

Julius Caesar

by
William Shakespeare

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Julius Caesar

By William Shakespeare

A Shakespeare in the Ruins

Study Guide

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William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Introduction

Welcome to the 2013 season, Celebrating 20 years of Shakespeare in the Ruins!

According to Sarah Constible, the director of this season's **Julius Caesar**,

Human history is littered with the violent deaths of political leaders. The motivations for these assassinations are legion: notoriety, religion, a wish to end tyranny, a desire to prevent social change. In almost every case, the killers have felt justified in their actions. Their beliefs are strong enough that, in their eyes, murder becomes a necessity.

Shakespeare once again has defined human history and predicted it with **Julius Caesar**. He gives us not simply a dramatization of a coup, but also an insight into the motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of both sides of the political and personal landscape. We are encouraged throughout the play to constantly ask ourselves which side is in the right, and if there is a right side and a wrong side.

Forty three years ago, Canadians asked those same questions during the October Crisis. In Sarah Constible's words:

In 1970, Quebec's Minister of Labour, Pierre LaPorte, was murdered by the Front de Liberation du Quebec, a separatist group who wanted to end "Anglo-Saxon imperialism". This brought about the invoking of the War Measures Act by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (the Caesar of his day), in which our government suspended civil liberties and arrested over 400 individuals suspected of having ties to the radical organization.

So, Ms. Constible has set this production of **Julius Caesar** during Canada's "Black October". She writes:

It is my hope that, by bringing the story closer to our home and our history, it will illuminate the truth that Shakespeare realized over 400 years ago: that we are all capable of transgressing our moral code and of committing acts we would otherwise view as abhorrent.

Become embroiled and therefore complicit in the conspiracy!

And don't forget to dress for the weather and for promenading in the Trappist Monastery Provincial Heritage Park.

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Cast of Characters

Julius Caesar

Antony
Octavius
Lepidus } **triumvirs after Caesar's death**

Brutus
Cassius
Casca
Cinna
Trebonius
Cimber } **conspirators against Caesar**

Titinius
Messala
Volumnius } **friends of Brutus and Cassius**

Lena **assistant to Brutus**
Dardanius **servant to Brutus**
Clitus **servant to Brutus**
Pindarus **servant to Cassius**

Calpurnia **wife of Caesar**
Portia **wife of Brutus**

Cinna **a poet**
Soothsayer

CSIS agents
Soldiers
Citizens
Servants

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Brief summary

Two tribunes, Marullus and Flavius, break up a gathering of Roman citizens who celebrate Julius Caesar's triumphant return from war. The victory is marked by public games in which Caesar's friend, Antony, takes part. On his way to the arena, Caesar is stopped by a stranger who warns that he should "Beware the Ides (15th) of March".

Fellow senators, Cassius and Brutus, are suspicious of Caesar's reactions to the power he holds in the Republic. They fear he will accept offers to become Emperor. Cassius, a successful general himself, is jealous, while Brutus is uncertain. Cassius, Casca, and their allies, visit Brutus at night to persuade him to share their views, and they plan Caesar's death. Brutus is troubled, but does not confide in his devoted wife, Portia.

On the 15th of March, Caesar is urged not to go to the Senate by his wife, Calpurnia, who has had dreams that he will be murdered. He is nevertheless persuaded by a conspirator to go anyway, and as petitioners surround him, Caesar is stabbed and dies with Brutus giving the final blow. Brutus then addresses the people of Rome to explain the conspirators' motives and their fears about Caesar's ambition. Against Cassius' advice, Brutus allows Anthony to speak next. While Brutus' speech calms the crowd, Anthony's oration stirs them to rioting and the conspirators are forced to flee the city.

Brutus and Cassius gather an army in Northern Greece and prepare to fight the forces led by Antony, who has joined with Octavius, and Lepidus. Brutus and Cassius are now filled with doubts about the future, and they quarrel bitterly over funds for their soldiers' pay. Eventually, they prepare to engage Antony's army at Philippi. Brutus stoically receives news of his wife's suicide in Rome, but as he tries to rest on the eve of the conflict, he sees Caesar's ghost.

In the battle, the conspirators appear at first to be winning, but when his messenger seems to be overtaken by the enemy, Cassius fears the worst and gets his servant, Pindarus, to help him to a quick death. Brutus, finding Cassius's body, commits suicide. To Brutus, this death is the only honourable action left to him. Antony, triumphant on the battlefield, praises Brutus as "the noblest Roman of them all", and orders a formal funeral before he and Octavius return to rule in Rome.

<http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/play-summary/julius-caesar/>

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Detailed summary

Here's a more detailed description from Spark Notes. As well, you may want to check out the following link to find a Video Spark Note that offers a 9 minute summary and slide show.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/>

Two tribunes, Flavius and Murellus, find scores of Roman citizens wandering the streets, neglecting their work in order to watch Julius Caesar's triumphal parade: Caesar has defeated the sons of the deceased Roman general Pompey, his archrival, in battle. The tribunes scold the citizens for abandoning their duties and remove decorations from Caesar's statues. Caesar enters with his entourage, including the military and political figures Brutus, Cassius, and Antony. A Soothsayer calls out to Caesar to "beware the Ides of March," but Caesar ignores him and proceeds with his victory celebration.

Cassius and Brutus, both long time intimates of Caesar and each other, converse. Cassius tells Brutus that he has seemed distant lately; Brutus replies that he has been at war with himself. Cassius states that he wishes Brutus could see himself as others see him, for then Brutus would realize how honored and respected he is. Brutus says that he fears that the people want Caesar to become king, which would overturn the republic. Cassius concurs that Caesar is treated like a god though he is merely a man, no better than Brutus or Cassius. Cassius recalls incidents of Caesar's physical weakness and marvels that this fallible man has become so powerful. He blames his and Brutus' lack of will for allowing Caesar's rise to power: surely the rise of such a man cannot be the work of fate. Brutus considers Cassius' words as Caesar returns. Upon seeing Cassius, Caesar tells Antony that he deeply distrusts Cassius.

Caesar departs, and another politician, Casca, tells Brutus and Cassius that, during the celebration, Antony offered the crown to Caesar three times and the people cheered, but Caesar refused it each time. He reports that Caesar then fell to the ground and had some kind of seizure in front of the crowd; his demonstration of weakness, however, did not alter the plebeians' devotion to him. Brutus goes home to consider Cassius' words regarding Caesar's poor qualifications to rule, while Cassius hatches a plot to draw Brutus into a conspiracy against Caesar.

That night, Rome is plagued with violent weather and a variety of bad omens and portents. Brutus finds letters in his house apparently written by Roman citizens worried that Caesar has become too powerful. The letters have in fact been forged and planted by Cassius, who knows that if Brutus believes it is the people's will, he will support a plot to remove Caesar from power. A committed supporter of the republic, Brutus fears the possibility of a dictator-led empire, worrying that the populace would lose its voice. Cassius arrives at Brutus' home with his conspirators, and Brutus, who has already been won over by the letters, takes control of the meeting. The men agree to lure Caesar from his house and kill him. Cassius wants to kill Antony too, for Antony will surely try to hinder their plans, but Brutus disagrees, believing that too many deaths will render their plot too bloody and dishonor them. Having agreed to spare Antony, the conspirators depart. Portia, Brutus' wife, observes that Brutus appears preoccupied. She pleads with him to confide in her, but he rebuffs her.

Caesar prepares to go to the Senate. His wife, Calpurnia, begs him not to go, describing recent nightmares she has had in which a statue of Caesar streamed with blood and smiling men bathed their hands in the blood. Caesar refuses to yield to fear and insists on going about his daily business. Finally, Calpurnia convinces him to stay home—if not out of caution, then as a favor to her. But Decius, one of the conspirators, then arrives and convinces Caesar that Calpurnia has misinterpreted her dreams and the recent omens. Caesar departs for the Senate in the company of the conspirators.

As Caesar proceeds through the streets toward the Senate, the Soothsayer again tries but fails to get his attention. The citizen, Artemidorus, hands him a letter warning him about the conspirators, but Caesar refuses to read it, saying that his closest personal concerns are his last priority. At the Senate, the conspirators speak to Caesar, bowing at his feet and encircling him. One by one, they stab him to death. When Caesar sees his dear friend Brutus among his murderers, he gives up his struggle and dies.

The murderers bathe their hands and swords in Caesar's blood, thus bringing Calpurnia's premonition to fruition. Antony, having been led away on a false pretext, returns and pledges allegiance to Brutus, but weeps over Caesar's body. He shakes hands with the conspirators, thus marking them all as guilty while appearing to make a gesture of conciliation. When Antony asks why they killed Caesar, Brutus replies that he will explain their purpose in a funeral oration. Antony asks to be allowed to speak over the body as well; Brutus grants his

permission, though Cassius remains suspicious of Antony. The conspirators depart, and Antony, alone now, swears that Caesar's death shall be avenged.

Brutus and Cassius go to the Forum to speak to the public. Cassius exits to address another part of the crowd. Brutus declares to the masses that though he loved Caesar, he loves Rome more, and Caesar's ambition posed a danger to Roman liberty. The speech placates the crowd. Antony appears with Caesar's body, and Brutus departs after turning the pulpit over to Antony. Repeatedly referring to Brutus as "an honorable man," Antony's speech becomes increasingly sarcastic. Questioning the claims that Caesar acted only out of ambition, Antony points out that Caesar brought much wealth and glory to Rome, and three times turned down offers of the crown. Antony then produces Caesar's will, but announces that he will not read it because it would upset the people inordinately. The crowd nevertheless begs him to read the will, so he descends from the pulpit to stand next to Caesar's body. He describes Caesar's horrible death and shows Caesar's wounded body to the crowd. He then reads Caesar's will, which bequeaths a sum of money to every citizen and orders that his private gardens be made public. The crowd becomes enraged that this generous man lies dead. Calling Brutus and Cassius traitors, the masses set off to drive them from the city.

Meanwhile, Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor, Octavius, arrives in Rome and forms a three-person coalition with Antony and Lepidus. They prepare to fight Cassius and Brutus, who have been driven into exile and are raising armies outside the city. At the conspirators' camp, Brutus and Cassius have a heated argument regarding matters of money and honor, but they ultimately reconcile. Brutus reveals that he is sick with grief, for in his absence Portia has killed herself. The two continue to prepare for battle with Antony and Octavius. That night, the Ghost of Caesar appears to Brutus, announcing that Brutus will meet him again on the battlefield.

Octavius and Antony march their army toward Brutus and Cassius. Antony tells Octavius where to attack, but Octavius says that he will make his own orders; he is already asserting his authority as the heir of Caesar and the next ruler of Rome. The opposing generals meet on the battlefield and exchange insults before beginning combat.

Cassius witnesses his own men fleeing and hears that Brutus's men are not performing effectively. Cassius sends one of his men, Pindarus, to see how matters are progressing. From afar, Pindarus sees one of their leaders, Cassius'

best friend, Titinius, being surrounded by cheering troops and concludes that he has been captured. Cassius despairs and orders Pindarus to kill him with his own sword. He dies proclaiming that Caesar is avenged. Titinius himself then arrives—the men encircling him were actually his comrades, cheering a victory he had earned. Titinius sees Cassius's corpse and, mourning the death of his friend, kills himself.

Brutus learns of the deaths of Cassius and Titinius with a heavy heart, and prepares to take on the Romans again. When his army loses, doom appears imminent. Brutus asks one of his men to hold his sword while he impales himself on it. Finally, Caesar can rest satisfied, he says as he dies. Octavius and Antony arrive. Antony speaks over Brutus' body, calling him the noblest Roman of all. While the other conspirators acted out of envy and ambition, he observes, Brutus genuinely believed that he acted for the benefit of Rome. Octavius orders that Brutus be buried in the most honorable way. The men then depart to celebrate their victory.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/summary.html>

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Setting

Set in Canada during the time of the FLQ "Black October" Crisis, SIR's first production of Julius Caesar will illuminate the truth that Shakespeare realized over 400 years ago: that we are all capable of transgressing our moral code and of committing acts we would otherwise view as abhorrent, in the name of "liberty".

The FLQ

During the 1960's the Quiet Revolution in Quebec lowered the voting age, increased government spending, took education out of the hands of the church, and modernized health care. For many francophones, these changes were welcome, but others felt that the changes were too slow and Quebec citizens deserved to have more control over their own economic and social destiny.

The Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) was a revolutionary movement that used propaganda and terrorism to promote the emergence of an independent, socialist Québec. In 1963 underground FLQ activists placed bombs in mailboxes in 3 federal armories and in Westmount, a wealthy upper-middle-class anglophone area of Montréal. In 1964 another group of FLQ members stole approximately \$50 000 in cash and military equipment. At a holdup at International Firearms, the company vice-president was killed by the FLQ and another employee was killed by the police, who mistook him for one of the thieves. From 1963 to 1970, the FLQ was involved in over 200 bombings.

The October Crisis

On the 5th of October in 1970, members of the FLQ kidnapped James Cross, the British trade commissioner in Montréal. The kidnappers' demands, communicated in a series of public messages, included the freeing of a number of convicted or detained FLQ members and the broadcasting of the FLQ manifesto. On October 10, the Québec Minister of Justice offered safe passage abroad to the kidnappers in return for the liberation of their hostage, however, on the same day, a second FLQ cell kidnapped the Québec Minister of Labour and Immigration, Pierre LaPorte.

On October 15 the Québec government requested the assistance of the Canadian Armed Forces to supplement the local police, and on October 16 the

federal government proclaimed the existence of a state of "apprehended insurrection" under the **War Measures Act**. The FLQ was banned, normal liberties were suspended, and arrests and detentions were authorized without charge. Over 450 persons were detained in Québec, most of whom were eventually released without the laying or hearing of charges.

On October 17, the body of Pierre LaPorte was found in the trunk of a car. In early December 1970, the cell holding James Cross was discovered by police, and his release was negotiated in return for the provision of safe conduct to Cuba for the kidnappers and some family members. Four weeks later the second group was located and arrested, subsequently to be tried and convicted for kidnapping and murder.

The federal response to the kidnapping was intensely controversial. According to opinion polls, an overwhelming majority of Canadians supported the Cabinet's action, but it was criticized as excessive by Québec nationalists and by civil libertarians throughout the country. Supporters of the response claim that the disappearance of terrorism in Québec is evidence of its success, but this disappearance might equally be attributed to public distaste for political terror and to the steady growth of the democratic separatist movement in the 1970s, which led to the election of a PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS government in 1976.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/quiet-revolution>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/front-de-liberation-du-quebec>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/october-crisis>

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Anticipation Guide

1. What are the necessary qualities for a good ruler?
2. What are the responsibilities of citizens if their ruler and government are doing a good job?
3. What are the responsibilities of citizens if their ruler and government are not doing a good job?
4. Shakespeare in the Ruins has throughout its history used gender blind casting and sometimes switched male characters to female, and vice versa. Which of the traditional male characters in **Julius Caesar** could be changed to female characters? How would these changes affect the play?
5. Do I know anything about 1970's October Crisis? How does that moment in Canadian history connect with **Julius Caesar**?
6. What will it be like to watch the play outside in the ruins of the Trappist Monastery? Did I dress appropriately for an outdoor performance? How will the outdoor setting enhance the performance of the play?

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** A Doorway into the text

When approaching any Shakespearean text, two major challenges face students and teachers:

- How do we make sense of the text?
- What is the best way to fully appreciate the play?

On the surface, the answers to these questions are obvious. To make sense of the text, read and re-read, seek out scene summaries, look up archaic language, and don't panic. Appreciation is even more obvious: see the play, which, if you're reading this, you are hopefully planning to do, and **do the play**, which requires some bravery, perseverance, and that same instruction again: don't panic.

Here's a "doing the play" activity that makes use of Sparknotes. For each Shakespearean play, Sparknotes offers two different tools: 1. An overview of the background, setting, plot, characters, and a scene-by-scene breakdown of the action of the play.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/>

and 2. No Fear Shakespeare: the original text of the play alongside a "modern text" version.

<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/juliuscaesar/>

Since you're just beginning to introduce the play, start at the beginning. Give the students a "summary and analysis" of Act 1 scene 1 from Sparknotes.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/section1.rhtml>

Now give them the side-by-side text of the scene from No Fear Shakespeare.

http://nfs.sparknotes.com/juliuscaesar/page_2.html

Divide your students into small groups and instruct them to use both texts to create a third: **a plain language version** of the scene.

Here's an illustration from Act 1 scene 1 of how that might work:

	FLAVIUS Hence! Home, you idle creatures get you home! Is this a holiday? What, know you not, Being mechanical, you ought not walk Upon a laboring day without the sign	FLAVIUS Get out of here! Go home, you lazy men. What, is today a holiday? Don't you know that working men aren't supposed to walk around on a workday without wearing their work clothes? You there, speak up. What's your occupation?
5	Of your profession?—Speak, what trade art thou?	
	CARPENTER Why, sir, a carpenter.	CARPENTER I'm a carpenter, sir.
	MURELLUS Where is thy leather apron and thy rule? What dost thou with thy best apparel on? —You, sir, what trade are you?	MURELLUS Where are your leather apron and your ruler? What are you doing, wearing your best clothes? And you, sir, what's <i>your</i> trade?
10	COBBLER Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.	COBBLER Well, compared to a fine workman, you might call me a mere cobbler.
	MURELLUS But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.	MURELLUS But what's your trade? Answer me straightforwardly.
	COBBLER A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience, which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.	COBBLER It is a trade, sir, that I practice with a clear conscience. I am a mender of worn soles.
15	MURELLUS What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?	MURELLUS What trade, boy? You insolent rascal, what trade?
	COBBLER Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me. Yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.	COBBLER Sir, please, don't be angry. But if your soles are worn out, I can mend you.
	MURELLUS What mean'st thou by that? "Mend" me, thou saucy fellow?	MURELLUS What do you mean by that? "Mend" me, you impertinent fellow?!

The modern text, on the right, does a good job of clarifying the meaning of the original, but ask your students, “Would you actually say that? Without changing the meaning, what would you say if you were that character?” As well, encourage your students to pare down the language to its essence. There’s no need to say in a paragraph what you can say in a sentence. What is the character really saying? After they work on it, the scene might end up sounding like this:

Flavius: Hey! What are you two doing? This isn't a holiday! Hey, buddy, what do you do?

Carpenter: Huh?

Flavius: For a living! What do you do?

Carpenter: Me? I'm a carpenter.

Murellus: You don't look like one. And your friend. What's he do?

Cobbler: You could say I'm a fixer.

Murellus: C'mon. What do you do?

Cobbler: If you need fixing, I'm your man.

Murellus: Could you be more specific?

Cobbler: If your soles are worn out, I can fix them.

Murellus: My souls?

Cobbler: Yeah, your soles. Of your shoes.

There are two significant benefits to this assignment: 1. Your students must **get inside the text** and think about what is really important in the scene, and 2. they now have a script with language that is their own, so it's much easier to learn and stage scenes with.

You may argue that we've now taken all of the poetic language out of the scene and therefore the essence of Shakespeare is lost. Agreed, but remember too, that the reason why Shakespeare is so often performed today is not only just because of the poetry, but also because the themes and stories still have something to say about humanity. In the pared down text, your goal is to retain all of the complex characterization and all of the important themes.

And, after some experience with this kind of pared down text work, students find that, when they watch an original text version of the same play, **they forget that they are watching Shakespeare** and they just enjoy the show. They come to you after the performance and proudly exclaim, "I understood every scene!" Some students even request that when they next perform a scene, they want to analyze the language the same way, but they want to perform it in **original text**.

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Another doorway into the text

How do the actors do it? How do the Shakespeare in the Ruins performers handle the text so well that they make language that looks "like Greek to me" on the page sound poetic and still completely understandable?

The answer is practise. Practise, practise, and more practise. In addition, the actors have training, life experience, theatrical experience, years of study, and still more practise. They're not afraid of hard work. Just like any other career, it's the effort they put into a performance, the hard work they do on the job, that makes Shakespeare come alive for an audience.

So, successful Shakespearean acting is not really more difficult than any other job you want to do well. It is neither difficult in itself nor is it mysterious. It's just simple, old fashioned, hard work.

One of the simple things that SIR actors always strive to do is **pay close attention to the clues that Shakespeare wrote in the script**. In other words, they follow the punctuation.

For example, here is part of Antony's speech when he first sees Caesar's body in Act 3 scene 1:

O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank.
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death hour; nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.

Use the punctuation of the piece to clarify its meaning. So, when read aloud, the speech becomes:

O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low? **(full stop)**
Are all thy conquests, **(tiny pause)** glories, **(tiny pause)** triumphs, **(tiny pause)**
spoils, **(tiny pause)** shrunk to this little measure? **(full stop)**
Fare thee well. **(full stop)**
I know not, **(tiny pause)** gentlemen, **(tiny pause)** what you intend, **(tiny pause)**
Who else must be let blood, **(tiny pause)** who else is rank. **(full stop)**

If I myself, **(tiny pause)** there is no hour so fit as Caesar's death hour; **(longer pause)** nor no instrument of half that worth as those your swords, **(tiny pause)** made rich with the most noble blood of all this world. **(full stop)**

So, we've focussed on the punctuation, ignored the capital letters, and "blasted right on through" at the ends of lines that have no punctuation.

You may ask "What about the iambic pentameter? What about the intended rhythm of the language? What about the "tum tee tum tee tum"?"

Here's a radical thought: the poetry of the language is so well written that when we play the lines for meaning, **the rhythm of the language will take care of itself.** You'll still hear the "tum tee tum tee tum", but now you'll understand the words because you've paid attention to the punctuation.

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Jump into the Script

Here's an adaptation of an exercise from last year's study guide of Henry V adapted for this year's production of **Julius Caesar**. The creator of the Henry V guide, Pamela Lockman, credits the Folger Institute for this idea.

Create a large open performance space in your classroom by placing chairs in a circle. Make the appropriate number of copies of each short "script" and distribute each to a student. Give the students five minutes to practise and stage their scene in their separate casts. Now return to the seats in the circle. Each cast, in turn, then jumps up and performs their scene in front of the larger group. Try it again without anyone sitting down and make it fast paced.

Note that the text of the following scenes comes from SIR's production of **Julius Caesar**.

1. (from Act One, Scene Two Cast of 3)

Soothsayer: Caesar!

Caesar: Ha! Who calls?

Soothsayer: Beware the ides of March.

Caesar: What man is that? Who is it in the press that calls on me?

Antony: A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

Caesar: Set him before me; let me see his face.

2. (from Act One, Scene Two Cast of 2)

Brutus: I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar.

Cassius: Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty things
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
All at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

3. (from Act One, Scene Two Cast of 2)

Brutus: Tomorrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or, if you will,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

Cassius: I will do so: till then, think of the world. (Exit Brutus)
Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed.

4. (from Act Two, Scene One Cast of 1)

Brutus: But, alas,
Caesar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.

5. (from Act Two, Scene Three Cast of 2)

Calpurnia: When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

Caesar: Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.

6. (from Act Three, Scene One Cast of 6)

Cinna: O, Caesar -

Caesar: Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

Cimber: Great Caesar -

Caesar: Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

Casca: Speak, hands for me! (He stabs Caesar.)

Cassius: (Stab, as does Cinna and Cimber)

Brutus: (Stab.)

Caesar: Et, tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar.

Cinna: Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!

7. (from Act Three, Scene Two Cast of 3)

Citizen: We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

Citizen #2: The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will.

Antony: Have patience, gentle friends; I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.
You are not wood; you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.

8. (from Act Four, Scene Three Cast of 2)

Brutus: Go to! You are not Cassius.

Cassius: I am.

Brutus: I say you are not.

Cassius: Urge me no more! I shall forget myself.

Have mind upon your health. Tempt me no further.

Brutus: Must I give way and room to your rash choler?

Shall I be frightened when a madwoman stares?

Cassius: O ye gods, ye gods! Must I endure all this?

9. (from Act Five, Scene One Cast of 4)

Octavius: I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.

Brutus: O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,
Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable.

Cassius: A peevish schoolboy, worthless of such honour,
Joined with a masker and a reveller!

Antony: Old Cassius still.

Octavius: Come Antony. Away!

Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth:
If you dare fight today, come to the field;
If not, when you have stomachs.

10. (from Act Five, Scene Five Cast of 3)

Octavius: How died your master, Lena?

Lena: I held the sword, and he did run on it.

Antony: This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.

Additional text exploration

Now that every student has a short text from the play, ask them to consider the following:

- Is there a line in the text that you've heard before? If yes, go on to the next bullet. If no, pick out a line from your text that you think is the most memorable or significant.
- See if you can find the line in a script of the entire play. What do you think the line's meaning and purpose is in the context of the scene?
- Does that line have a meaning and purpose for us today? How might that line come up in modern conversation?

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Famous Funeral Speeches

(From the pulpit, Brutus speaks to the Plebeians, the assembled citizens.)

Brutus: Be patient till the last. Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

All: None, Brutus, none.

BRUTUS: Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

(Enter Antony.)

Here comes Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart, that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

- Is it a good speech? If so, what makes it a good speech? Does Brutus present a logical argument? Check the response from Brutus' audience, the citizens: did the speech convince them of Brutus' viewpoint?
- Was it a good idea to speak first and let Anthony speak after? Is there an advantage or disadvantage to speaking first?
- Note that this speech is written in prose while Anthony's speech is poetry. What was Shakespeare trying to accomplish with this difference?

Antony: Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--
(For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men)
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause.
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

First Citizen: Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

Second Citizen: If thou consider rightly of the matter,

Caesar has had great wrong.

Third Citizen: Has he, masters?

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

Fourth Citizen: Marked ye his words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

First Citizen: If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

Second Citizen: Poor soul! His eyes are red as fire with weeping.

Third Citizen: There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Fourth Citizen: Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

Antony: But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters! If I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;
I found it in his closet; 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament,
Which (pardon me) I do not mean to read,
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

- What elements of Brutus' speech does Antony use against him?
- Is Antony's argument logical and effective? Is it rational or emotional?
- What lines are repeated? What effect do those repetitions have?

A few moments later, Antony continues, saving his best tactic, displaying the ravaged body of Caesar, for the end of his presentation.

Antony: If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

(He shows the autopsy photos.)

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed;
And as he plucked his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knocked, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
(Which all the while ran blood) great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here!
Here is himself, marred, as you see, with traitors.

- How does seeing the body of Caesar affect the crowd? Is this a fair way for Antony to end his argument?
- In most productions, the body itself is visible to the audience. In this one, the audience will see autopsy photos. How will that affect the impact of the speech?

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Food for thought

In the play, Julius Caesar only appears in three scenes. Is that enough to name the play after him or does the title Julius Caesar represent something else?

In spite of the fact that Caesar only appears briefly in the play, we still get a sense that he is more than just an innocent victim. Shakespeare presents us just enough information to get a taste of what Brutus fears about him. Take a close look at Caesar's appearances. How does Shakespeare show us what Brutus fears?

In 1970, many Canadians considered Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau the "Julius Caesar" of his time. Some thought he was an overly powerful leader with an ego to match. His handling of the October Crisis was seen by some as an example of how that power and ego could cause harm.

Open the following link to Prime Minister Trudeau's "Notes for a National Broadcast" written during the crisis. Are his statements reasonable and justified?

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/primeministers/h4-4065-e.html>

Now open the next link at the CBC archives for a video recording of an "off the cuff" interview taped on the street outside the House of Commons. Here Trudeau and the interviewer provide us with an infamous exchange:

Trudeau: There's a lot of bleeding hearts around who just don't like to see people with helmets and guns. All I can say is "Go on and bleed," but it's more important to keep law and order in this society than be worried about weak kneed people who don't like the looks of a soldier --

Reporter: At any cost? How far would you go with that? How far would you extend that?

Trudeau: Just watch me.

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/civil-unrest/the-october-crisis-civil-liberties-suspended/just-watch-me.html>

(Note that the site will make you watch two 15 second advertisements at each viewing.)

What's on display here? Do you see a logical, supremely confident Prime Minister or an over developed ego?

William Shakespeare's **Julius Caesar** Useful Links

The Web English Teacher will link you to a long and useful list of resources. This list is particularly helpful if you would like to do further study on the funeral speeches.

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/juliuscaesar.html>

Find the Cummings study guide for the play here:

<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/xJuliusCae.html>

Find historical information on Julius Caesar here:

<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/caesar.html>

Here's another paraphrased version of the play. Compare it with the Sparknotes No Fear Shakespeare interpretation.

<http://klivingston.tripod.com/caesar/>

Here's the Literature Network's study guide:

http://www.online-literature.com/shakespeare/julius_caesar/

Here again are the links to the Sparknotes study guide and the No Fear Shakespeare version of the play:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/>

<http://nfs.sparknotes.com/juliuscaesar/>