Merchant of Venice Internet Research

Yesterday, we looked at some of the plots and themes we are going to read about in *The Merchant of Venice*. Today, you have the opportunity to learn a little more about some of these big ideas. You may work with a partner to answer the following questions. Please both write down the answers on notebook paper.

Usury

1. [Define](http://www.dictionary.com/) usury
2. Using the [Credit Card Calculator](http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/iTools-iOutils/CreditCardCalculator-eng.aspx), determine how long it would take to pay off a loan of $3000 making only the minimum payments.
3. How much money would you pay in interest?
4. We are used to living in a credit-based economy and dealing with companies like banks to lend us money. How do you feel if you had to pay that interest to a PERSON instead of a bank? How would you feel if that person was someone you already didn't like? (Write at least 2 sentences)  
   <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/iTools-iOutils/CreditCardCalculator-eng.aspx>  
     
   Jews v. Christians
5. Why was money lending a common profession for Jews?
6. How did this affect relationships between Jews and Christians?
7. Give two reasons why Shakespeare might have created a Jewish villain in this play.
8. What was life like for Jews in Venice during the time of this play?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/merchant/ei_shylock.html>  
<http://www.answers.com/topic/usury>  
  
Love, Marriage, and Women's Roles in the Elizabethan Era

1. What are some things that women were NOT allowed to do at this time?
2. What restrictions were there on women and the theatre?
3. What was a common reason for marrying? How were spouses chosen?

<http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/elizabethan-women.htm>  
<http://elizabethan.org/compendium/index.html>

History of Venice

1. Describe Venice at the peak of its power and wealth.
2. What was unique about Venice during the 13th century?
3. What is the Spice Trade? What is the role of Venice in the Spice Trade?
4. Why might Shakespeare have chosen to use Venice for the location of a play?
5. Use a search engine to find images of Venice. What is unique about this city?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venice>  
  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spice_trade>  
  
[http://www.sparknotes.com/history/european/renaissance1/section5.rhtml](http://www.sparknotes.com/history/european/renaissance1/section5.rhtml%20)   
  
About William Shakespeare

1. When was Shakespeare born? When did he die?
2. How many plays did Shakespeare write during his lifetime?
3. What else did Shakespeare write? Why did he stop writing plays during this time?
4. Why is Shakespeare considered to be such an important literary figure?
5. When did he write the play *Merchant of Venice?*

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare>   
  
The Globe Theatre

1. What is Shakespeare's connection to the Globe Theatre?
2. How many spectators could the theatre hold?
3. Describe the layout of the theatre.
4. How was attending a play during Shakespeare's time different than going to the theatre today?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globe_Theatre>