***The Merchant of Venice* 1.1**   
   
**Instructions:**  
Read the opening scene of *The Merchant of Venice* multiple times without any background information. Rely on the text to form judgments about characters, which you will later evaluate as you study the rest of the play.  
   
**What To Do:**  
1. Read 1.1 (Act 1, Scene 1) of *The Merchant of Venice.*   
  
2. Read through the scene. Note down any words or phrases that you do not understand. After reading, look up these words and write them down.

3. Take notes on the following question: What are the relationships between the six characters?   
  
3. Next, use the text to determine the social status of each of the six characters. Rate all six, with 1 being the highest and 6 being the lowest. \*\* Use specific evidence in the text to explain your opinions.   
  
4. Read through the scene again. In a discussion of this second reading, focus on the setting. Where in Venice would this scene be set? Why?

\*\* Again, refer to specific parts of the text to support your answers.   
  
5. Read through the scene a third time. When finished, complete the character chart.   
  
6. Next, read the scene with students playing assigned characters. Block the scene together (decide who should move where/perform what actions).   
  
7. Discuss the following questions: Why do Salarino and Solanio suggest that Antonio would rather talk with Bassanio than with them? Why would Antonio so readily lend Bassanio the money that he needs?

8. Predict how the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio will change throughout the play. What will the story be about? Have the students write their predictions on the character chart in the spot provided. Return to these predictions later in your study of the play to see who guessed correctly.

Adapted from: http://www.folger.edu/edulesplandtl.cfm?lpid=694