

Character List – Julius Caesar

Flavius – a tribune (an official elected by the people to protect their rights); punished for removing decorations from Caesar's statues during Caesar's triumphal parade.

Marullus – a tribune; punished for removing decorations from Caesar's statues during Caesar's triumphal parade.

Julius Caesar – a great Roman general and senator, recently returned to Rome in triumph after a successful military campaign

Casca – conspirator against Caesar; relates to Cassius and Brutus how Caesar was offered the crown three times and three times he turned it down

Calphurnia – Caesar's wife

Antony – Caesar's friend;

Soothsayer – warns Caesar to “Beware the ides of March” (March 15th)

Brutus – A supporter of the republic who believes strongly in a government guided by the votes of the senators; loves Caesar as a friend, but opposes the ascension of any single man to the position of dictator, and he fears that Caesar aspires to such a power
(His inflexible sense of honor makes it easy for Caesar's enemies to manipulate him into believing that Caesar must die in order to preserve the republic. He truly believes that Caesar's death will benefit Rome.)

Cassius – conspirator against Caesar; a general and longtime acquaintance of Caesar – Cassius dislikes that Caesar has become “godlike” in the eyes of the Romans – he slyly leads Brutus to believe that Caesar has become too powerful and must die; finally converting Brutus to his cause by sending him forged letters claiming that the Roman people support the death of Caesar

Cicero – a Roman senator renowned for his oratorical skill (speaking ability); speaks at Caesar's triumphal parade

Cinna – a poet

Act I, Scene 1 overview –

Two tribunes, Flavius and Murellus, enter a Roman street, along with various commoners. Flavius and Murellus order the commoners to return home and get back to work. Murellus engages a cobbler in a lengthy inquiry about his profession; misinterpreting the cobbler's punning replies, Murellus quickly grows angry with him. Flavius interjects to ask why the cobbler is not in his shop working. The cobbler explains that he is taking a holiday from work in order to observe the triumph (a lavish parade celebrating military victory) – he wants to watch Caesar's procession through the city, which will include the captives won in a recent battle against his archrival Pompey.

Murellus scolds the cobbler and attempts to diminish the significance of Caesar's victory over Pompey and his consequent triumph.

“What conquest brings he home? What tributaries follow him (Caesar) to Rome/ To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?” Murellus asks, suggesting that Caesar's victory does not merit a triumph since it involves no conquering of a foreign foe to the greater glory of Rome. (lines 32-34)

Murellus reminds the commoners of the days when they used to gather to watch and cheer for Pompey's triumphant returns from battle. Now, however, due to a mere twist of fate, they rush out to celebrate his downfall. Murellus scolds them further for their disloyalty.

The commoners leave, and Flavius instructs Murellus to go to the Capitol, a hill on which rests a temple on whose alters victorious generals offer sacrifice, and remove any crowns placed on statues of Caesar. Flavius adds that he will thin the crowds of commoners observing the triumph and directs Murellus to do the same, for if they can regulate Caesar's popular support, they will be able to regulate his power

Act I, Scene 2 overview –

Caesar enters a public square with Antony, Calpurnia, Portia (Brutus' wife), Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca and a Soothsayer; he is followed by a throng of citizens and then by Flavius and Murellus. Antony, dressed to celebrate the feast day, readies himself for a ceremonial run through the city. Caesar urges him to touch Calpurnia, his wife, as he runs, since Roman superstition holds that the touch of a ceremonial runner will cure barrenness (unable to bear children). Antony agrees, declaring that whatever Caesar says is certain to become fact.

The Soothsayer calls out from the crowd to Caesar, telling him to “beware the Ides of March” (ides refers to the 15th day of March, May, July, and October and the 13th day of the other months in ancient Roman calendar). Caesar pauses and asks the man to come forward; the Soothsayer repeats himself. Caesar ultimately dismisses the warning, and the procession departs. Brutus and Cassius remain. Cassius asks Brutus why he has not seemed himself lately. Brutus replies that he has been quiet because he has been plagued with conflicting thoughts. He assures Cassius that even though his “mind is at war with itself”; he will not let his inner turmoil affect his friendships.

Cassius and Brutus speak together. Cassius asks Brutus if Brutus can see his own face; Brutus replies that he cannot. Cassius then declares that Brutus is unable to see what everyone else does, namely that Brutus is widely respected. Noting that no mirror could reveal Brutus' worthiness to himself; Cassius offers to serve as a human mirror so that Brutus may discover himself and conceive of himself in new ways.

Brutus hears shouting and says that he fears that the people want to make Caesar their king. When Cassius asks, Brutus adds that he would rather that Caesar not assume that position. Brutus adds that he loves Caesar but that he also loves honor, and that he loves honor even more than he fears death. Cassius replies that he, too, recoils at the thought of kneeling in awe before someone whom he does not consider his superior. Cassius recalls a windy day when he and Caesar stood on the banks of the Tiber River, and Caesar dared him to swim to a distant point. They raced through the water, but Caesar became weak and asked Cassius to save him. Cassius had to drag him from the water. Cassius also recounts an episode when Caesar had a fever in Spain and experienced a seizure. Cassius marvels to think that a man with such feeble constitution should now stand at the head of the civilized world.

Caesar stands like a Colossus over the world, Cassius continues, while Cassius and Brutus creep about under his legs. He tells Brutus that they owe their underling status not to fate but to their own failure to take action. He questions the difference between the name “Caesar” and the name “Brutus”; why should Caesar's name be more celebrated than Brutus' when, spoken together, the names sound equally pleasing and thus suggest that the men should hold equal power? He wonders in what sort of age they are living when one man can tower over the rest of the population. Brutus responds that he will consider Cassius' words. Although unwilling to be further persuaded, he admits that he would rather not be a citizen of Rome in such strange times as the present.

Meanwhile, Caesar and his train return. Caesar sees Cassius and comments to Antony that Cassius looks like a man who thinks too much; such men are dangerous, he adds. Antony tells Caesar not to worry, but Caesar replies that he prefers to avoid Cassius: Cassius reads too much and finds no enjoyment in play or music – such men are never at ease while someone greater than themselves holds the reins of power. Caesar urges Antony to come to his right side (he is deaf in his left ear) and tell him what he thinks of Cassius. Shortly, Caesar and his train depart.

Brutus and Cassius take Casca aside to ask him what happened at the procession. Casca relates that Antony offered a crown to Caesar three times, but Caesar refused it each time. While the crowd cheered for him, Caesar fell to the ground in a fit. Brutus speculates that Caesar has “the falling sickness” (a term for epilepsy in Elizabethan times). Casca notes, however, that Caesar’s fit did not seem to affect his authority: although he suffered his seizure directly before the crowd, the people did not cease to express their love. Casca adds that the great orator Cicero spoke in Greek, but that he couldn’t understand him at all, saying “it was Greek to me”. He concludes by reporting that Flavius and Murellus were deprived of their positions as civil servants for removing decorations from Caesar’s statues. Casca then departs, followed by Brutus.

Cassius, alone now, says that while he believes that Brutus is noble, he hopes that Brutus’ noble nature may yet be bent. He decides to forge letters from Roman citizens declaring their support for Brutus and fear of Caesar’s ascent to power; he will throw them into Brutus’ house that evening.

Act I, Scene 3 overview –

Casca and Cicero meet on a Roman street. Casca says that though he has seen many terrible things in the natural world, nothing compares to the frightfulness of this night's weather. He wonders if there is strife in heaven or if the gods are so angered by mankind that they intend to destroy it. Casca relates that he saw a man with his hands on fire, and yet his flesh was not burning. He describes meeting a lion near the Capitol; bizarrely, the lion ignored him and walked on. Many others have seen men on fire walking in the streets, and an owl, a nocturnal bird, was seen sitting out in the marketplace during the day. When so many abnormal events happen at once, Casca declares, no one could possibly believe that they are natural occurrences. Casca insists that they are portents of danger ahead. Cicero replies that men will interpret things as they will. Cicero asks if Caesar is coming to the Capitol the next day; Casca replies that he is. Cicero departs, warning that it is not a good atmosphere in which to remain outside. Cassius enters. He has been wandering through the streets, taking no shelter from the thunder and lightning. Casca asks Cassius why he would endanger himself so. Cassius replies that he is pleased – he believes that the gods are using these signs to warn the Romans about a “monstrous state”, meaning both an abnormal state of affairs and an atrocious government. Cassius compares the night to Caesar himself.

“like this dreadful night,
... thunders, lightens, open graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol.” (pg. 792, lines 73-75)

He also calls Caesar “prodigious grown, And fearful, as these strange eruptions are” (pg. 792, lines 77-78)

Casca reports to Cassius that the senators plan to make Caesar king in the senate the following day. Cassius draws his dagger and swears to the gods that if they can make a weak man like Caesar so powerful, then they can empower Cassius to defeat a tyrant. He declares that Rome must be merely trash or rubbish to give itself up so easily to Caesar's fire. Casca joins Cassius in his censure of Caesar, and Cassius reveals that he has already swayed a number of high-powered Romans to support a resistance movement.

A conspirator named Cinna enters. Cassius now divulges his latest scheme in his plot to build opposition against Caesar; the conversation of Brutus. Cassius given Cinna the letters he forged to place in Brutus' chair in the Senate, and others to throw through Brutus' window and place on Brutus' statue. Cassius claims that Brutus has already come three-quarters of the way toward turning against Caesar; he hopes the letters will bring him the rest of the way around. Casca comments that the noble Brutus' participation in their plot will bring worthiness to their schemes, for

“he sits high in all the people's hearts
And that which would appear offence in us
His countenance, like richest alchemy
Will change to virtue and to worthiness” (pg.795, lines 157 -160)

Study Questions – *Julius Caesar*

Act 1

1. Who wrote *Julius Caesar*?

William Shakespeare

2. Why do the Tribunes, Flavius and Marullus, chase the commoners away? Why are the Tribunes angry with the commoners? Why do the Tribunes fear Caesar?

They should be at work, not celebrating Caesar; his victory does not merit a triumph since it involves no conquering of a foreign foe to the greater glory of Rome (pg.777, lines 32-34)

They accuse them of being fickle. It was not long ago that these same people were out cheering for Pompey and now they cheer as loudly for the man who is responsible for his murder, Caesar

If they can regulate his popular support, they will be able to regulate his power (fear that Caesar will use his popularity with the masses to increase his power and rule Rome as a tyrant)

3. Why does Caesar want Antony to touch Calpurnia? What is Antony's response?

Roman superstition holds that the touch of a ceremonial runner will cure barrenness.

Antony agrees, declaring that whatever Caesar says is certain to become fact.

4. What is the Soothsayer's warning to Caesar?

Beware the ides of March

5. What fear do both Cassius and Brutus share?

Brutus reveals that he loves Caesar but abhors Caesar's growing power (pg 782, lines 79-82); Cassius suggests that Caesar's reputation has grown to such proportions that he is like a god above other people and Brutus and Cassius are reduced to cowering beneath his godlike image. (pg.783, lines 135-137)

6. Describe the four physical weaknesses and/or sicknesses that Cassius and others point out about Caesar.

Possibly sterile (Caesar points this out as a possibility himself as he asks Antony to touch his wife to cure barrenness)

Lacks stamina (Cassius describes that he had to save him during their swimming race because Caesar became so weak – pg. 783, lines 102-111)

Suffers seizures (Cassius describes him suffering a fit Spain – pg. 783, lines 119-124; Casca tells Brutus and Cassius that Caesar fell to the ground in a fit while the crowd cheered for him, pg. 787, lines 252-254)

Deaf in left ear (learn from Caesar as he tells Antony to come to his right side to tell him what he thinks of Cassius; pg. 786, lines 213-214)

7. What does Antony offer Caesar during the feast of the Lupercal? How many times does he offer this to Caesar? What does Caesar do?

Antony offered a crown to Caesar three, but Caesar refused it each time. (pg. 786, lines 220-232)

8. Why does Caesar say he distrusts Cassius? What kind of men had Caesar rather have around him? Explain.

He has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much; men like him are dangerous - reads a lot, is a keen observer and sees the hidden motives in what men (pg. 785-786, lines 194-214);

Wants the men around him to be fat healthy men who sleep at night (pg. 785, lines 192-195)

9. Why is it important to have Brutus join the conspiracy?

The people love him. Brutus could do those things and look virtuous doing them. (pg. 795, lines 157-160)

Act I - Literary Devices/Elements

Narrator – no narrator, it is a drama

Written in blank verse – written in unrhymed iambic pentameter

Pun – word or phrase that means two different things at the same time.

(pg. 777, scene 1, line 21 – “Truly sir, **all** that I live by is with the **awl**.”)

Internal conflict – Brutus (pg. 782, lines 79 – 82) – Brutus loves Caesar but abhors Caesar’s growing power

Casca speech (pg. 787, lines 234-250) is written in prose instead of blank verse (he usually reserved writing in prose for the speech of a comic or a minor character)

Suggests that Casca was a lesser character or member of the conspiracy

Act II, Scene 1 overview –

Brutus paces back and forth in his garden. He asks his servant to bring him a light and mutters to himself that Caesar will have to die. He knows with certainty that Caesar will be crowned king; what he questions is whether or not Caesar will be corrupted by his power. Although he admits that he has never seen Caesar swayed by power in the past, he believes that it would be impossible for Caesar to reach such heights without eventually coming to scorn those lower in status. Brutus compares Caesar to the egg of a serpent “which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous”; thus, he determines to “kill him in the shell” (II.i.33–34).

Brutus’ servant enters with a letter that he has discovered near the window. Brutus reads the letter, which accuses him of sleeping while Rome is threatened: “Brutus, thou sleep’st. Awake, and see thyself” (II.i.46). Brutus interprets the letter as a protest against Caesar: “Thus must I piece it out: / Shall Rome stand under one man’s awe?” (II.i.51–52). Believing the people of Rome are telling him their desires through this single letter, he resolves to take the letter’s challenge to “speak, strike, redress” (II.i.47). A knock comes at the door. Brutus’ servant announces Cassius and a group of men—the conspirators. They include Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus, and Trebonius.

Cassius introduces the men, then draws Brutus aside. The two speak briefly before rejoining the others. Cassius suggests that they swear an oath, but Brutus demurs. They have no need of oaths, he says, since their cause should be strong enough to bind them together. The group discusses whether it should try to bring the esteemed Cicero into the conspiracy, for he would bring good public opinion to their schemes, but Brutus dissuades them, pointing out that Cicero would never follow anyone else’s ideas. Cassius then suggests that they would do well to kill Antony in addition to Caesar, but Brutus refuses, saying that this would make their plan too bloody. According to Brutus, they only stand against the spirit of Caesar, which he wishes could be destroyed without the necessity of killing the man himself. He says that they should kill him boldly, but not viciously, so that they might be perceived as purging the state rather than as murderers. Cassius replies that he still fears Antony, but Brutus assures him that Antony will be rendered harmless once Caesar is dead.

Cassius states that no one knows whether Caesar will come to the Capitol that day, since the warnings of augurs (seers or soothsayers) after this brutal evening might keep him at home. But Decius assures the others that he will be able to convince Caesar to ignore his superstitions by flattering his bravery. The conspirators depart, Brutus suggesting that they try to behave like actors and hide their true feelings and intentions.

Brutus’ wife, Portia, enters the garden. She wonders what has been worrying Brutus, for his behavior has been strange. He says that he has felt unwell. She asks why he refuses to tell her his concerns, insisting that, as his wife, she should be told about his problems and assuring him that she will keep his secrets. Brutus replies that he wishes he were worthy of such an honorable wife. They hear a knock at the door, and Brutus sends her away with a promise to talk to her later.

Ligarius enters, looking sick. He says he would not be sick if he could be sure that Brutus was involved in a scheme in the name of honor. Brutus says that he is. Ligarius rejoices and accompanies Brutus offstage to hear more of the plan.

Act II, Scene 2 overview –

Caesar wanders through his house in his dressing gown, kept awake by his wife Calpurnia's nightmares. Three times she has called out in her sleep about Caesar's murder. He sends a servant to bid the priests to offer a sacrifice and tell him the results. Calpurnia enters and insists that Caesar not leave the house after so many bad signs. Caesar rebuffs her, refusing to give in to fear. But Calpurnia, who has never heeded omens before, speaks of what happened in the city earlier that night: dead men walked, ghosts wandered the city, a lioness gave birth in the street, and lightning shattered the skies. These signs portend true danger, she says; Caesar cannot afford to ignore them.

Caesar counters that nothing can change the plans of the gods. He deems the signs to apply to the world in general and refuses to believe that they bode ill for him personally. Calpurnia says that the heavens proclaim the death of only great men, so the omens must have to do with him. Caesar replies that while cowards imagine their death frequently, thus dying in their minds several times over, brave men, refusing to dwell on death, die only once. He cannot understand why men fear death, which must come eventually to all.

The servant enters, reporting that the augurs recommend that Caesar stay home. They examined the entrails of an animal and were unable to find a heart—a bad sign. But Caesar maintains that he will not stay home out of fear. Danger cannot affect Caesar, he says. Calpurnia begs him to send Antony to the Senate in his place; finally Caesar relents.

Decius enters, saying that he has come to bring Caesar to the Senate. Caesar tells him to tell the senators that he will be absent that day. Calpurnia tells him to plead illness, but Caesar refuses to lie. Decius then asks what reason he should offer. Caesar states that it is simply his will to stay home. He adds that Calpurnia has had a dream in which she saw his statue run with blood like a fountain, while many smiling Romans bathed their hands in the blood; she has taken this to portend danger for Caesar.

Decius disputes Calpurnia's interpretation, saying that actually the dream signifies that Romans will all gain lifeblood from the strength of Caesar. He confides that the Senate has decided to give Caesar the crown that day; if Caesar were to stay at home, the senators might change their minds. Moreover, Caesar would lose public regard if he were perceived as so easily swayed by a woman, or by fear. Caesar replies that his fears now indeed seem small. He calls for his robe and prepares to depart. Cassius and Brutus enter with Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna to escort him to the Senate. Finally, Antony enters. Caesar prepares to depart.

Act II, Scene 3 overview –

Artemidorus comes onstage, reading to himself a letter that he has written Caesar, warning him to be wary of Brutus, Casca, and the other conspirators. He stands along the route that Caesar will take to the Senate, prepared to hand the letter to him as he passes. He is sad to think that the virtue embodied by Caesar may be destroyed by the ambitious envy of the conspirators. He remains hopeful, however, that if his letter gets read, Caesar may yet live.

Act II, Scene 4 overview –

Portia sends Brutus' servant to the Senate to observe events and report back to her how Caesar is faring. A Soothsayer enters, and Portia asks him if Caesar has gone to the Capitol yet. The Soothsayer replies that he knows that Caesar has not yet gone; he intends to wait for Caesar along his route, since he wants to say a word to him. He goes to the street to wait, hoping Caesar's entourage will let him speak to the great man.

Study Questions - *Julius Caesar*

Act II

1. Why does Brutus believe that Caesar must be stopped from becoming king?
Believes that if Caesar becomes king he will become too power hungry and would ignore those below him – Brutus believes he is acting for the good of Rome
2. As the conspirators meet in the home of Brutus, why does Brutus say that they do not need to take an oath?
Brutus says their honest faces should be enough
3. List the names of the conspirators that have been revealed up to this point.
Cassius, Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, Trebonius, Brutus
4. Cassius says that Antony must die, too; but Brutus says no. Why does Brutus say no?
Brutus says it is not necessary and may turn the public against them; also he says Antony is like Caesar's right arm and if you murder the body (Caesar) then the arm will be useless (Antony)
5. Some concern is expressed that because Caesar has grown superstitious of late, that he might not leave the house the next day. How does Decius say he can manipulate Caesar? What does this say of Caesar's personality?
By flattering him
6. Brutus will not share his worries with Portia, his wife. What action does Portia take that causes Brutus to say, "Oh, gods, make me worthy of this noble wife"?
She stabs herself in the thigh to prove herself to Brutus
7. Why does Calpurnia cry out in her sleep?
She is having bad dreams – She screams 'Help, ho! They murder Caesar!'
8. The soothsayers offer an animal to the gods. What in their examination of the animal suggests to them that Caesar should not leave his house?
They fail to find a heart in the animal
9. How does Decius persuade Caesar to come to the Senate on the Ides of March?
He tells him a different interpretation of Calpurnia's dream and lets him know that they are planning to offer him the crown that day
10. Why is Artemidorus waiting for Caesar?
Wants to give Caesar a warning letter
11. What is your prediction as to what will happen in the Senate of Rome on the Ides of March?
Caesar will be stabbed by "his friends"

Act III, Scene 1 overview –

Artemidorus and the Soothsayer await Caesar in the street. Caesar enters with Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius, Metellus, Trebonius, Cinna, Ligarius, Antony, and other senators. Artemidorus approaches with his letter, saying that its contents are a matter of closest concern for Caesar. Caesar responds, “What touches us ourself shall be last served”—that is, his personal concerns are his last priority (III.i.8). Artemidorus tells him to read it instantly, but Caesar dismisses him as crazy.

The group enters the Senate, and Cassius worries that the assassination plot has been discovered. Trebonius draws Antony away from the Senate room. Metellus approaches Caesar to request that his brother, Publius Cimber, who has been banished from Rome, be granted permission to return. Caesar answers that since Publius was banished by lawful decree, there is not just cause for absolving his guilt. Brutus and Cassius kneel at Caesar’s feet and repeat Metellus’ plea; Caesar answers that he will not change his mind now, declaring himself as “constant as the Northern Star” (III.i.60). When Cinna comes forward and kneels to plead further, Caesar adds another comparison, suggesting that they might as well hope to “lift up Olympus,” the mountain where the gods were believed to dwell, as to sway Caesar in his convictions (III.i.74).

Decius and Ligarius, followed by Casca, come forward to kneel at Caesar’s feet. Casca stabs Caesar first, and the others quickly follow, ending with Brutus. Recognizing that Brutus, too, has joined with the conspirators, Caesar speaks his last words: “Et tu, Brute?—Then fall Caesar” (III.i.76). He then yields and dies. The conspirators proclaim the triumph of liberty, and many exit in a tumult, including Lepidus and Artemidorus. Trebonius enters to announce that Antony has fled.

Brutus tells the conspirators that they have acted as friends to Caesar by shortening the time that he would have spent fearing death. He urges them to bend down and bathe their hands in Caesar’s blood, then walk to the marketplace (the Roman Forum) with their bloodied swords to proclaim peace, freedom, and liberty. Cassius agrees, declaring that the scene they now enact will be repeated time and again in the ages to come as a commemorative ritual.

Antony’s servant enters with a message: Antony, having learned of Caesar’s death, sends word that he loved Caesar but will now vow to serve Brutus if Brutus promises not to punish him for his past allegiance. Brutus says that he will not harm Antony and sends the servant to bid him come. Brutus remarks to Cassius that Antony will surely be an ally now, but Cassius replies that he still has misgivings.

Antony enters and sees Caesar’s corpse. He marvels how a man so great in deed and reputation could end as such a small and pathetic body. He tells the conspirators that if they mean to kill him as well, they should do it at once, for there would be no better place to die than beside Caesar. Brutus tells Antony not to beg for death, saying that although their hands appear bloody, their hearts have been, and continue to be, full of pity; although they must appear to him now as having acted in cruelty, their actual motives stemmed from sympathy and love for the Roman populace. Brutus tells Antony to wait until the conspirators have calmed the multitude; then they

will explain fully why they have killed Caesar. Antony says he does not doubt their wisdom and shakes each of their bloody hands, staining the not-yet-bloodied hands of Trebonius, who has returned from leading Antony astray, in the process.

Antony now addresses Caesar's departed spirit, asking to be pardoned for making peace with the conspirators over his dead body. After Antony praises Caesar's bravery, Cassius questions his loyalty. Antony assures Cassius that he indeed desires to be numbered among their friends, explaining that he merely forgot himself for a moment upon seeing Caesar's body. He emphasizes that he will gladly ally himself with all of the former conspirators, as long as they can explain to him why Caesar was dangerous.

Brutus assures Antony that he will find their explanation satisfactory. Antony asks if he might bring the body to the Forum and speak a funeral oration. Brutus consents, but Cassius urges him against granting permission. He tells Brutus that Antony will surely move the people against them if he is allowed to speak. Brutus replies that he will preface Antony's words, explaining to the public the reason for the conspirators' deed, and then explain that Antony has been allowed to speak only by Brutus' consent. He believes that the people will admire his magnanimity for allowing Antony, a friend of Caesar's, to take part in the funeral, and that the episode will benefit the conspiracy's public image. Cassius remains displeased, but Brutus allows Antony to take Caesar's body, instructing him to speak well of them since they are doing him a favor by permitting him to give the oration.

All depart; Antony remains alone onstage. He asks Caesar to pardon him for being gentle with his murderers. Antony prophesies that civil strife will follow Caesar's death and lead too much destruction. As long as the foul deed of Caesar's death remains unavenged, he predicts, Caesar's spirit will continue to seek revenge, bringing chaos to Rome.

Octavius' servant enters and sees the body on the ground. Antony tells him to return to Octavius, who had been traveling to Rome at Caesar's behest, and keep his master out of the city; Rome is now dangerous for Octavius, Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor. But Antony urges the servant to come to the Forum and hear his funeral speech. Once they see how the public responds to the conspirators' evil deed, they can decide how Octavius should proceed.

Act III, Scene 2 overview –

Brutus and Cassius enter the Forum with a crowd of plebeians. Cassius exits to speak to another portion of the crowd. Brutus addresses the onstage crowd, assuring them that they may trust in his honor. He did not kill Caesar out of a lack of love for him, he says, but because his love for Rome outweighed his love of a single man. He insists that Caesar was great but ambitious: it was for this reason that he slew him. He feared that the Romans would live as slaves under Caesar's leadership.

He asks if any disagree with him, and none do. He thus concludes that he has offended no one and asserts that now Caesar's death has been accounted for, with both his virtues and faults in life given due attention. Antony then enters with Caesar's body. Brutus explains to the crowd that Antony had no part in the conspiracy but that he will now be part of the new commonwealth.

The plebeians cheer Brutus' apparent kindness, declaring that Brutus should be Caesar. He quiets them and asks them to listen to Antony, who has obtained permission to give a funeral oration. Brutus exits.

Antony ascends to the pulpit while the plebeians discuss what they have heard. They now believe that Caesar was a tyrant and that Brutus did right to kill him. But they wait to hear Antony. He asks the audience to listen, for he has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. He acknowledges Brutus' charge that Caesar was ambitious and maintains that Brutus is "an honourable man," but he says that Caesar was his friend (III.ii.84). He adds that Caesar brought to Rome many captives, whose countrymen had to pay their ransoms, thus filling Rome's coffers. He asks rhetorically if such accumulation of money for the people constituted ambition. Antony continues that Caesar sympathized with the poor: "When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept" (III.ii.88). He reminds the plebeians of the day when he offered the crown to Caesar three times, and Caesar three times refused. Again, he ponders aloud whether this humility constituted ambition. He claims that he is not trying to disprove Brutus' words but rather to tell them what he, Antony, knows; he insists that as they all loved Caesar once, they should mourn for him now.

Antony pauses to weep. The plebeians are touched; they remember when Caesar refused the crown and wonder if more ambitious people have not stepped into his place. Antony speaks again, saying that he would gladly stir them to mutiny and rebellion, though he will not harm Brutus or Cassius, for they are—again—honorable men. He then brings out Caesar's will. The plebeians beg him to read it. Antony says that he should not, for then they would be touched by Caesar's love for them. They implore him to read it. He replies that he has been speaking too long—he wrongs the honorable men who have let him address the crowd. The plebeians call the conspirators traitors and demand that Antony read the will.

Finally, Antony descends from the pulpit and prepares to read the letter to the people as they stand in a circle around Caesar's corpse. Looking at the body, Antony points out the wounds that Brutus and Cassius inflicted, reminding the crowd how Caesar loved Brutus, and yet Brutus stabbed him viciously. He tells how Caesar died and blood ran down the steps of the Senate. Then he uncovers the body for all to see. The plebeians weep and become enraged. Antony says that they should not be stirred to mutiny against such "honourable men" (III.ii.148). He protests that he does not intend to steal away their hearts, for he is no orator like Brutus. He proclaims himself a plain man; he speaks only what he knows, he says—he will let Caesar's wounds speak the rest. If he were Brutus, he claims, he could urge them to rebel, but he is merely Antony.

The people declare that they will mutiny nonetheless. Antony calls to them to let him finish: he has not yet read the will. He now reads that Caesar has bequeathed a sum of money from his personal holdings to every man in Rome. The citizens are struck by this act of generosity and swear to avenge this selfless man's death. Antony continues reading, revealing Caesar's plans to make his private parks and gardens available for the people's pleasure. The plebeians can take no more; they charge off to wreak havoc throughout the city. Antony, alone, wonders what will come of the mischief he has set loose on Rome. Octavius' servant enters. He reports that Octavius has arrived at Caesar's house, and also that Brutus and Cassius have been driven from Rome.

Act III, Scene 3 overview –

Cinna the poet, a different man from Cinna the conspirator, walks through the city. A crowd of plebeians descends, asking his name. He answers that his name is Cinna, and the plebeians confuse him with the conspirator Cinna. Despite Cinna's insistence that they have the wrong man, the plebeians drag him off and beat him to death.

Study Questions - *Julius Caesar*

Act III

1. Why doesn't Caesar read the letter from Artemidorus first?
Caesar's reply "What touches us ourself shall be last served" – Artemidorus specifies its personal importance to Caesar which prompts Caesar to make a show of hearing it last
2. What does Metellus Cimber request of Caesar? Who joins with him in his request? What were the results of the request?
He asks Caesar to repeal the banishment of his brother, Publius Cimber; Caesar says he will not
3. Who stabs Caesar First?
Casca
4. After all the conspirators stab Caesar, Brutus does too. What does Caesar say in Latin; what does it mean?
Et tu, Brute? - You too Brutus
5. Why do you think Brutus suggests they bathe themselves in Caesar's blood before going to the marketplace to face the people?
He believes what they did was for the good of Rome – they should smear themselves with the blood of Caesar and go to the marketplace and cry Peace, Liberty and Freedom
6. What was the message that Antony sent to Brutus? What was Brutus to do for Antony's support?
Antony sends word that he loved Caesar but will now vow to serve Brutus if Brutus promises not to punish him for his past allegiance. Explain why Caesar deserved to die.
7. In the famous soliloquy that Antony gives after all the conspirators leave, he reveals his true intentions. What are his true intentions? The soliloquy begins, "Oh, pardon me."
He will seek revenge against the conspirators
8. Antony receives a message from Octavius. What message does Antony send back to Octavius?
Keep out of the city for now. Have the servant attend the funeral speeches to gauge the public response, then they can decide how to proceed

9. Both Brutus and Antony address the crowd after Caesar's death. What is the crowd's reaction to the speech Brutus made? What is the same crowd's reaction to the speech Antony made?

They say that Brutus' speech has offended no one. They want to crown Brutus. They agree with the speech Antony makes – they think Caesar suffered a great wrong

10. What line in Antony's speech is repeated so often that its meaning becomes ironic?

Brutus is an honorable man

11. What document does Antony claim to have? What does Caesar leave the Roman citizens?

Caesar's will; Caesar left each citizen 75 drachmas along with his private arbors and orchards on one side of the Tiber

12. Why is Cinna, the poet, killed by the mob?

They confuse him with Cinna who is a member of the conspiracy

Act IV, Scene 1 overview –

Antony meets Octavius and Lepidus at his house. They review a list of names, deciding who must be killed. Lepidus agrees to the death of his brother if Antony will agree to allow his nephew to be killed. Antony suggests that, as a way of saving money, they examine Caesar's will to see if they can redirect some of his funds. Lepidus departs, and Antony asks Octavius if Lepidus is a worthy enough man to rule Rome with him and Octavius. Octavius replies that he trusts him, but Antony harbors doubts. Octavius points out that Lepidus is a "tried and valiant soldier," to which Antony responds, "So is my horse": he goes on to compare Lepidus to a mere animal, calling him a "barren-spirited fellow" and a mere tool (IV.i.28–36). Antony now turns the conversation to Brutus and Cassius, who are reportedly gathering an army; it falls to Octavius and Antony to confront them and halt their bid for power.

Act IV, Scene 2 overview –

Meanwhile, Brutus waits with his men in camp and meets with Lucilius, Titinius, and Pindarus. Lucilius bears a message from Cassius and steps aside to speak to Brutus. He says that Cassius is becoming more and more displeased with Brutus, and Brutus worries that their ties may be weakening. Cassius arrives with his army and accuses Brutus of having wronged him. Brutus replies that he would not wrong him, as he considers him his brother, and insists that they continue the discussion privately in Brutus' tent.

Cassius charges Brutus with having condemned one of their men for taking bribes, even though Cassius sent letters asking him not to, since Cassius knew the man. Brutus responds by accusing Cassius of having taken bribes himself at times. Brutus tells him to recall the Ides of March, when they killed Caesar because they believed that he was corrupt. He asks Cassius if they should now allow themselves to descend into the very corruption that they tried to eliminate. Cassius tells Brutus not to bait him any more, for Cassius is a soldier and will fight.

The two men insult each other, and Brutus expresses the reasons for his disappointment in Cassius. Because he claims to be so honest himself that he cannot raise money by ignoble means, he was forced to ask Cassius for money, but Cassius ignored him. Cassius claims that he did not deny Brutus, but that the messenger misreported Brutus' words. Cassius accuses Brutus of having ceased to love him. He hopes that Antony and Octavius will kill him soon, for, having lost his closest ally and friend, he no longer desires to live. He offers his dagger to Brutus to kill him, declaring, "Strike as thou didst at Caesar; for I know / When though didst hate him worst, thou loved'st him better / Than ever thou loved'st Cassius" (IV.ii.159–161).

Brutus tells Cassius to put his dagger away and says that they both are merely ill-tempered. The two men embrace and forgive each other. Outside, Lucilius is attempting to prevent a poet from entering the tent, but the poet squeezes past him and scolds Brutus and Cassius for arguing: "Love and be friends, as two such men should be, / For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye" (IV.ii.183–184). But, having already repledged their friendship, the two generals laugh together at the poet's presumptuousness and send him away.

Cassius and Brutus drink wine together. Cassius expresses his surprise at Brutus' earlier rage. Brutus explains that he has been under many emotional burdens lately, the foremost of which has been the death of his wife, Portia; he recently received news that she killed herself by swallowing fire. Titinius and Messala enter with news from Rome; Messala says that the triumvirate of Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus has put a hundred senators to death. Messala asks Brutus if he has had word from Portia, and when Brutus answers negatively, Messala comments that this seems strange. When Brutus inquires if Messala knows something, Messala replies that he does not. But Brutus insists that Messala tell him the truth, and Messala reports that Portia is dead.

Brutus suggests that they march to Philippi to meet the enemy. Cassius says that he would rather let the enemy come to them. Brutus protests that they are at the peak of their readiness and should seize the opportunity. Cassius relents and agrees to march. The others depart, leaving Brutus in his tent with his servant Lucius. Brutus summons Varro and Claudio to sleep in his tent until they are needed for early morning messages.

The others fall asleep while Brutus lies awake trying to read. A spectral image enters (identified in the text as "Ghost of Caesar"). Brutus wonders if he is dreaming; he asks the form to identify himself. The Ghost replies that he is "thy evil spirit" (IV.ii.333). After telling Brutus that they will see each other again at Philippi, the Ghost disappears, and Brutus wakes his attendants. He asks them if they saw anything strange, but they reply that they did not.

Act V, Scene 1 overview –

Octavius and Antony enter the battlefield at Philippi with their armies. A messenger arrives to report that the enemy is ready for battle. Antony, the more experienced soldier, tells Octavius to attack from the left. Octavius refuses and replies that he will attack from the right and Antony can come from the left. Antony asks Octavius why he questions his authority, but Octavius stands firm.

The enemy factions—consisting of Brutus, Cassius, and their armies—enter; Titinius, Lucilius, and Messala are among them. Octavius asks Antony if their side should attack first, and Antony, now calling Octavius “Caesar,” responds that they will wait for the enemy to attack. Antony and Octavius go to meet Brutus and Cassius. The leaders exchange insults. Octavius draws his sword and calls for Caesar’s death to be avenged; he swears that he will not lay the sword down again until another Caesar (namely himself) adds the deaths of the traitors to the general slaughter. The leaders insult each other further before parting to ready their armies for battle.

After the departure of Antony and Octavius, Brutus calls Lucilius to talk privately. Cassius calls Messala to do the same. Cassius tells the soldier that it is his birthday and informs him of recent bad omens: two mighty eagles alighted on the foremost banners of their army and perched there, feeding from the soldiers’ hands; this morning, however, they are gone. Now ravens, crows, and other scavenger birds circle over the troops as if the men were diseased and weak prey. Cassius walks back to join Brutus and comments that the future looks uncertain; if they lose, they may never see each other again. Cassius asks Brutus if Brutus would allow himself to be led through Rome as a captive should they lose. Brutus replies that he would rather die than go to Rome as a defeated prisoner; he declares that this day “must end that work the ides of March begun”—that is, the battle represents the final stage in the struggle for power that began with the murder of Caesar (V.i.114). He bids Cassius “for ever and for ever farewell” (V.i.117). Cassius echoes these sentiments, and the men depart.

Act V, Scene 2 overview –

The battle begins between the scenes, and the next scene, comprising a scant total of six lines, depicts the two sides’ first surge against each other. Brutus sends Messala to Cassius to report that he senses a weakness in Octavius’ army and will push forward to exploit it.

Act V, Scene 3 overview –

The next scene finds Cassius standing on a hill with Titinius, watching the battle and lamenting its course. Though Brutus was correct in noting Octavius’ weakness, he proved overeager in his attack, and the tide of battle has turned against him. Pindarus now runs up to Cassius with a report: Antony’s troops have entered Cassius’ camp. He advises Cassius to flee to some more distant spot. Cassius refuses to move but, catching sight of a group of burning tents, asks if those tents are his. Titinius confirms that they are. Cassius then notices a series of advancing troops in the distance; he gives Titinius his horse and instructs him to find out whose troops they are. Titinius obeys and rides off.

Cassius asks Pindarus to ascend a nearby hill and monitor Titinius' progress. Pindarus calls down his reports: Titinius, riding hard, is soon surrounded by the unknown men; he dismounts the horse and the unknown men cheer. Distraught at this news of what he takes to be his best friend's capture, Cassius tells Pindarus to watch no more. Pindarus descends the hilltop, whereupon Cassius gives Pindarus his sword, covers his own eyes, and asks Pindarus to kill him. Pindarus complies. Dying, Cassius' last words are that Caesar has now been revenged by the very sword that killed him.

Unexpectedly, Titinius now enters with Messala, observing that the battle rages on without sign of ending. Although Antony's forces defeated those of Cassius, Brutus' legions rallied to defeat those of Octavius. The men then discover Cassius' body. Titinius realizes what has happened: when he rode out to the unknown troops, he discovered the troops to be Brutus'; the men's embrace of Titinius must have appeared to Pindarus a capture, and Cassius must have misperceived their joyful cheers of reunion as the bloodthirsty roars of the enemy's men. Messala departs to bring the tragic news to Brutus. Titinius mourns over Cassius' body, anguished that a man whom he greatly admired died over such a mistake. Miserable, Titinius stabs himself and dies.

Brutus now enters with Messala and his men. Finding the bodies, Brutus cries, "O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet": even in death, Caesar is reaping revenge; he seems to turn events against his murderers from beyond the grave (V.iii.93). Brutus orders that Cassius' body be taken away, and the men set off to struggle again with the armies of Antony and Octavius.

Act V, Scene 4 overview –

Brutus prepares for another battle with the Romans. In the field, Lucilius pretends that he is Brutus, and the Romans capture him. Antony's men bring him before Antony, who recognizes Lucilius. Antony orders his men to go see if the real Brutus is alive or dead and to treat their prisoner well.

Act V, scene 5 overview –

Brutus sits with his few remaining men. He asks them to hold his sword so that he may run against it and kill himself. The Ghost of Caesar has appeared to him on the battlefield, he says, and he believes that the time has come for him to die. His men urge him to flee; he demurs, telling them to begin the retreat, and that he will catch up later. He then asks one of his men to stay behind and hold the sword so that he may yet die honorably. Impaling himself on the sword, Brutus declares that in killing himself he acts on motives twice as pure as those with which he killed Caesar, and that Caesar should consider himself avenged: "Caesar, now be still. / I killed not thee with half so good a will" (V.v.50–51).

Antony enters with Octavius, Messala, Lucilius, and the rest of their army. Finding Brutus' body, Lucilius says that he is glad that his master was not captured alive. Octavius decides to take Brutus' men into his own service. Antony speaks over the body, stating that Brutus was the noblest Roman of all: while the other conspirators acted out of envy of Caesar's power, Brutus

acted for what he believed was the common good. Brutus was a worthy citizen, a rare example of a real man. Octavius adds that they should bury him in the most honorable way and orders the body to be taken to his tent. The men depart to celebrate their victory.

Study Questions - *Julius Caesar*

Act IV and V

1. Why does Antony compare Lepidus to his horse?
He is property like Antony's horse – Antony will use him until he is no longer needed, then he will be dropped
2. Why does Brutus tell Cassius to speak his complaints softly and inside the tent?
Fighting in front of the soldiers is not advisable – an obvious conflict between the two men might affect the morale of the armies
3. What does Brutus accuse Cassius of doing? Why is Brutus so opposed to this?
He has accused Cassius of taking bribes; He reminds him that they killed Caesar because they believed he was corrupt; they should not descend into the very corruption they tried to eliminate
4. Cassius tried to frighten Brutus. How does he do this? What is Brutus' response?
He says he is prepared to fight – He is not afraid
5. What is the cause of Brutus' grief? Explain what happens.
Portia committed suicide – she swallows hot coals
6. Brutus and Cassius do not agree on how to carry out the attack on Antony and Octavius. What are the differences between their plans? Explain.
Brutus wants to march to Philippi because the people between where they are and Philippi are loyal to them only because they made them be – the enemy marching past them could add them to their numbers and come at them refreshed, newly reinforced and full of coverage
Cassius wants to wait for the enemy to come after them – it will waste their provisions and tire out their soldiers while they wait rested, energetic
7. Explain the meaning of Brutus' speech that begins with, "There is a tide."
They are significant because they emphasize Brutus' belief in the power of the will over fate – throughout the play, the theme of fate vs. free will proves important here; Brutus suggests that both exist and that one should take advantage of fate by asserting one's will
8. Why does Brutus ask the others in his tent if they cried out in their sleep?
He is looking for some explanation of what he saw and heard – was it really a ghost

9. When Antony sees Brutus and Cassius approach with their armies, what does he think is the reason they have come to him?
They want to descend on them looking fierce so Antony and Octavius will think they are brave
10. As the four leaders talk before the battle, Cassius blames Brutus for Antony's being there at all. Explain.
If Brutus had listened to Cassius earlier and not allowed Brutus to speak at Caesar's funeral, they would not be in this situation
11. Why do Brutus and Cassius give each other an everlasting farewell?
What they started on March 15th must end; Brutus will not allow himself to become a prisoner so he will either be victorious or will die by his own accord
12. What message is Messala ordered to take to "the legions on the other side"?
A sudden attack on Octavius' troops – Brutus feels they are weak and can be overtaken
13. In scene three, Cassius dies. Explain the events leading to his death and why his death is a mistake.
Cassius sends Pindarus to see what is happening with Titinius; Pindarus reports to Cassius that Titinius is surrounded by horsemen who overtake him, seize him as he dismounts, and shout for joy – Cassius mistakenly believe that Titinius was captured by the enemy and tells Pindarus to watch no more – Cassius asks Pindarus to kill him using the sword Cassius used to kill Caesar
14. Lucilius impersonates Brutus. Why?
To try to save and protect Brutus
15. In scene five, Brutus dies. Explain the events leading to his death. Why does Brutus say, "Caesar, now be still"?
Brutus believes that Antony and his troops have won – the ghost of Caesar has appeared to him and he believes that the time has come for his to die – He asks Volumnius to hold his sword while he runs on it (assist in his suicide) – As he does, he says that he is acting on motives that are twice as pure as when he killed Caesar so Caesar should consider himself avenged

16. How do Antony and Octavius treat the men who fought with Cassius and Brutus? How do they treat Brutus' body? Why?

Octavius takes the men into his own service; Antony speaks over the body saying that Brutus was the noblest Roman of all; while the other conspirators acted out of envy of Caesar's power, Brutus acted for what he believed was the common good; Octavius say they should bury him in the most honorable way and orders the body be taken to his tent

Julius Caesar – Exam Review

Narrator – no narrator, it is a drama
Written in blank verse – written in unrhymed iambic pentameter
Julius Caesar is considered a tragedy

Pun – word or phrase that means two different things at the same time.
(pg. 777, scene 1, line 21 – “Truly sir, **all** that I live by is with the **awl**!”)

Internal conflict – Brutus (pg. 782, lines 79 – 82) – Brutus loves Caesar but abhors Caesar’s growing power

Casca speech (pg. 787, lines 234-250) is written in prose instead of blank verse (he usually reserved writing in prose for the speech of a comic or a minor character) - Suggests that Casca was a lesser character or member of the conspiracy – Casca is of lower social/political status than Brutus and Cassius

Pg. 801 (lines 81-82)
Seek none, conspiracy
Hide it in smiles and affability
(Brutus personifies the conspiracy – makes it seem like it is outside the control of the conspirators)

Pg. 803 (lines 155-161)
Cassius foreshadows the harm Antony might cause the conspirators (Note that Brutus does not take heed of the warning Cassius gives)

Pg. 804 (lines 192-193)
Peace! Count the clock
The clock hath stricken three
Example of an anachronism -
Mechanical clocks did not exist because they had not been invented yet

Pg. 815 (lines 123-125)
Dramatic irony – Audience knows as does Trebonius what will happen (Caesar is unaware)

Brutus’ funeral speech –
Speaks in prose (why?)
Uses parallelism (the repetition of words, phrases or sentences)

Antony’s funeral speech –
Written in blank verse – unrhymed iambic pentameter
Uses Repetition – repeats “Brutus is an honorable man”
Verbal irony – cannot openly say what he means, uses verbal irony to say something else

Pg. 841 (lines 268-269)

Personification of Fortune

Pg. 858 – When Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus to tell him he will see him (Brutus) at Philippi is an example of foreshadowing

Pg. 868-869

The audience knowing that Brutus' troops were victorious and Cassius' thinking they were defeated is an example of dramatic irony

Brutus is considered the tragic hero