Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Test: Old Man at the Bridge,**

**Merchant of Venice (Act 1 Scene 1)**

**Std IX-PPS Set C**

**Marks 20 30min**

**Answer the following questions according to their weightage:**

1. The bridge, described here, is a pontoon bridge. It is made on a floating structure like a flat bottomed boat. The purpose of the bridge is to facilitate carts, trucks, men, women and children to cross it.
2. While the narrator was talking to the old man he was watching the bridge and the African looking country of the Ebro Delta. He was wondering how long it would be before they saw the enemy. He was also listening all the while for first noises that would signal the mysterious event called contact.
3. The title does not have an article before the noun ‘old man’ because the story is not about a specific old man. It symbolises any old man and conveys the plight and helplessness of old people with no politics during any warlike situation. The bridge symbolises the link between life and death. If people do not cross over the bridge and move towards a safer place, they may lose their lives in war.
4. Solanio claims that if he had such a venture forth the better part of his affections would be with his hopes abroad. He would be still plucking the grass to know where sits the wind peering in maps for ports and piers and roads and every object that might make him fear misfortune to his ventures out of doubt would make him sad.
5. Antonio’s assurance to Salerio and Solanio is that his ships are not the reason for his melancholy. His ventures are not trusted in one bottom or in one place. His whole estate is not upon the fortune of that present year. Therefore, he is not sad because of his merchandise.
6. Bassanio calls Portia as rich, fair and virtuous. He says that this Portia is not less in value to Cato’s daughter Portia. The world is not ignorant of her worth and renowned suitors come from all the four directions. Her sunny locks hang on her temples like a golden fleece and Belmont as become Colchis’ strand. Many Jasons come in quest of Portia and he believed because of the fair speechless messages that she had given, he would be the one who would be fortunate to marry her.