

Julius Caesar Act 1 Outline

I. Act 1

a. Scene i

i. Enjambment vs. end-stopped lines

a. enjambment:

b. end-stopped line

ii. Flavius' superciliousness

iii. Pun/comic relief

iv. Characterization of the commoners

1. "You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things! / O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome! / Knew you not Pompey?"
(I.i.35-37)

2. Why do Marullus and Flavius think that the commoners should have a guilty conscience and show remorse for their behavior?

v. Flavius and Marullus' view of Caesar

1. Why does Flavius want to remove decorations on city statues?
What does this wish have to do with Marullus' complaining words?

2. "These growing feathers plucked from Caesar's wings, / Will make him fly an ordinary pitch, / Would else would soar above the view of men / And keep us all in servile fearfulness." (I.i.72-75)

vi. Verse vs. Prose

- b. Scene ii
 - i. Antony's attitude toward Caesar
 - 1. "When Caesar says "Do this," it is performed" (I.ii.10).
 - ii. Importance of Omens
 - iii. Caesar's reaction to the soothsayer
 - 1. "He is a dreamer; let us leave him. Pass." (I.ii.24).
 - iv. Brutus' internal conflict
 - 1. "Vexed I am / Of late with passions of some difference, / Conceptions only proper to myself, / Which give some soil, perhaps to my behaviors" (I.ii.39-42).
 - 2. "Poor Brutus, with himself at war, / forgets the show of love to other men" (I.ii.46-47).
 - 3. Positive attributes of Brutus
 - 4. In History: When the Roman civil war began in 49 B.C., Marcus Junius Brutus joined Pompey's army to fight against Caesar. Brutus was taken prisoner in Greece the next year, when Pompey was defeated. Caesar, however, not only pardoned Brutus but later made him a regional governor and a praetor. Brutus had reason to be loyal to Caesar, but history records that he loved the republican form of government, which Caesar threatened to end.

v. Cassius' mirror metaphor/methods of persuasion

1. "I have heard / Where many of the best respect in Rome / (Except immortal Cesar), speaking of Brutus / And groaning underneath this age's yoke, / Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes" (I.ii.58-62).

2. "And since you know you cannot see yourself / So well as by reflection, I, your glass, / Will modestly discover to yourself. / That of yourself which you yet know not of" (I.ii.67-70).

3. Use of flattery—Is this a good method for Brutus?

vi. Brutus' character qualities

1. "Set honor in one eye and death i' the other, / And I will look on both indifferently; / For let the gods so speed me as I love / The name of honor more than I fear death" (I.ii.86-89).

vii. Cassius' characterization of Caesar

1. "'Tis true, this god did shake" (I.ii.121)

2. "Ye gods! It doth amaze me / A man of such a feeble temper should / So get the start of the majestic world / And bear the palm alone" (I.ii.128-131).

3. “Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world / Like a Colossus,
and we petty men / Walk under his huge legs and peep about / To
find ourselves dishonourable graves” (I.ii.135-138).

4. Cassius’ tone

viii. Elizabethan idea of fate

1. “Men at sometimes are masters of their fates. / The fault, dear
Brutus, is not in our starts, / But in ourselves, that we are
underlings” (I.ii.139-141).

ix. Rome’s history as a republic

1. “When could they say (till now- that talked of Rome / That her
wide walls encompassed but one man?” (I.ii.151-152).

2. Brutus request for Cassius to stop talking—what does this reveal
about Brutus’ character?

3. “Brutus had rather be a villager. Than to repute himself a son of
Rome / Under these hard conditions as this time / Is like to lay
upon us” (I.ii.172-175).

x. Caesar’s characterization of Cassius

1. “Let me have about me men that are fat, / Sleek-headed men, and
such as sleep o’ nights. / Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
/ He thinks too much, such men are dangerous” (I.ii.192-195).

2. Negative qualities of Caesar

xi. Caesar's refusal of the crown

1. Is he following his conscience, believing that refusing the crown is the right thing to do? Or do you think he has another reason for refusing the crown?
2. Why would Caesar have come in angry after this even transpired? Remember the description: "The angry spot in Caesar's brow doth glow . . .).

xii. Punishment of Flavius and Marullus

1. What does this suggest about Caesar as a ruler?

xiii. Need for Casca in the conspiracy

1. "However he puts on this tardy form. / This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit, / Which gives men stomach to digest his words / With better appetite" (I.ii.292-295).

xiv. Cassius' soliloquy

1. "Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see / Thy honorable mettle may be wrought / From that it is disposed" (I.ii.301-303).
2. Cassius' plan to woo Brutus

- c. Scene iii
 - i. Elapsed time—1 month has elapsed since Act 1 scene i and Act 1 scene iii; night of March 14th
 - ii. Omens/Topsy Turvy World
 - iii. Cicero's warning about interpreting omens
 - 1. "But men may construe things after their fashion, / Clean from the purpose of the things themselves" (I.iii.34-35)
 - iv. Cassius' interpretation of omens
 - 1. "Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man / Most like this dreadful night / That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars / As doth the lion in the Capitol" (I.iii.72-75)
 - 2. Cassius threat of suicide
 - v. Cassius' test of Casca's loyalty
 - 1. "I know that he would not be a wolf / But that he sees the Romans are but sheep; He were no lion, were not Romans hinds" (I.iii.104-106).
 - a. Is this a logical (logos) or emotional (pathos) appeal?

2. “But, O grief, / Where hast thou led me? I perhaps, speak this /
Before a willing bondman” (I.iii.111-112)

a. Apostrophe—occurs when a character speaks to something
dead as if it were alive or something that is inanimate as if
it were animate

vi. Need for Brutus in the conspiracy

1. “O, he sits high in all the people’s hearts, / And that which would
appear offense in us, / His countenance, like richest alchemy, /
Will change to virtue and to worthiness” (I.ii.157-160).