LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Activities to develop the language of the text

Find the **'Week by Week'** section of the website and select **'Week 1'**. Look at Bethan Cullinane's blog for the first week of rehearsals. Bethan is the actor who is playing Jessica in the play. You will notice she mentions that, in the early rehearsals, the actors have been trying out scenes from the play in their own words.

Why do you think the director has asked the actors to work in this way? How will it help the actors to get to know the play? Now find a speech in the play and try changing the words into modern English. Try out your version and see whether others can spot which speech you have changed.

Find the **Act 3 Scene 1** section on the **Language** part of the website. Use the **'Tools'** button to find examples of different techniques used in the language of this scene. Select the **'Repetition'** option which will show you the way in which Shylock repeats words: 'Let him look to his bond', 'Jew' and 'revenge'.

What effect do these repeated words and phrases show the audience about Shylock's feelings at this point in the play? Try out some of the other options such as metaphor or alliteration and noticed how they add to the effect of the speech.

Find the **'Week by Week'** section of the website and select **'Week 3'**. Find the **'Week 3 Blog'** dated 21st February. Here Bethan Cullinane, the actor playing Jessica, describes the way in which the actors are being directed to read the verse taking breaths at the end of each line. She explains how this makes the speeches seem urgent and just like the way people speak.

Try out the speech Bethan mentions when Jessica is speaking to Lorenzo taking breaths at the end of each line. See if you can hear how this makes the speech sound urgent as if she is worried that her father Shylock might enter at any time. Pick another speech in verse where there is a similar situation and try speaking that taking breaths at the end of each line. Try it without taking breaths at the end of each line. What do you notice?

In the **'Language'** section of the website, select **Act 3 Scene 2**, the casket scene. Use the **'Tools'** button and click on the **'Simile'** option. Scroll down to the speech where Bassanio is looking at the gold casket and read the similes which are highlighted. Describe how the similes show that Bassanio has understood the important message in the song he has just heard.

Next select the **'Metaphor'** option and scroll down to the speech where Bassanio looks at the lead casket. How does the metaphor of the spider explain the power of Portia's portrait over Bassanio? Try the other options and see how different language devices are used in the scene.