

Julius Caesar

by William Shakespeare

Approved for use in Grade 10 English

Summary of the Work: "The citizens of Rome gather to celebrate Julius Caesar's triumphant return from war. Cassius and Brutus are senators. They feel that Caesar is becoming too powerful and too much like a king. Cassius talks to Brutus about overthrowing Caesar. Cassius and his fellow conspirator visit Brutus to discuss their plot to murder Caesar at the Senate. Brutus' wife, Portia, is worried and begs Brutus to tell her what's happening but he refuses. Caesar's wife, Calphurnia, warns Caesar to stay indoors as she has dreamt about his death but Caesar is persuaded to go to the Senate by one of the conspirators. Caesar is stabbed to death by the conspirators on the steps of the senate. Brutus delivers the final wound. Antony, who was friends with Caesar, shakes hands with the conspirators. When he is left alone, Antony curses the murderers and talks of revenge. Brutus and Antony speak to the crowd at Caesar's funeral. At first the crowd support Brutus but when Antony shows them Caesar's wounds and reads his will, the crowd turn against Brutus and the conspirators flee the city. Brutus and Cassius gather an army to fight against Antony. They argue before the fight and Brutus sees a vision of Caesar's ghost. Brutus is hopeful in battle but Cassius hears a mistaken report that his own troops are losing and kills himself. When his army is defeated, Brutus refuses to be captured and also kills himself. Antony wins the battle and praises Brutus' honour. Antony returns to rule Rome, with Caesar's great-nephew Octavius" (Royal Shakespeare Company 2025).

Rationale: "One of Shakespeare's enduring legacies lies in his profound understanding and portrayal of the complexities of human nature. Through his characters and their intricate relationships, Shakespeare explores the depths of human emotions, motivations, and moral dilemmas. Students, as they study these characters, gain insights into the universal aspects of the human experience. The Bard's keen observations of human behavior serve as a mirror reflecting the intricacies of their own lives, fostering empathy and a nuanced understanding of the human condition. The exploration of love, ambition, jealousy, and power in Shakespeare's plays becomes a lens through which students can contemplate and analyze the complexities inherent in their own lives and the world around them" (Rose, Michael.Team. "Why We Study Shakespeare." Cincinnati Classical Academy, 1 Dec. 2023, www.cincyclassical.org/why-we-study-shakespeare/).

This play also provides nonfiction historical context of Julius Caesar and the ancient Roman Republic.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

Noted Distinction: It was first published in the First Folio in 1623, has since been published in many editions, and is one of Shakespeare's classic well-known tragedies.

Notes on the Text:	Connection to the Curriculum: This text challenges students to read and comprehend a classic Shakespearean work and adapt to Shakespearean language. It serves as a classic reference when students read other texts in the future, provides the experience of reading the drama genre, and encourages literary analysis skills when thinking critically about character development and various themes still very relevant in our modern world.
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Additional Connections:
