

**THE POCKET
OXFORD THEATRE
COMPANY**

Presents

***The
Merchant
of Venice***

SECUNDARIA WORKPACK

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Teachers' note: *Welcome to The Pocket Oxford Theatre's workpack. We hope you find it useful. It includes pre-show information designed to help teachers prepare their students and give them a better understanding of this exciting piece of theatre in a foreign language; and also post-show activities to help make it an interactive and enjoyable experience once back in the classroom. We look forward to seeing you.*



The Pocket Oxford Theatre Company:

The Pocket Oxford present original and entertaining productions that are always fun, highly visual, and engaging for young audiences. The Pocket Oxford rework Shakespeare's plays into unique and contemporary hour-long, two-handed shows that students can really understand and have fun with, whilst also learning about the plays of the Bard. Our shows are the perfect way to introduce a young audience to Shakespeare's timeless stories. All of our productions include plenty of audience participation — music, dancing and dressing-up - as well as key lines from the original text, to ensure that experiencing Shakespeare is as enjoyable and as exciting as possible. Not something to be afraid of!

After touring in Europe for the past five years, The Pocket Oxford, are excited to be returning with their new and contemporary adaption of William Shakespeare's classic tragicomedy, "The Merchant of Venice".

The Pocket Oxford have updated the story and placed it in a modern day context. We have omitted some characters and secondary storylines to create a clear and succinct pocket version.

Once again William Shakespeare is in Spain writing his new play, whilst he and his wife, Anne Hathaway, are protesting against social and economic inequality as part of the city's Occupy Movement.



THE CHARACTERS:

Before you come to see The Pocket Oxford's version of 'The Merchant of Venice', why not familiarise yourself with primary characters and their names in the original story first?

Antonio - a merchant of Venice

Bassanio - Antonio's friend, in love with Portia

Gratiano - Bassanio's best friend

Lorenzo - Antonio and Bassanio's friend, in love with Jessica

Portia - a rich heiress

Nerissa - Portia's maid

Shylock - a rich Jew and money lender in Venice

Jessica - Shylock's daughter, in love with Lorenzo

Balthazar - Portia's disguise as a lawyer

Prince of Morocco - a suitor to Portia

Prince of Arragon - a suitor to Portia

SYNOPSIS;

Bassanio is desperately in need of money to court Portia, a wealthy heiress who lives in the city of Belmont. Bassanio asks Antonio for a loan in order to travel in style to Portia's estate. Antonio agrees, but is unable to make the loan himself because his money is all invested in a number of trade ships that are still at sea.

In Belmont, Portia expresses sadness over the terms of her late father's will, which stipulates that she must marry the man who correctly chooses one of three caskets. Portia and her lady-in-waiting, Nerissa, fondly remember a visit paid sometime before by Bassanio.

In Venice, Antonio and Bassanio approach Shylock, a Jewish moneylender, for a loan. Shylock nurses a long-standing grudge against Antonio, who has made a habit of berating Shylock and other Jews for their usury, the practice of loaning money at exorbitant rates of interest.

Shylock acts agreeably and offers to lend Bassanio three thousand ducats with no interest. Shylock adds, however, that should the loan go unpaid he will be entitled to a pound of Antonio's flesh cut from nearest to his heart.

Shylock's daughter Jessica schemes to elope with Antonio's friend Lorenzo and that night escapes with Lorenzo.

After a night of celebration, Bassanio and his friend Gratiano leave for Belmont, where Bassanio intends to win Portia's hand in marriage.

In Belmont, Portia welcomes the Prince of Morocco, who has come in an attempt to win her hand by choosing the correct casket. The prince studies the inscriptions on the three caskets and chooses the gold one, which proves to be an incorrect choice.

The Prince of Arragon also visits Portia in order to gain her hand in marriage. He too studies the caskets carefully and picks the silver one, which is also incorrect.

Bassanio arrives at Portia's estate, and they declare their love for one another. Despite Portia's request that he wait before choosing,

as she is worried that he too may choose incorrectly, Bassanio immediately makes his choice and picks the correct casket, made of lead. He and Portia rejoice as Gratiano confesses that he has fallen in love with Nerissa. The couples decide on a double wedding.

In Venice, Shylock is furious to find that his daughter has run away with a Christian, but rejoices in the fact that Antonio's ships are rumored to have been wrecked at sea and that he will soon be able to claim his debt.

Portia gives Bassanio a ring as a token of love, and makes him swear that under no circumstances will he part with it. The celebration, however, is cut short by the news that Antonio has indeed lost his ships, and that he has forfeited his bond to Shylock. Bassanio and Gratiano immediately travel to Venice to try and save Antonio's life. After they leave, Portia tells Nerissa that they too will go to Venice disguising themselves as men.

Shylock ignores the many pleas to spare Antonio's life, and a trial is called to decide the matter. A legal expert, who turns out to be Portia disguised as Balthazar a young man of law, asks Shylock to show mercy, but he insists upon the pound of flesh that is rightfully his. Bassanio offers Shylock three times the money due to him, but Shylock insists on collecting the bond as it is written. Portia examines the contract and, finding it legally binding, declares that Shylock is entitled to the merchant's flesh.

Shylock ecstatically praises her wisdom, but as he is on the verge of collecting his due, Portia reminds him that he must do so without spilling one drop of Antonio's blood as the contract does not entitle him to any, or to taking any more or any less than exactly one pound of Antonio's flesh. Trapped by this logic, Shylock hastily agrees to take Bassanio's money instead, however Portia insists that Shylock take his bond as written, or nothing at all. Portia also informs Shylock that he is guilty of conspiring against the life of a Venetian citizen, which means he must turn over half of his property to the state and the other half to Antonio.

Antonio forgoes his half of Shylock's wealth upon the condition that Shylock converts to Christianity, and second, he must leave the entirety of his estate to Lorenzo and Jessica upon his death.

Shylock agrees and takes his leave.

Bassanio, who does not see through Portia's disguise, showers the young law clerk with thanks, and is eventually pressured into giving Portia the ring with which he promised never to part. When Bassanio arrives the next day, his wife accuses him of faithlessly giving his ring to another woman. Before the deception goes too far, however, Portia reveals that she was, in fact, Baltazar, and she reconciles with her husband.

Lorenzo and Jessica are pleased to learn of their inheritance from Shylock, and the joyful news arrives that Antonio's ships have in fact made it back safely.

The group celebrates its good fortune.

Central Themes;

Love and Friendship;

"The Merchant of Venice" presents us with the themes of love and friendship between its characters. The central romantic relationship of the play is that between **Bassanio** and **Portia**. Their marriage is paralleled by several others: the elopement of **Shylock's** daughter, **Jessica**, with the Christian, **Lorenzo**; and the marriage of Portia's servant, **Nerissa**, to Bassanio's companion, **Gratiano**. In addition, numerous critics have suggested that the strongest friendship in the play—between **Antonio** and Bassanio—also approaches romantic love.

Love and friendship might seem to offer alternatives to the ugly emotions of prejudice, greed, and revenge on display in "The Merchant of Venice". However, beginning with Bassanio's borrowing money from his friend Antonio in order to woo Portia, the play also demonstrates that the apparent purity of love and friendship can be tainted by selfish economic concerns. In addition, love and friendship are also at the mercy of the law, as seen in Portia's being subject to the terms of her father's riddle of the **caskets**.

Justice and Mercy;

"The Merchant of Venice" explores equally the themes of justice and mercy. Every character in this work seeks to dispense justice to others and claim mercy for themselves... **Shylock** demands mercy for his people, while expecting justice from **Antonio**; **Portia** wishes mercy from her dead father, while dispensing justice to **Shylock**; **Antonio** begs mercy from **Shylock**, while he passionately defends his sense of justice.

The climax of the story comes in the famous courtroom scene and the showdown between **Portia** and **Shylock**. Who's right and who's wrong? Is justice dispensed, or mercy? And what is the difference between the two? Keep these questions in mind, but also keep track of each character. Do they seek justice or

mercy? Which do they get, and which do they give?

Revenge;

The Merchant of Venice also presents us with the theme of Revenge, the central motivating factor for **Shylock** and his subsequent actions. **Shylock** seeks revenge on **Antonio** for all the past slurs against him, his profession and his religion and will stop at nothing to see his desire for revenge consummated. It is interesting to note that **Shylock** is also on the receiving end of revenge at the hands of his daughter **Jessica**. Bearing in mind what **Shylock** has endured is he justified in his desire for revenge and it's potentially fatal outcome?

Quotes; *[The following quotes will probably be used in the play's text - discussing what they mean would be beneficial.]*

Gratiano: "Play the fool with mirth and laughter, let old wrinkles come, and let my liver rather heat with wine, than my heart cool with mortifying groans." [Act 1, Scene 1]

Jessica: "Love is blind." [Act 2, Scene 6]

Antonio: "Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea, Neither have I money nor commodity." [Act 1, Scene 1]

Portia: "So shines a good deed in a naughty world." [Act 5, Scene 1]

Shylock: "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." [Act 1, Scene 3]

Antonio: "In this there can be no dismay, my ships come home a month before the day." [Act 1, Scene 3]

Shylock: "If I can catch him once upon the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him." [Act 1, Scene 3]

Shylock: "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, heal'd by the same means, warm'd and cool'd by the same winter and summer? 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?" [Act 3, Scene 1]

Portia: "The quality of mercy is not strained, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes, The throned monarch better than his crown." [Act 4, Scene 1]

Portia: "A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off. Nearest the merchant's heart." [Act 4, Scene 1]

Prince of Morocco: "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire." [Act 2 , Scene 7]

Prince of Morocco: "All that glisters is not gold. Glided tombs do worms enfold. Fare you well your suit is cold." [Act 2, Scene 7]

Prince of Aragon: "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves." [Act 2, Scene 9]

Prince of Aragon: "Take what wife you will to bed. I will ever be your head." With one fool's head I came to woo, but I go away with two." [Act 2, Scene 9]

Bassanio: "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." [Act 3, Scene 2]

Bassanio: "Look on beauty, and you shall see tis purchased by the weight, and here chose I." [Act 3, Scene 2]

KEY WORDS; [for students to familiarise themselves with for The Pocket Oxford's production]

justice - justicia

mercy - misericordia

revenge - venganza

love - amor

money - dinero

greed - codicia

occupy - ocupar

global movement - movimiento global

global financial crisis - crisis financiera mundial

inequality - desigualdad

shipping company - compañía naviera

ship - barco

protesting - protestando

protestor - manifestante

banks - bancos

corruption - corrupción

rich - rico

poor - pobre

borrow - pedir prestado

blood - sangre

flesh - carne

husband - marido

marriage - matrimonio

miracles - milagros

business- negocios

interest rates - las tasas de interés

interest - interés

banker - banquero

begging - mendicidad

lend - prestar

enemy - enemigo

heart - corazón

a pound in weight - una libra de peso

kilogram - kilogramo

repay - pagar

respect - respeto
hand in marriage - mano en matrimonio
lucky - afortunado
contestant - concursante
assistant - asistente
deal - negociar
winner - ganador
winning - ganar
loser - perdedor
losing - perder
a deal - un trato
casket - cofre
gold - oro
silver - plata
lead - plomo
clue - pista
choose - elegir
to sign - para firmar
signed - firmado
tattooed - tatuado
boss - jefe
storm - tormenta
ring - anillo
court - tribunal
courtroom - sala de justicia
trial - juicio
lawyer - abogado
the judge - el juez
defence - defensa
debt - deuda
defend - defender
hatred - odio
contract - contrato
drop of blood - gota de sangre
murder – asesinato

POST SHOW DEBATES;

- 1] Discuss the different types of love demonstrated in the play.
- 2] Discuss the influence of money on each of the characters, and to what consequence.
- 3] Discuss the differences in Shylock and Antonio's attitude to banking.
- 4] Discuss why "The Merchant of Venice" is regarded as a 'Tragicomedy'.

THE CASKET DEBATE:

Divide the class into two groups.

In secret Group 1 should create three of their own caskets with clues and inscriptions as found in Act II and Act III of the play.

Group 2 should elect four of its members to take roles as Portia and her three suitors. As in the play each suitor should pick a casket in turn (no duplications). The suitors open the caskets one at a time, reading the scrolls inside after hearing the clues.

The suitors in Group 2 may ask the members of Group 1 three questions in total as to why they should pick a particular casket and may also ask other members of their own Group for advice if they wish before making their choice.

This is an opportunity for Group 1 to try and trick the suitors.

When the suitor has made their choice ask them to explain his/her reasoning for picking that particular casket.

The class can then hold a discussion. Group 1 giving their reasons on what subject matter they chose for their caskets and why the winning casket was the winning casket and Group 2 can explain why they chose their particular casket.

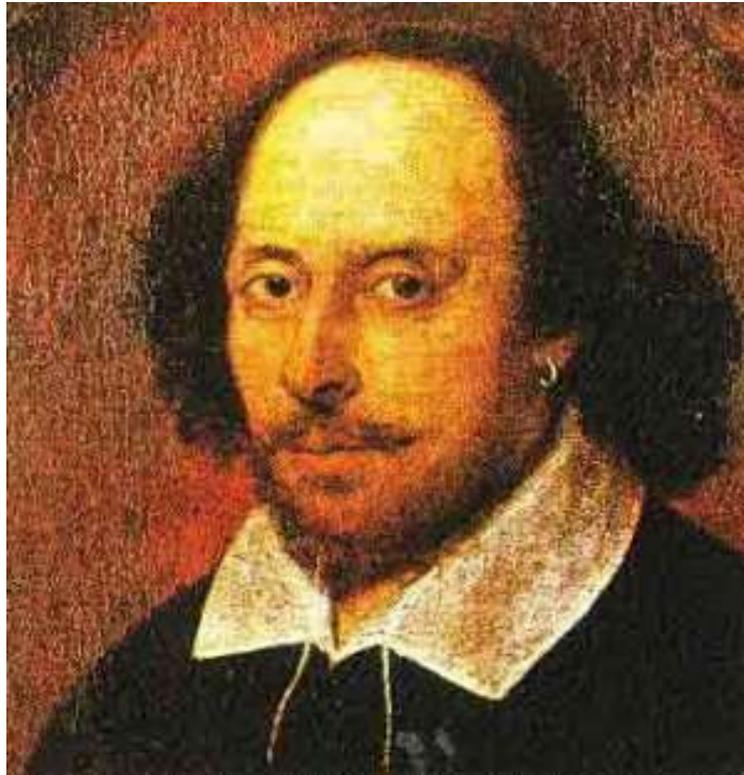
This is an opportunity for the class to discuss what qualities that they admire in people..... preferably all in English of course!!!!

The students can also discuss the characteristics of the type of people Portia's father would expect to pick each casket (For example: gold - people who rely on outward appearances, flashy, materialistic) and why he was making sure that the right suitor, deserving of his daughter would win her hand.

Then, come up with lists of modern-day people from the worlds of politics, entertainment, sports, history, or your own life that fit the gold, silver, and lead profiles.

Select one, and write a poem that sets them within the context of that casket.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:



SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England in 1564. His parents were quite rich and he attended a grammar school where he studied Greek and Latin. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582. Shakespeare then moved to London to become a playwright and actor with the successful theatre company The Lord Chamberlain's Men. The company would later change its name to The King's Men in 1603. Shakespeare remained with the company until he retired in 1610.

Shakespeare's earliest plays date from 1590 and by 1597 he was sufficiently rich to buy the second largest house in Stratford. The following year he became a partner in the new Globe Theatre, London. He wrote 37 plays in total and 154 sonnets (lyrical poems of 14 lines). His plays are categorised into three genres; comedy, tragedy and history plays.

The Merchant of Venice is a tragic comedy by William Shakespeare believed to have been written between 1596 and 1598. Though classified as a comedy in the first folio and sharing certain aspects with Shakespeare's other romantic comedies, the play is perhaps most remembered for its dramatic scenes, and is best known for Shylock and the famous 'Hath not a Jew eyes' speech. Also notable is Portia's speech about the 'quality of mercy'.

He wrote his last play 'The Tempest' in 1611, after which he retired to Stratford, where he died in 1616, aged 52.

Shakespeare was alive during the late Renaissance, which in England is referred to as the Elizabethan Era; as Queen Elizabeth I was Britain's first female monarch. Queen Elizabeth I was an active and generous patron of the theatre who stood against the Puritans who wished to close down the theatres. Without her support the Elizabethan theatres would not have survived. Shakespeare is still regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest playwright, although he is often referred to as 'the bard', which simply means the poet.



The house in which Shakespeare was born, Stratford-Upon-Avon.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & ANNE HATHAWAY

Anne Hathaway grew up in Shottery, a small village just to the west of Stratford-upon-Avon. Her father, Richard, was a wealthy farmer and the house in which she grew up still exists as a major tourist attraction.

After the death of her parents, Anne married Shakespeare in November 1582 when she was 26 years old; Shakespeare was only eighteen. It was common at this time for women, such as Anne, whose parents had died, to stay at home to care for their younger brothers and sisters and marry in their late twenties, often to younger eligible men. However, because Anne was pregnant with their first child Susanna when they got married, some people believe they had a rushed "shotgun wedding" to save embarrassment. The couple later had twins named Hamnet and Judith in 1585.

It has often been inferred that Shakespeare came to dislike his wife, but there is no existing documentation or correspondence to support this (although in his will he only left her his "second best bed"!). For most of their married life, he lived in London writing and performing his plays, while she remained in Stratford. However he returned to Stratford for a period every year and when he retired from the theatre in 1613, he chose to live in Stratford with Anne rather than London. Anne Hathaway died in 1623 at the age of 67.

THEATRES

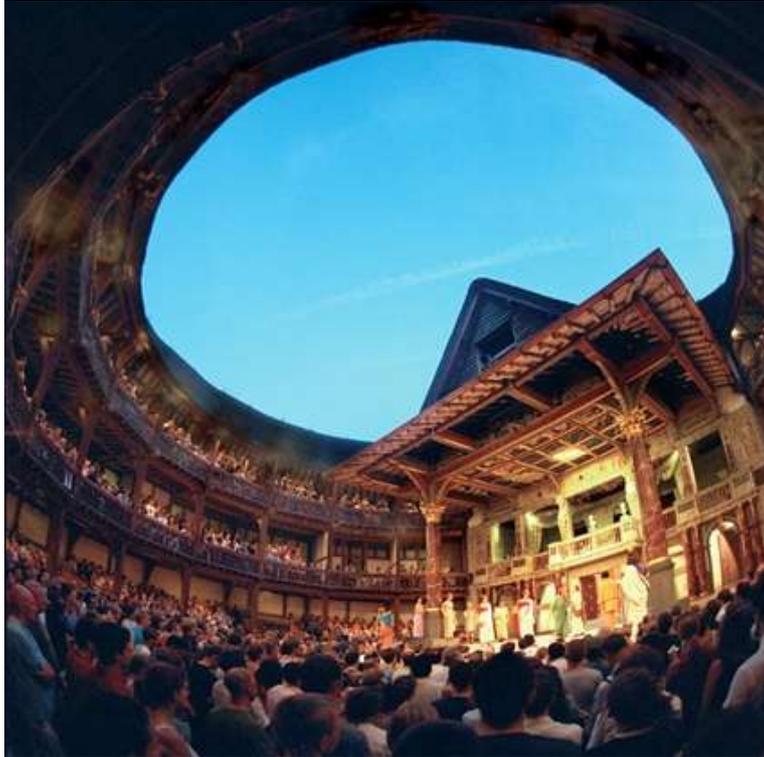
Before the first theatres were built in England, actors travelled around the country in groups known as 'players'. They travelled and performed in wagons and carried portable stages, which the audience would stand around to watch their simple productions, usually based on religious stories. The first purpose-built theatre was erected in 1576 by James Burbage, and simply called 'The Theatre'. Due to its popularity, by 1600 there were a number of playhouses in London. 'The Theatre' was pulled down in 1598 and was rebuilt in a new location and renamed 'The Globe'. This became the theatre where Shakespeare would perform and stage his plays.



The Globe Theatre

The Globe was a three-story open air building which could hold up to 3,000 people, thus making theatre in Shakespeare's day as popular by today's standards as a football match or pop concert. Spectators (nicknamed Groundlings) could pay one penny to stand and watch the play or pay two-pence to sit in one of the many galleries. The very rich often paid for a seat on the stage itself.

At this time, in the theatre there was little or no scenery; the plays were always performed in daylight (as there was no lighting); and there were only basic costumes and props. Women were not allowed to act in the plays, and instead young boys played all the female roles.



Interior of The Globe Theatre, London

In 1642, all the theatres in England were closed by the English Parliament, due to pressure from the Puritans.

Why the Puritans were against the Globe Theatre

The Globe theatre and its plays were a new idea. The Globe theatre attracted huge crowds - upto 3000 people. The theatres were also used for bear-baiting and gambling. The crowds attracted thieves, gamblers, pickpockets, beggars, prostitutes and all kinds of criminals. Many Puritans thought that theatres were evil and wanted them all closed. Respectable citizens were worried about the rise in crime, fighting and drinking...not to mention the danger of so many people in one space and the risk of the Bubonic Plague.

In 1642, under the force of the Puritans, the English Parliament closed the theatres. All actors were to arrested and whipped, and anyone caught watching a play would be fined 5 shillings. The Globe Theatre was pulled down. The Globe theatre would not be rebuilt for another 350 years, not until 1997!

EXERCISE 1; Fill in the blanks with the following words:

William / Shakespeare / Hathaway / The Globe / tragicomedy / Puritans / The Theatre / The Tempest / Stratford-upon-Avon / Players / 2 pence / young boys / 1616 / 1594-96 /

1/ _____ Shakespeare was married to Anne _____.

2/ They lived in a place called _____.

3/ Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" is considered to be a _____'.

4/ Before theatres were built actors travelled around the country in a wagon and were called _____.

5/ The first theatre built in England was called _____.

6/ "The Merchant of Venice" was written between _____.

7/ In the Elizabethan era women were not allowed to perform on the stage so the female roles were played by _____.

8/ It cost _____ to sit in the gallery at the theatres.

9/ The theatre that Shakespeare worked at, and part

owned, was called _____.

10/ William _____ died in _____.

11/ The last play Shakespeare wrote was called _____.

12/ All the theatres were closed down in 1642 by the _____.

EXERCISE 2; TRUE or FALSE ??

1. Not many people went to the theatre.
2. Theatres only showed plays.
3. Respectable citizens were worried that theatres were a bad influence.
4. The Bubonic Plague was a problem.
5. Puritans thought theatres were educational.
6. After 1642, Actors were whipped if they were caught.
7. The Globe theatre was demolished.
8. You cannot visit the Globe Theatre today.

EXERCISE 3; Shakespeare's language.

There is no doubt that Shakespeare's work has made a considerable contribution to the English Language. You might not know it but lots of the phrases and words used everyday in English, come from his plays.

In your class, guess which of the following words and phrases were first said by Shakespeare, and discuss what they could possibly mean.

- a) "In a pickle"
- b) "Wild- goose chase"
- c) "All that glisters is not gold"
- d) "Moonbeam"
- e) "Unreal"
- f) "What the dickens"
- g) "Not slept one wink"
- h) "Own flesh and blood"
- i) "Eaten me out of house and home"



Queen Elizabeth I

WORD SEARCH;

We suggest that the students complete the following word-searches whilst discussing the meaning of each term for a fuller understanding.

1/ Find the following theatre words:

Plot Casting Actor Play Acts Theatre Drama

Stage Prop Globe Costume Scene Set Part

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | S | T | C | A | P | P | D | E |
| E | P | H | A | M | A | R | D | P |
| M | R | E | V | E | R | O | R | E |
| P | L | A | Y | G | T | O | N | R |
| L | J | T | B | A | P | E | G | O |
| O | A | R | E | T | C | A | L | T |
| T | S | E | F | S | N | R | O | C |
| C | A | S | T | I | N | G | B | A |
| A | C | O | S | T | U | M | E | R |

Shakespearean Insult Kit;

Combine one word from each of the three columns below, prefaced with "Thou" to create a Shakespearean insult:

Column 1

artless
bawdy
beslubbering
bootless
churlish
cockered
clouted
craven
currish
dankish
dissembling
droning
errant
fawning
fobbing
froward
frothy
gleeking
goatish
gorbellied
impertinent
infectious
jarring
loggerheaded
lumpish
mangled
mewling

Column 2

base-court
bat-fowling
beef-witted
beetle-headed
boil-brained
clapper-clawed
clay-brained
common-kissing
crook-pated
dismal-dreaming
dizzy-eyed
doghearted
dread-bolted
earth-vexing
elf-skinned
fat-kidneyed
fen-sucked
flap-mouthed
fly-bitten
folly-fallen
fool-born
full-gorged
guts-gripping
half-faced
hasty-witted
hell-hated
idle-headed

Column 3

apple-john
baggage
barnacle
bladder
boar-pig
bugbear
bum-bailey
canker-blossom
clack-dish
clotpole
coxcomb
codpiece
death-token
dewberry
flap-dragon
flax-wench
flirt-gill
foot-licker
fustilarian
giglet
gudgeon
haggard
harpy
hedge-pig
horn-beast
joithead
lewdster

paunchy
pribbling
puking
puny
qualling
rank
reeky
roguish
ruttish
saucy
spleeny
spongy
surly
tottering
unmuzzled
vain
venomed
villainous
warped
wayward
weedy
yeasty

ill-breeding
ill-nurtured
knotty-pated
milk-livered
motley-minded
onion-eyed
plume-plucked
pottle-deep
pox-marked
reeling-ripe
rough-hewn
rude-growing
rump-fed
shard-borne
sheep-biting
spur-galled
swag-bellied
tardy-gaited
tickle-brained
toad-spotted
unchin-snouted
weather-bitten

lout
maggot-pie
malt-worm
mammet
measle
minnow
miscreant
moldwarp
mumble-news
nut-hook
pigeon-egg
pignut
puttock
pumpion
ratsbane
scut
skainsmate
strumpet
varlot
vassal
whey-face
wagtail

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