

## Essay #1: Argumentative Essay on *Merchant of Venice*

Name: Trevor Swan

### Final Comment:

Trevor,

Generally speaking, I think that this is a strong essay, though there are a few things that you'll want to work on going forward. You have a clear argument that you follow throughout, and you also have nice, unified body paragraphs supported with logical analysis. Both of these things should serve you well on future essays.

Your use of evidence is *on the right track*; at times you do a nice job of supporting claims with a combination of quotations and paraphrases. At other times, though, I found myself asking, "Can you give another example?" There's a tendency in many paragraphs to lean on a single example, and arguments will be more robust (and sometimes more complex) if you provide more evidence. You could also include more *counterintuitive quotations*. You do a nice job of engaging the question of conversion – which seems like it runs against the tenor of your argument; this adds complexity to your claim and makes it more interesting. You do not, however, mention things like Shylock drawing attention to the names that Christians call him, or insisting on his humanity. Given that you *do* argue that Christians can call Shylock "dog" and "devil," with impunity, these quotations seem relevant to your argument, and if you could address them then the essay would be stronger.

Also see my notes on the introduction. Generally speaking, though, this essay shows you off to a good start to the semester. Very good job!

### Green highlights went well

### Yellow highlights need improvement

Introduction & Title			
Criteria	15 14 13	12 11 10	9 7 5 0
Has an evocative title Presents and develops intellectual problem of race in <i>Merchant of Venice</i> Points to ambiguous evidence capable of supporting more than one reading Ends with clear, focused, arguable thesis	Meets all criteria at high level; clear & readable	Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear	Meets few criteria; unclear
Overall Quality of Ideas, Argument, Effective Evidence			

Criteria	35 34 33	32 31 30 28	27 25 20 15
<p>Adopts clear, consistent definitions for key argumentative terms – “race” and “racism,” “represent/endorse/challenge,” “comedy,” etc.</p> <p>Has well-supported argument that anticipates reader’s objections</p> <p>Uses concrete, textual evidence from the poem to support claims (references to details, brief quotations, summaries of scenes, etc.)</p> <p>Thoroughly explains significance of textual evidence</p> <p>Has strong insights; shows clear wrestling with complexity &amp; ambiguity</p> <p>Avoids over-reliance on obvious evidence and ideas</p> <p>Avoids plot-summary</p>	Meets all criteria at high level; clear & readable	Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear	Meets few criteria; unclear
<b>Organization &amp; Argument</b>			
Criteria	25 24 23	22 21 20 19	17 13 10 5
<p>Thesis statement clear, focused &amp; contestable</p> <p>All parts of argument are developed thoroughly and logically; no inconsistencies or deviations from thesis</p> <p>Paragraphs support unified claim, stated in topic sentence</p> <p>Claims of paragraphs logically support thesis statement, smoothly transition from previous paragraph</p> <p>Concluding sentences logically and effectively point reader back to thesis statement</p> <p>Effective concluding paragraph, considers larger significance of paper’s argument</p>	Meets all criteria at high level; clear & readable	Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear	Meets few criteria; unclear
<b>Style</b>			
Criteria	15 14 13	12 11 10	9 7 5 0
<p>Uses sophisticated transitions to guide reader from one paragraph to another</p>	Meets all criteria at high	Meets some criteria;	Meets few criteria; unclear

<p>Sentences effectively guide reader from old to new information</p> <p>Sentences contain clear actors as subjects and concrete actions as verbs</p> <p>Has clear, graceful, grammatically correct sentences</p>	<p>level; clear &amp; readable</p>	<p>uneven; less clear</p>	
<b>Formatting, Length, Citation</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>10 9</b>	<b>8 7 6</b>	<b>5 4 3 2 0</b>
<p>Paper uses appropriate font size, margins, etc.</p> <p>Paper meets length requirements (4-5 pages, 1200-1500 words)</p> <p>Paper includes appropriate heading</p> <p>Follows MLA Conventions for in-text citation &amp; documentation</p>	<p>Meets all criteria at high level; clear &amp; readable</p>	<p>Meets some criteria; uneven; less clear</p>	<p>Meets few criteria; unclear</p>
<b>Penalty for Editing Errors</b>			
<b>0</b>	<b>-1 -2</b>	<b>-4 -6 -10</b>	
<p>Flawless paper or occasional but minor errors</p> <p>Strong professional ethos</p>	<p>Some distracting noise via spelling, punctuation, or apostrophe errors or occasional grammar mistakes (subject-verb agreement; fragments; run-ons, etc.). Writer seems careless, but understanding rarely impeded</p>	<p>Paper seriously marred by editing errors or grammatical mistakes; paper seems unprofessional; comprehension significantly impeded</p>	