Ridicule, humour or light sarcasm which implies the opposite of the literal sense of the word. |
| **Dramatic Irony**  The effect produced when a speech of situation has one meaning for the actor or speaker and an inner or opposite for the audience. |
| **Pathos**  That which excites pity. |
| **Supernatural**  Agencies above or outside the forces of nature. |
| **Soliloquy**  Where a character is talking to himself or herself and disregards any other characters present (used in drama to disclose a character’s innermost thoughts). |

**The Merchant of Venice**

**Important points to consider about the play:**

**The play was inspired by…**

1.The trial of Roderigo Lopez (London, 1594). Roderigo Lopez, a converted Jew, was the most distinguished member of his race in England. He was the chief physician to Queen Elizabeth. He allowed himself to be entangled in a Spanish plot to poison the Queen, was tried, convicted, hanged, drawn and quartered.

2. “The Jew of Malta” by Christopher Malta

In this play Marlowe’s main idea is that Jews can learn bad habits from Christians. This idea is also present in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice

**Background History**

“The status of Jews in Sixteenth Century England”

* Jews had rules placed upon that were different than other members of society.
  + - For example, Jews were forbidden to own property.
* Jews were forced to conform to Christianity.
* The attitude of Christians at the time was that forcing someone to become a Christian was doing them a favour.

**Type of play**

The Merchant of Venice is a comedy and was first presented around 1596.

**Setting**

The setting of the play is during the 16th Century in Venice, Italy.

**Characters**

* Shylock-Jewish Moneylender
* Portia-A wealthy young woman
* Antonio- A merchant (business man), Shylock’s enemy, aided by Portia
* Nerissa-Portia’s waiting woman (aid or close friend that serves her)
* Gratiano- Nerissa’s husband, Bassanio’s friend
* Jessica- Shylock’s daughter
* Lorenzo- Jessica’s husband

**Plots**

* The bond plot- Shylock vs Antonio
* The Casket Plot-Portia’s search for a husband
* Courtship of Gratiano & Nerissa and Jessica & Lorenzo- Minor plot that is a reflection of the casket plot.