Read and Respond

The Merchant of Venice
By William Shakespeare

In this extract from Act 1, Scene 2, Portia and her lady in waiting Nerissa discuss the suitors who have so far visited Belmont in to win Portia's hand in marriage.

NERISSA
Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

PORTIA
I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

NERISSA
First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

PORTIA
Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith.

NERISSA
Then there is the County Palatine.

PORTIA
He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

NERISSA
How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

PORTIA

God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.
In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but,
he! why, he hath a horse better than the
Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than
the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a
throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will
fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I
should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me
I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I
shall never requite him.

NERISSA

What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron
of England?

PORTIA

You know I say nothing to him, for he understands
not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French,
nor Italian, and you will come into the court and
swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English.
He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can
converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited!
I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round
hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his
behaviour every where.

NERISSA

What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

PORTIA

That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he
borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and
swore he would pay him again when he was able: I
think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed
under for another.

NERISSA

How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

PORTIA

Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and
most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when
he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and
when he is worst, he is little better than a beast:
and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall
make shift to go without him.

NERISSA

If he should offer to choose, and choose the right
casket, you should refuse to perform your father's
will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Step 1.   Identify the learning

'Learning Outcomes provide the building blocks for teachers to plan their teaching. Teachers can then use Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to take forward their planning and enable the Learning Outcomes to come alive in practice with their students.'

(NCCA - Focus on Learning 5: Learning Outcomes)

Aspects of Learning Outcomes in Focus

Oral Language 8	Listen actively to interpret meaning, compare, evaluate the effectiveness of, and respond to drama….
Reading 4	Use an appropriate critical vocabulary while responding to literary texts
Writing 12	Demonstrate an understanding of how… text structure and word choice may vary with context and purpose

Links to L2LP Learning Outcomes

Personal Care	3.44 Identify the choices and consequences involved in an imminent short-term decision

Step 2.   Create a variety of assessments

"Knowledge about a variety of assessment types allows teachers to select the most appropriate and effective instruments to meet their learning objectives."
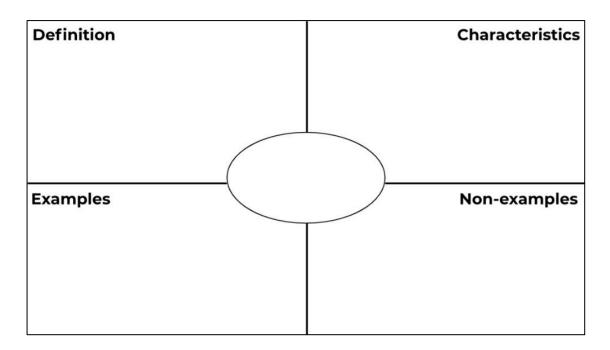
(Preparing for the Plunge: Preservice Teachers' Assessment Literacy Author(s): M. A. Siegel and C. Wissehr)

Possible activities:

1. Find examples of the following in the extract:
   - Evidence to suggest that Portia is not free to make her own decisions
   - Two examples of humour

2. Imagine you are writing a series of direct messages (on a social media platform of your choice) between Portia and <u>one</u> of her suitors based on her description of their meeting. You might consider using one of the images above as a prompt for the conversation.

3. Based on your reading of this extract, how would you describe the relationship between Portia and Nerissa? What language in the text supports your opinion?

4. In pairs, write the script, for a modern audience, that features a conversation between two of the suitors as they discuss their meetings with Portia.

5. *The Merchant of Venice* is a **tragicomedy**, use the Frayer Model to explore what this means.

Definition	Characteristics
Examples	Non-examples

Some considerations when creating written assessments

Steps to consider:

Step 1. Identify the intended learning

Oral Language	
Reading	
Writing	
L2LP links	

Step 2. Link the assessment formats to the learning intentions/learning outcomes

The following types of assessments can provide a broad range from which to identify and assess student learning. Consider accessibility for all students including lower-order and higher-order questions.

Selected response items
- Matching exercise
- Multiple choice
- True or false etc.

Constructed response items
- Fill in the blanks
- Short answer
- Essay, Storyboard, Reflective piece etc.

Step 3. Consider a stimulus piece / trailer / extract / image / text etc…

Step 4. Share what students need to know in order to achieve – co-create and share success criteria with students

The following reflection guide might be useful to consider when creating written assessments.

Take a moment to reflect

What do you consider when creating written assessments?

	When Designing Assessments	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	I use multiple choice or 'select the answer' questions.			
2.	Students are aware of the marking scheme – e.g., features of quality for CBAs			
3.	I co-create success criteria with students.			
4.	I give a variety of assessments to cover a wide breadth of learning.			
5.	I link the intended learning with the assessment created.			
6.	I ask the students to work in groups/pairs to contribute to the assessment.			
7.	I use paragraph or essay-type questions.			
8.	I ensure assessment questions are expressed using student-friendly language.			
9.	I take into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students.			
10.	Students work in pairs/groups when completing assessments.			
11.	I use 'open book' assessment.			
12.	I talk to my colleagues about assessment and share examples and templates.			
13.	I include a question or two beyond what has been taught, to challenge students.			
14.	I give students time to respond to the assessment feedback.			