

# Breaking up the Speech - Shylock

## Part of the Shakespeare in the Classroom Series

### at 'Let Him Roar Again'

#### Step by Step Instructions:

1. Break the text into three sections, The outburst ('He hath disgraced me' to 'I am a Jew. '), the second phase ('Hath not a Jew eyes' to 'shall we not revenge') and the final phase.
2. Acknowledge the differences in tone and intent. Shakespeare doesn't write speeches, he writes intentions and objectives and actions to move the character and plot forward. Actors should avoid using the same colour wash across the entire text. Good actors will give the longer speeches colour and life and nuance.
3. Get the class standing up in the space. Give them 30 seconds to form a tableau they believe fits the first section of text. Students should then repeat this for a second and then a final tableau that reflects the tone and intent of the speech.
4. Put these physical tableaux together with the text. Include vocal intensity.
5. Extension Option 1: Students can work in smaller groups to create their own version. Where else might this kind of speech take place?  
Extension Option 2: Some students may wish to try performing this speech on their own.

## ***The Merchant of Venice Act III, Scene i.***

### **SHYLOCK**

He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million;  
laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation,  
thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies;  
and what's his reason? I am a Jew.

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, healed by the same means,  
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as  
a Christian is?

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?

If we are like you in the rest, we will  
resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian,  
what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian  
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by  
Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you  
teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I  
will better the instruction.