



SHAKESPEARE LIVE!
2014
PRESENTS
JULIUS
CAESAR

By William Shakespeare

The
SHAKESPEARE
Theatre of
New Jersey



Student-Teacher
Study Guide

compiled and arranged by
the Education Department of
The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

In This Guide:

Classroom Activities for Teachers and Students	p2
Shakespeare: Helpful Tips For Exploring & Seeing His Works	p3
About the Playwright.....	p4
Shakespeare’s London	p5
Shakespeare’s Verse	p6
“Are you SURE this is English?”	p7
<i>Julius Caesar</i> : An Introduction	p8
<i>Julius Caesar</i> : A Brief Synopsis.....	p9
Sources and History of the Play.....	p10
Commentary and Criticism	p11
Who’s Who in <i>Julius Caesar</i>	p12
Shakespeare’s Common Tongue	p13
Terms and Phrases Found in <i>Julius Caesar</i>	p13
What Did He Say/Who Said That - Quizzes.....	p14
Test Your Understanding.....	p15
Topics for Discussion.....	p16
Follow-Up Activities.....	p16
Sources for this Study Guide	p17
Answers to Quizzes.....	p17
Meeting the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards	p18
About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey	back cover

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Shakespeare LIVE! is part of Shakespeare for a New Generation, a national program of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest.

Funding for Shakespeare LIVE! is provided, in part, by Investors Savings Bank, The Turrell Fund, the Ambrose and Ida Frederickson Foundation, Provident Bank Foundation, and The John & Margaret Post Foundation.

FACING PAGE: The Ghost of Caesar and members of the 2007 touring production of JULIUS CAESAR.
PHOTO by Andrew Murad ©2007.



ESAR

VIAQUE

ICTOR IA

EX SUA

A

A

M

IM

VV

CLASSROOM •

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

What we hear most from educators is that there is a great deal of anxiety when it comes to Shakespeare; seeing it, reading it and especially teaching it. One of the principal goals of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's education programs is to demystify Shakespeare, take him "off the shelf" and re-energize his work for students and teachers alike. Toward these goals, this Study Guide provides educators with tools to both allay their own concerns and to expand the theatre-going experience for their students beyond the field trip to The Shakespeare Theatre.

The information included in this guide will help you expand your students' understanding of Shakespeare in performance, as well as help you meet many of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. We encourage you to impart as much of the information included in this Study Guide to your students as is possible. The following are some **suggestions from teachers** on how you can utilize elements of the guide given limited classroom time.

- Many teachers have found that distributing or reading the Short Synopsis and Who's Who pages has greatly increased students' understanding and enjoyment of the production. It provides the students with a general understanding of what they will be seeing and what they can expect. Some teachers have simply taken the last five minutes of a class period to do this with very positive results.
- When more class time is available prior to your visit, we recommend incorporating the background information on William Shakespeare and the play itself. One teacher divided her class into groups and assigned each group research topics based on the divisions found in the study guide. Using a copy of the corresponding study guide page as a launch pad, the students had one week to research the topics. The students then presented their information to the class in three- to five-minute oral reports. Including the questions that evolved from the presentations, the entire project took only one class period. I am told that the reading of Old English and Middle English texts was "quite entertaining and very informative."
- Using the questions found in the "TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION," many teachers will opt to take a class period after the trip to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey to discuss the play with their students. The questions help keep the comments focused on the production, while incorporating various thematic and social issues that are found in the play.
- One school spent two days working through performance-based activities (a few of which are suggested in the "FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES" section) with a particularly "difficult and rowdy" class. They were astounded with the results. Their students took the opportunity to "ham it up," and discovered a great joy and understanding from performing Shakespeare.

"What's My Line?" Promoting Active Listening

Teacher-tested, student-approved! Try this exercise with your students:

Before attending the production, give each student one line from the play to listen for. Discuss the meaning of the line and encourage their input in deciphering what Shakespeare meant by the line. How would the student perform the line? Why is the line important to the play? Does it advance the plot, or give the audience particular insight into a character or relationship?

Following the production, discuss the line again. Did the actor present the line in the way your student expected? If not, how was it different?

Again, we hope you will incorporate as many portions of this study guide as you are able into your classroom experience. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in the Study Guide, please contact our education department. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite young people (and teachers) about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy Teaching,



Brian B. Crowe,
Director of Education



The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's
Main Stage, The F.M. Kirby Theatre.

ACTIVITIES

Shakespeare: Helpful Tips For Exploring & Seeing His Works

“Just plunge right in

(to Shakespeare). See a play, read it aloud, rent a video, listen to a tape. It’s up to you. When you look at Shakespeare close up, he’s not as intimidating as when he’s seen from afar.”

Norrie Epstein
The Friendly Shakespeare

Tragedy can have humor,
and great comedy always
has elements of the tragic.

18th-century critics complained that Shakespeare’s tragedies weren’t consistently serious enough. According to the classic rules, tragedy should be uniformly somber. Shakespeare’s use of humor in his tragedies prevents us from becoming washed away in a dense fog of emotion. Rather, it forces us out of the “tragic” long enough to appreciate the level to which the play’s passions have taken us.

“Some of the plays have taken on mythic proportions. By myths, I mean we grow up knowing certain things about [Shakespeare’s] characters but we don’t know how we know them.

There are lots of
SHAKESPEAREAN MICROCHIPS
lodged in our brains.”

Charles Marowitz, director

“It was Olivier’s *Henry V* that made me realize that
Shakespeare is about real people
and that his language wasn’t simply beautiful poetry.”

Robert Brustein, director

Don’t be afraid to
**LISTEN,
WATCH
AND REACT;**
laugh, cry, and be moved.
Shakespeare wrote for
a live and active audience.
Both audience and actor
must be involved to create
a truly winning performance.

“My advice to anyone seeing Shakespeare:

Don’t worry so much!

Just make sure your ears are clean and your eyes are sharp. Listen and look and watch. Look at the distance people stand from each other; look at the relationships being developed.

Stay with it.

Don’t negate the move that Shakespeare will make toward your gut, toward your soul—because he will touch you there, if you allow yourself to be touched.”

-David Suchet, actor

“There are some parts of the plays you’ll never understand. But excuse me, I thought that’s what great art was supposed to be about.

**DON’T
FREAK
OUT
OVER
IT!”**

Peter Sellars,
Director

About the Playwright

William Shakespeare, widely recognized as the greatest English dramatist, was born on April 23, 1564. He was the third of eight children born to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden of Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire, England. Shakespeare's father was a prominent local merchant, and Shakespeare's childhood, though little is known about it for certain, appears to have been quite normal. In fact, it seems that the young Shakespeare was allowed considerable leisure time because his writing contains extensive knowledge of hunting and hawking. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer. She was eight years his senior, and the match was considered unconventional.

It is believed that Shakespeare left Stratford-on-Avon and went to London around 1588. By 1592 he was a successful actor and playwright. He wrote approximately 38 plays, two epic poems, and over 150 sonnets. His work was immensely popular, appealing to members of all social spheres including Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. While they were well-liked, Shakespeare's plays were not considered by his educated contemporaries to be exceptional. By 1608, Shakespeare's

involvement with theatre began to dwindle, and he spent more time at his country home in Stratford. He died in 1616.

Most of Shakespeare's plays found their first major publication in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, when two of his fellow actors put the plays together in the *First Folio*. Other early printings of Shakespeare's plays were called *quartos*, a printer's term referring to the format in which the publication was laid out. These quartos and the *First Folio* texts are the sources of all modern printings of Shakespeare's plays.



A MAN OF MANY WORDS

Shakespeare used over **20,000 different words** in his plays and poems. Of these, 8.5% (1,700 words) had never been seen in print before Shakespeare used them.

To give you a sense of just how extraordinary this is, consider that the King James Bible uses only 8,000 different words. Homer is credited with using approximately 9,000 different words in his works. Milton is estimated at using 10,000 different words in his works.

THE SONNETS

You might have thought that Shakespeare wrote the sonnets earlier in his career, as a type of "stepping stone" to his plays. However, Shakespeare actually penned most of his sonnets during the various outbreaks of the plague in London, when the theatres were closed.

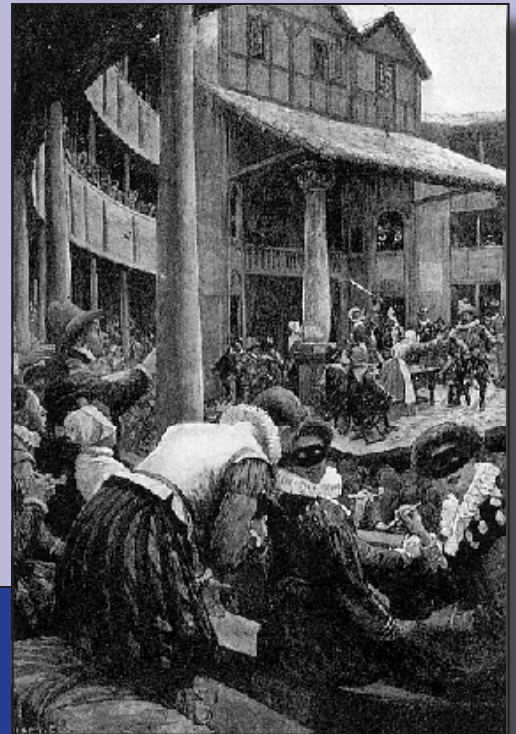
Shakespeare's London

London, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, was a bustling urban center filled with a wide variety of people and cultures. Although most life centered around making a living or going to church, the main source of diversion for Londoners was the theatre. It was a form of entertainment accessible to people of all classes. The rich and the poor, the aristocrats and the beggars all met at the theatre. Though often appeasing the church or the monarchy, theatre at this time did experience a freedom that was unknown in previous generations. Evidence of this can be found in the numerous bawdy and pagan references found in Shakespeare's plays. This relative artistic license and freedom of expression made theatre extremely unpopular among certain members of society, and it was later banned entirely by the Puritans. Not until the reign of Charles II (1660-1685) was the theatre restored to the status it held in Shakespeare's day.

The Globe Theatre, the resident playhouse for Shakespeare's company of actors, was easily accessible to Londoners and an active social center. Actors and performers were also regularly brought to court or to private homes to entertain. Despite their social popularity, actors maintained a relatively low status, sometimes no better than a common beggar or rogue. Most performers were forced to earn a living doing trade work. The aristocracy's desire for entertainment, however, did spur the development of numerous new theatre pieces. Often a nobleman would become a patron to an artist or company of actors, providing for their financial needs and sheltering them

to some degree from official sanctions. In return, the company would adopt the name of the patron. Shakespeare's acting company was originally named "Lord Chamberlain's Men" after their patron, Henry Carey, Lord Chamberlain. Later, under the patronage of King James I, they were known as "The King's Men," an unprecedented honor at the time.

Despite the flourishing of the arts at this time, London was sometimes a desolate place. Outbreaks of the Black Plague (the bubonic plague) frequently erupted, killing thousands of citizens. Theatres, shops, and the government were all shut down during these times in hopes of preventing the spread of the disease. Elizabethans were unaware that the disease was being spread by the flea and rat populations, which well outnumbered the human population of London at that time.



HEARING A PLAY

The Elizabethans were an audience of listeners. They would say, "I'm going to hear a play," not "I'm going to see a play." The Elizabethan audience would pick up on words and their various meanings that we wouldn't.

Marjorie Garber

Speaking in rhyme is not natural to us, but it was to the Elizabethans, so we have to understand what language meant to them, and what language does not mean to us today. If I were an Elizabethan and I wanted to impress you as a lover, I wouldn't send you flowers. I would come and woo you at your feet and recite to you a sonnet I had written just for you— no matter how bad it was. Elizabethan England was a world where people sang, talked and breathed language.

Shakespeare's Verse

Shakespeare's plays are written predominantly in "blank verse," a poetic form preferred by English dramatists in the 16th and early 17th centuries. It is a very flexible medium, which, like the human speech pattern, is capable of a wide range of tones and inflections. The lines, which are usually unrhymed, are divided into five "feet," each of which is a two-syllable unit known as an "iamb." Each iamb is made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Blank verse is technically defined as unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Here is a selection of blank verse from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the stressed syllables in bold type:

Theseus: To **you**, your **father should** be as a **god**;
One **that compos'd** your **beauties, yea**, and **one**
To **whom** you **are** but as a **form** in **wax**
By **him** **imprinted**, and within his **pow'r**
To **leave** the **figure, or** **disfigure** it.
Demetrius is a **worthy gentleman**.

Hermia: So **is** **Lysander**.

Theseus: **In** **himself** he **is**;
But in this **kind**, **wanting** your **father's** **voice**,
The **other** **must** be **held** the **worthier**.

In this short selection, you can see a variety of speech tones indicated by the verse. The regularity of the rhythmic pattern and the use of full lines to complete his thoughts give Theseus a sense of calm and authority. Hermia's brief response, which breaks the iambic pattern, is only a fraction of a line, suggesting that she is impassioned and saying only a portion of what she is thinking. Theseus, however, completes her line and restores the iambic pattern, indicating his authority and the fact that he is, at this point in the play, literally overbearing her will.

Notice that while the blank verse pattern is generally iambic, even in

this short passage there are instances where the pattern of stress is broken. The play would quickly become monotonous if the characters truly spoke in nothing but perfect iambic pentameter—fortunately for audiences, Shakespeare's rhythms of-ten become jagged and jarring to reflect the tension and conflict among his characters. Trying to determine where the rhythm of a line is regular or irregular provides important clues for the actor trying to understand what the character is thinking or feeling. As in real life, choosing to change the stress-bearing syllable may radically alter the meaning of what is being said.

Other clues are provided by word order and punctuation. There were few established rules for either in Shakespeare's time, so he was free to experiment with unusual syntax. As in our daily speech, the sentence structure (as indicated by both word order and punctuation) helps the reader or listener understand both the literal meaning of the sentence and the emphasis. A comma may indicate a new portion of the same idea, while a dash breaks into the sentence to insert a new idea, and a period suggests the completion of one idea and the start of another. Editors of Shakespeare over the years have quarreled bitterly about what punctuation the Bard "meant" to use or "should" have used. As an actor or reader of Shakespeare, it is up to you to decide if a comma, dash, or period makes the meaning of the line most clear.

THE HEART OF THE POETRY

The alternating unstressed-stressed pattern of blank verse has often been compared to the rhythm of the human heartbeat. When a character in Shakespeare is agitated, confused or upset, the rhythm of their verse often alters, much in the same way a heartbeat alters under similar conditions.

BOY, OH BOY

In Shakespeare's England, it was against the law for women to perform on the public stage. For this reason, the female roles in plays were always performed by males, usually teenage boys who were of slighter build than the other actors, had higher voices and no facial hair.

Shakespeare jokes about this in *Midsummer*, when Flute tries to be excused from playing Thisbe on the grounds that his beard has begun to come in. The text also leads us to believe that a short boy in the company would have played Hermia, while a taller young man took the role of Helena.

Are You SURE This Is English?

Contrary to popular belief, Shakespeare and his contemporaries did not write in Old English, or even Middle English. **PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE 16TH AND EARLY 17TH CENTURIES WROTE IN MODERN ENGLISH.** Shakespeare spoke (and wrote in) the same language which we speak today. It is possible to be thrown a bit by grammatical “carry-overs” from earlier English [“thee” and “thou” instead of “you”] and the poetic liberties that Shakespeare took, but there is no doubt that the words and syntax used in his plays can be understood today without any “translation.” To help clarify this point, here are some examples of Old, Middle and Modern English.

WHAT DID SHAKESPEARE SOUND LIKE?

While we may associate Shakespeare with the “refined” British accent of an Ian McKellen or Judi Dench, linguistic scholars suggest that the closest approximation to the London accent of Shakespeare’s day is the accent heard nowadays in the Appalachian region of the United States.

Old English (500 - 1150 CE)

When Julius Caesar invaded Britain in BCE 55-4, the Celtic (pronounced KEL-tic) tribes lived in the British Isles. Their languages survive today in the forms of Gaelic (Scotland and Ireland), Welsh (Wales) and Manx (Isle of Man). The Romans brought Latin to Britain. However, early English developed primarily from the language of tribes which invaded and settled England from what is now Germany. This language, known as Old English, was also influenced by the Latin spoken by Catholic missionaries from Rome as well as the Scandinavian dialects of Viking raiders and settlers.

selection from *Beowulf*

author unknown, ca 800 CE

Oft Scyld Scëfing sceaðena prëstum,
 monegum mægðum meodo-setla oftëah,
 egsode eorlas. Syððan ærert wearð
 fëasceaft funden, hë þæs frofre gebåd,
 wëox under wolcnum, weorð-myndum þàh,
 oð-þæt him aeghwylc ymb-sittendra
 ofer hron-råde hýran scolde,
 gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning!

IN MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*Often Scyld the Scefing from squadroned foes,
 from many a tribe, the mead-bench tore,
 awing the earls. Since first he lay
 friendless, a foundling, fate repaid him:
 for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve,
 till before him the folk, both far and near,
 who lived by the whale-path, heard his mandate,
 gave him gift: a good king he!*

Middle English (1150 - 1450 CE)

The conquest of England by the Norman army in 1066 brought great changes to English life and the English language. The Old French spoken by the Normans became for many years the language of the Royal Court and of English literature. Over time, the spoken English still used by the lower classes borrowed about 10,000 words from French, as well as certain grammatical structures. By the time English reappeared as a written, literary language in the 14th century, it only distantly resembled Old English. This German-French hybrid language is known as Middle English.

selection from *The Canterbury Tales*

by Geoffrey Chaucer, ca 1390 CE

But natheless / while I haue tyme and space
 Er that I ferther / in this tale pace
 Me thynketh it acordant to resoun
 To telle yow / al the condiciun
 Of eeche of hem / so as it seemed to me
 And whiche they weere / and of what degree
 And eek in what array / that they were inne
 And at a knyght thanne wol I first bigynne.

IN MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

*But nonetheless, while I have time and space
 Before I continue in this story
 I think it appropriate to speak of,
 To tell you, the condition
 Of each of them, as it seemed to me.
 And who was who, and of what degree,
 And in what fashion each was dressed.
 And with a knight then I will begin.*

Modern English (1450 - present day)

With the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, the English language began to develop and mutate at an unprecedented rate. Books, previously a precious and expensive commodity, were now widely available to anyone with basic literacy. Works in Latin, Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese were being translated by the hundreds, and the translators found it necessary to borrow and invent thousands of new words. English trade and exploration fueled even more cultural and linguistic exchange. The early Modern English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries has been referred to as “English in its adolescence”: daring, experimental, innovative and irreverent.

selection from *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, ca 1595 CE

Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not how to choose a man: Romeo! No, not he; though his face be better than any man’s, yet his leg excels all men’s; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare...

Julius Caesar: An Introduction

Unlike many Shakespeare plays, there is substantial evidence about exactly when *Julius Caesar* was first performed and how it was received. In June of 1599, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the theatre company of which Shakespeare was a founding member, completed construction on its new home, the Globe Theatre. A Swiss doctor traveling in London, Thomas Platter, noted in his diary that "on the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o'clock, I went with my party across the water; in the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasingly performed." The fact that Platter particularly remembers the straw thatching, which would have still been fresh and bright on the newly-built Globe, confirms his attendance at the original *Julius Caesar*.

Over the next two years, allusions to Shakespeare's Caesar and even direct quotations abounded in the work of other writers. Since the play had not been published (and would not see print until the First Folio of 1623), this is a clear indication of its enormous popularity at the Globe. Roman history and literature was in the standard curriculum for even the most minimal Elizabethan education, and practically every theatregoer would have known the general outline of Caesar's life and death.

For the next 400 years, as other Shakespeare plays rose and fell in critical and popular opinion, *Julius Caesar* would remain one of the most-produced and most-studied Shakespeare plays. At one time, more American students were required to read *Julius Caesar* than any other Shakespeare play. The reasons why this is no longer so are several. In the Sourcebooks Shakespeare edition of the play, Robert Ormsby speculates that "grandiloquent public oratory" is no longer interesting in an age of informal speech and "sound bites;" that teachers of the 1970s believed that other plays, like *Romeo and Juliet*, were more appealing and relevant to teenagers; and that *Julius Caesar's* rootedness in classical history and culture makes it difficult to contemporize for audiences who have no relationship to Roman antiquity.

However, although Shakespeare adheres to the historical record with unusual scrupulousness in *Julius Caesar*, the play is anything but a dry and stodgy docu-drama about the idealized world of ancient Rome. For a historical story, the action of the play is intensely personal, emotional, and often shockingly violent. As David Darniell notes in his introduction to the Arden edition, it is both "Shakespeare's first great tragedy" and an entirely "new kind of political play," the first political thriller, in a sense.

One of the puzzles that even very young students immediately grasp about *Julius Caesar* has to do with the title: why is it called "*Julius Caesar*" when it's really about Brutus (or Cassius, or Antony)? Less than halfway into the play, its title character is dead and gone. It is this puzzle that reveals the play's main concern, which is not dutifully retelling the story of a Roman hero (or a Roman tyrant).

THE IDES OF MARCH

The soothsayer's warning to Julius Caesar, "Beware the Ides of March," has forever imbued that date with a sense of foreboding. But at the time the expression "Ides of March" did not necessarily evoke a sinister event—it was simply the standard way of saying "March 15."

The Roman calendar organized its months around three days, each of which served as a reference point for counting the other days:
Kalends (1st day of the month)
Nones (the 7th day in March, May, July, and October; the 5th in the other months)
Ides (the 15th day in March, May, July, and October; the 13th in the other months)

The remaining, unnamed days of the month were identified by counting backwards or forwards from the Kalends, Nones, or the Ides. For example, March 3 would be V Nones—5 days before the Nones.

Used in the Julian calendar (established by Julius Caesar in 45 BC) the confusing system of Kalends, Nones, and Ides continued to be used to varying degrees throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.

The defining moment of the play is not the murder itself, but the moments directly after the murder, when the conspirators and Antony battle for the hearts and minds of the Roman public. As a mortal man, Caesar is vulnerable, even pitiable at times; re-interpreted as a symbol and a legend, he shakes the entire world.

Julius Caesar is, in fact, a play about the most contemporary of phenomena in the age of the sound bite—it is a play about propaganda, about "spin." Practically every major character is acutely aware of his or her public persona, and the difference between the public role and the private person. Each attempts, with limited success, to control the way he or she is perceived in public, and the way his or her friends and enemies are perceived. At the same time, private emotions like love, jealousy, and pride subtly and uncontrollably alter the way each interprets his or her fellows. As

Douglas Trevor notes in the Pelican edition, everyone in the play engages in "misreading, misrecognition and miscalculation." It is a tragedy "about people who make mistakes."

From the moment of the actual assassination in 44 BC to the present day, opinion has divided over the "real" Caesar and the "real" Brutus, and their motives. Shakespeare only enhances and calls attention to these ambiguities— as Daniell puts it, "Caesar did, and did not, deserve to die... Brutus is, and is not, the tragic hero." Every time a definitive interpretation is proposed in the play, it is also quickly undercut or shaded with doubt. Early in the play, Cassius interprets a violent storm as a sign that the heavens sanction his plan to kill Caesar, only to be reminded by the elderly senator Cicero that "men must construe things after their fashion." This may seem like a dry theme on which to build a thriller, but Shakespeare graphically illustrates just how dangerous "construing" can be. When a mob tears Cinna the Poet limb from limb on stage, they do so because they have chosen, against all evidence, to misconstrue him as Cinna the conspirator, the object of their rage.

As a tragedy about the uneasy relationship between our private hearts and the roles we play in public, and about our difficulty understanding this relationship in others, *Julius Caesar* is a play about humanity in any era.

Julius Caesar: A Brief Synopsis

Citizens gather to celebrate the triumphant return of Julius Caesar to Rome after his victory over the forces of his former partner turned enemy, Pompey. Passing through the streets, Caesar is stopped by a soothsayer who warns him to beware the Ides of March (March 15). Caesar ignores the man's warning and passes on. Alone on stage, Cassius and Brutus discuss Caesar's rise to power, and fear his potential to become a tyrant. Cassius hints that they must assassinate Caesar. As cheers rise up from another part of town, they believe that Caesar has been crowned by the populace. As Caesar's entourage passes through, they pull aside Casca, who informs them that Caesar was offered the crown three times, but never accepted it. Brutus agrees to continue their discussion later.

Later, During a violent thunderstorm, Cassius encounters Casca and convinces him to take part in a coup against Caesar. He also informs Casca that other noble-minded senators have already been enlisted in this cause. With the addition of the widely-respected Brutus, their faction will be complete.

Having been awake all night contemplating the course he must take, Brutus concludes that Caesar must die in order to prevent his ambition from leading Caesar to tyranny. Cassius and the other conspirators arrive at Brutus' home, and plans are laid for the assassination of Caesar, which will take place the next day – on the Ides of March. Despite Cassius' insistence that Antony be killed along with Caesar, Brutus convinces the group to leave Antony untouched. Decius, one of the conspirators well-loved by Caesar, will make sure Caesar is at the Senate the next day, where the assassination is to take place, out of public view. After the conspirators leave, Portia, Brutus' wife, enters. She expresses her great concern for her husband, who has appeared mysteriously troubled lately. After much pleading, Brutus agrees to tell her about the conspiracy against Caesar.

The next morning, in Caesar's garden, Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, pleads with her husband to stay home, fearing some great harm will come to him based on the nightmares she has had. Though at first he proudly refuses to stay at home, Calpurnia eventually convinces him. Decius Brutus enters and tells Caesar that the Senate plans to crown him. If Caesar does not arrive, the Senate may reconsider his fitness to rule. His pride stung, Caesar decides to go to the Senate despite Calpurnia's fears.

Just outside the Senate, the soothsayer once again warns Caesar to beware the Ides of March. Artemidorus, a commoner who has discovered the plot against Caesar, tries to hand Caesar a message of warning, but Caesar declines to read it and Artemidorus is pushed aside by the senators. Under the guise of pleading for the return of a banished colleague, the conspirators gather around Caesar. At the appointed moment, they set on Caesar and stab

him to death. Antony arrives and promises not to act against Brutus and Cassius. Again rejecting the advice of Cassius, Brutus then gives Antony permission to speak to the public at Caesar's funeral. In the street outside the Capitol, Brutus addresses the commoners and explains that Caesar was killed to prevent the rise of another tyrant in Rome. Swayed by his reasons, the crowd cheers Brutus. Antony arrives with Caesar's body and addresses the gathered citizens after Brutus leaves. In a subtle speech, Antony praises Caesar's deeds while at the same time seeming to acknowledge the honor of his assassins. The crowd, moved by Antony's speech, is quickly turned against Brutus and the other conspirators. As the mob rushes through the streets of Rome,

it is discovered that Brutus and Cassius have fled the city. The enraged mob encounters a poet on the streets. When he is initially mistaken for a conspirator, the citizens attack and kill him.

Octavius (Caesar's great-nephew), Antony and Lepidus—who have taken charge of the city as the Second Roman Triumvirate— discuss which senators must be executed in order to restore peace and order to Rome. This done, they

plan to lead their troops against Cassius and Brutus. Meanwhile, in Brutus' camp, Brutus and Cassius quarrel over wrongs each feels the other has done to the other. Eventually they make a strained peace and turn their attention to the ensuing battle against the Triumvirate. Brutus insists that they march to Philippi, where Antony's forces are already camped, to take the fight to the enemy before the Triumvirate has reached its full strength. Though disagreeing at first, Cassius concedes. Later that night, Brutus is visited by Caesar's ghost. The ghost states that he will see Brutus once more at Philippi.

On the day of the battle, Octavius insists on taking the stronger flank position in battle despite Antony's seniority. Cassius and Brutus vow that if they do not win the battle, they will commit suicide before being taken back to Rome as captives. In the battle that ensues, Brutus leads an attack on Octavius' quickly weakening forces. However, Titinius and Cassius see that Brutus has launched his attack too soon and has left them at a disadvantage. Believing that his own capture is imminent, Cassius kills himself. With Cassius' forces in disarray, Brutus is forced to retreat. Realizing that he has been defeated, he orders his servant to assist in his suicide. Antony and Octavius arrive and find Brutus' body. They praise Brutus for his nobility of character, and order that he be buried with honor.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Simple or Subtle?

Julius Caesar is "a great favorite for school use, because it is so well made, so apparently direct, and so relatively simple. The more often I reread and teach it, or attend a performance, however, the subtler and more ambiguous it seems, not in plot but in character."

Harold Bloom

Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human

"And when an actor steps onto a stage to speak Shakespeare, it's not to take the audience back in time but to bring Shakespeare forward."

Sir Ian McKellan, actor

Sources & History of the Play

Around the time that Shakespeare penned *Julius Caesar* (1599), there were numerous plays springing up around London also dealing with the famous Roman leader. Shakespeare's play took as its primary source Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, specifically pulling from the chapters on Julius Caesar, Marcus Brutus and Marc Antony. Other sources that are believed to have influenced Shakespeare's play include a biography of Caesar found in *A Mirror for Magistrates* by John Higgins, *Nosce Teipsum* ("Know Thyself") by John Davies and the various writings of Cicero. It is believed that Shakespeare lifted the famous "Et tu, Brute" line from another play written about the same time. The phrase is not found in any Latin source, but was a well-known "tag-line" in Shakespeare's day. *Julius Caesar* did not appear in print until 1623, when it was included in the *First Folio*. Of all the plays in the *Folio*, *Caesar* is considered the truest to Shakespeare's original text, and was probably printed from Shakespeare's original manuscripts. The play was published on six different occasions between 1684 and 1691; an unheard-of popularity for a non-religious text or almanac.

There is some debate as to the date of the first performance of *Julius Caesar*. The first recorded performance took place on September 21, 1599, as noted in the diary of Thomas Platter. Many historians believe, however, that *Julius Caesar* was the production which opened the new theatre on Bankside, The Globe Theatre, on June 12, 1599. By all accounts, the play was very popular in Shakespeare's day, and was twice performed in court — in 1613 and 1638. It was one of the few Shakespeare plays to remain popular continuously into the late 17th century.

AN AMERICAN PLAY?

"The play was from the beginning of the United States a serious part of North American life for students, politicians, orators and all theatre people: it has been so ever since."

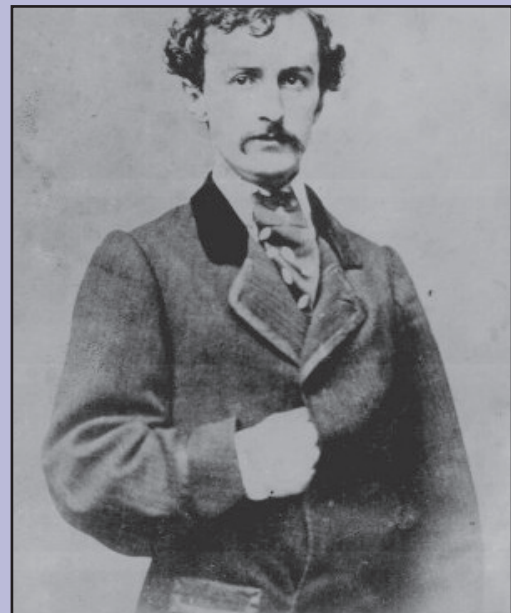
-David Daniell
The Arden Shakespeare:
Julius Caesar

The first American production of *Julius Caesar* appeared in Philadelphia on June 1, 1770. Flyers for the performance advertised it as "the noblest struggles for liberty by that renowned patriot, Marcus Brutus."

The Booths, "one of the most distinguished acting families of the nineteenth century," led lives that "were inextricably entwined with Shakespeare in general and with *Julius Caesar* in particular," both on stage and off. Junius Brutus Booth was named after the historical Brutus who liberated Rome from the tyrant Tarquin. On April 14, 1864, his son John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln, whom he believed to be a tyrant like Caesar. After shooting the president in Ford's Theatre, Booth jumped onto the stage screaming the Latin phrase, "Sic Semper Tyrannis" ("Thus ever to tyrants") before fleeing the scene.

The play was most popular in the first half of the 18th century, with over 150 performances in London. After a rather slow latter half of the century, *Julius Caesar* came back into fashion in 19th century England, and virtually every major English-speaking actor of the time performed at least one of the play's major roles in his career. Possibly the most notable of these productions took place in 1864 when the Booth family (Edwin, Junius Brutus and John Wilkes) performed Brutus, Cassius and Antony. It was the only time they appeared on stage together.

The play had a very active stage presence in the 20th century, with many productions using it as a theatrical response to the rise of totalitarianism in Germany and Russia. For his famous stage production in 1937-38, subtitled "Death of a Dictator", Orson Welles greatly altered Shakespeare's play, and presented Caesar in the guise of Mussolini. The production was a tremendous success, ran for 157 performances and was eventually adapted into a film. A notorious 1968 production of the play in Miami, Florida presented Caesar as Fidel Castro, and audiences cheered at his assassination. The 1993 Barons Court Theatre production in London cast a woman in the role of Julius Caesar, which drew vivid parallels to the Prime Minister at that time, Margaret Thatcher. With its more traditional approach, the 1953 film version, starring Marlon Brando as Marc Antony and Sir John Gielgud as Cassius, is often used by educators when teaching the play. Without a doubt, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* has a notable place in the history of theatre. It has been used as a "mirror of the interests and styles (not only theatrical) of every period."



Photograph of John Wilkes Booth from www.civilwar.net.

Commentary & Criticism

“Shakespeare had to emphasize politics in *Julius Caesar*, for otherwise Brutus’ fate would be meaningless. Brutus himself never sees his mistake in murdering his best friend and the leader of his country. His fate is dramatically satisfactory only in light of the impact of his action on Roman society as a whole, that is, in its political consequences. His error stems from an unconscious desire for a political world in which evil is impossible. Thus his political blindness has a psychological element, reflecting Shakespeare’s progress towards the psychological portraiture of the great tragedies.”

Charles Boyce
Shakespeare A to Z

“It is impossible for even the most judicially minded critic to look without a revulsion of indignant contempt at this travesty of a great man (Julius Caesar) as a silly braggart, whilst the pitiful gang of mischief-makers who destroy him are lauded as statesmen and patriots. There is no single sentence uttered by Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar that is, I will not say worthy of him, but even worthy of an average Tammany boss.”

George Bernard Shaw

“Of this tragedy many particular passages deserve regard, and the contention and reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius is universally celebrated; but I have never been strongly agitated in perusing it, and think it somewhat cold and unaffecting, comparing with some other of Shakespeare’s plays; his adherence to the real story, and to Roman manners, seems to have impeded the natural vigor of his genius.”

Samuel Johnson

“In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare transformed a confused welter of historical fact and legend into taut, balanced, and supremely ambivalent drama.”

Robert S. Miola
Julius Caesar and the Tyrannicide Debate

“The world of *Julius Caesar* is one where all those who rule are weak or ill (epilepsy, fever, deafness, shortsightedness, ague, fainting, illnesses real and pretended.)”

David Daniell
Julius Caesar: The Arden Shakespeare

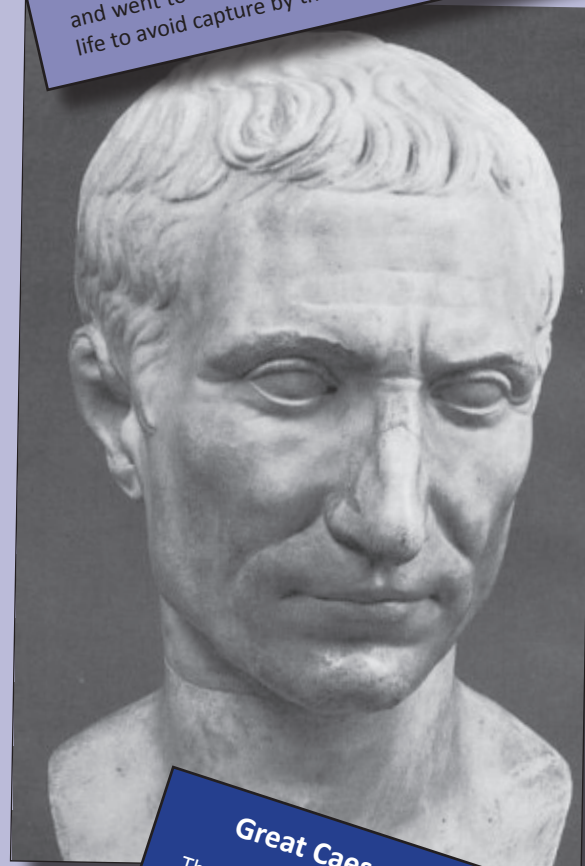
“*Julius Caesar*’s stage history in this (the twentieth) century is the tale of an heroic play adrift in an anti-heroic age.”

John Ripley

Watch out for the little guy

Following the death of Julius Caesar, Marc Antony joined with Julius’ great-nephew (Octavius Caesar) and Lepidus to create a new triumvirate in Rome. Under this leadership, the three men ruled Rome together, equally dividing the authority and responsibility — in theory, anyway.

Though Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar* only alludes to the difficulties ahead, he would go on to explore the tension within this trio in great detail in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The rule of the triumvirate was short-lived. It would not be long before Octavius had Lepidus stripped of power and went to war against Marc Antony, who took his own life to avoid capture by the young tyrant.



Great Caesar’s Ghost

The Elizabethan idea of a ghost was somewhat different than how we might think of a ghost today. They were not believed to be wispy air-like entities, but as having the appearance and solidity of the living. Ghosts also always came with a mission; to warn the living, to revenge or expose a murder, or to punish someone.

Who's Who in *Julius Caesar*:

Marcus Brutus — A devoted Senator and one of Caesar's most trusted friends. Conspires with Cassius and the others to murder Caesar for the good of the Republic.

Caius Cassius — Roman Senator who convinces Marcus Brutus and a number of other Senators to murder Caesar on the Senate floor.

Decius Brutus — Conspires with Cassius and other Senators to murder Caesar on the Senate. Convinces Caesar to come to the Capitol despite Calpurnia's warnings.

Casca, Trebonius, Metellus Cimber and Cinna — Other members of the Roman Senate who conspire with Brutus and Cassius against Julius Caesar.

Julius Caesar — A successful and proud Roman General poised to become the first Emperor of the Roman Republic.

Mark Anthony — Caesar's most loyal friend and ally. His famous speech at Caesar's funeral sets the mob of Rome against Brutus and the other Conspirators. Forms the Triumvirate with Octavius and Lepidus.

Octavius Caesar — Caesar's great-nephew and adopted son, he teams with Mark Anthony and Lepidus to form the Triumvirate which rules Rome following Caesar's death. Historically, Octavius Caesar would become the First Emperor of Rome.

Lepidus — The third (and weakest) member of the Triumvirate.

Artemidorus — A commoner who tries to warn Caesar of the conspiracy with a letter on the Capitol steps, but Caesar ignores him.

Cinna the Poet — A Roman poet with the unfortunate luck of having the same name as one of the conspirators. He is literally torn apart by the Roman mob when they turn on Brutus, Cassius and the rest of Caesar's assassins.

Lucius — Brutus's most loyal servant, he stays by his master's side right up until the end.

Soothsayer — A mysterious Roman fortune-teller who warns Caesar three times to "Beware the Ides of March".

Calpurnia — Caesar's wife; she warns Caesar not to go to the Capitol after interpreting a dream full of bad omens.

Portia — Brutus's wife; she attempts to convince Brutus to unburden himself the night before the assassination.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

BRUTUS comes from a Latin word meaning "stupid" (related to the English word "brute"). The name was a given family name, and despite its literal meaning (or rather, BECAUSE of its meaning), it was a much respected name. The name originated with Junius Brutus, who was given his surname because he pretended to be a fool in order to deceive the tyrant Tarquin. His ruse worked, and he was able to overthrow the tyrant and free Rome, giving birth to the Republic.

LUCIUS is the only character in this play completely created by Shakespeare. His name is associated with light, and, in most every scene in which he appears, he is bringing light into the darkened world of Brutus.

"PEACE, COUNT THE CLOCK."

As the conspirators plan the assassination of Caesar, a clock in town strikes the hour, startling them. Shakespeare seems to have been unaware (or simply unconcerned with the fact) that ancient Rome did not have clocks which chimed the hour. Along with Shakespeare's other historic inaccuracies, this anachronistic device was much criticized in the 18th and 19th centuries.

THE FEAST OF LUPERCAL

Caesar's triumphant return at the beginning of the play occurs in conjunction with the Feast of Lupercal, celebrated on February 15, a time of purification and renewal for the Romans. Traditionally a footrace was run through the streets, which were lined with spectators. It was believed that if a runner touched the stomach of a female onlooker as he ran, the woman would become more fertile and bear more children.

The festivities commemorated the founding of Rome. According to legend, the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were abandoned as infants, and nursed by a wild wolf. The she-wolf and the cave in which she suckled the boys were known as Lupercal.

Shakespeare's Common Tongue

alack — expression of dismay or shock
 anon — soon, right away
 aught — nothing
 avaunt — go away
 ere — before
 hath — has
 hence — away (from here)
 henceforth — from now on
 hither — here
 lest — or else
 naught — nothing
 oft — often
 perchance — by chance, perhaps, maybe
 sirrah — [pronounced SEER-uh] “hey, you” as to someone of lower status
 thee — you
 thence — away, over there
 thine — yours
 thither — there
 thou — you
 thy — your
 whence — where
 wherefore — why [literally: “where is the ‘for’ or ‘reason?’ ”]
 whither — where

... and the “thys” have it

Often Shakespeare will alternate his usage of “thou” for “you”, or “thy” for “your”, or “thine” for “yours”. Though the words are synonymous, there is a great deal of information that can be obtained by looking closely at these choices.

The different uses of these pronouns have to do with status, relationship, degrees of intimacy and shifting attitudes. “You” is used in formal situations and conveys respect from the speaker. It is used when addressing royalty and parents. “Thou,” used in more informal settings, also can suggest contempt or aggression from the speaker. The use of “thou” places the speaker above the status of the person to whom s/he is speaking. Children are addressed using “thou,” “thee” or “thy.” In a conversation between two people of equal status, the use of “you” suggests that everything is going along smoothly, whereas “thou” would suggest that there is some kind of upset or unrest in the relationship.

Terms & Phrases found in *Julius Caesar*

ACT I

basest mettle — lowest spirits
 servile — in the manner of a slave or servant
 wont — used to, accepted as the norm
 “I had as lief” — “I would as soon”
 “troubled Tiber” — the choppy waters of the Tiber River in Rome
 accoutred — equipped or attired
 buffet — to fight or hit
 Colossus — enormous (like the giant statue called the Colossus)
 “I am nothing jealous” — “I am not mistrustful”
 fain — gladly
 rabblement — the mob; the lowest members of society
 rived — split
 unbraced — unbuttoned; in this case, exposed to the elements
 hinds — hounds, dogs
 bondman — a slave
 gait — the manner of one’s walk
 praetor — a political title given to one who settled disputes; a judge

ACT II

adder — a poisonous snake
 Tarquin — the tyrannical king whom Brutus’ ancestor overthrew
 phantasma — phantom or illusion
 visage — appearance, face
 affability — being easy to speak to, friendliness
 ingrafted — implanted, grafted together
 wafture — gesture, a wave of the hand
 physical — medicinal
 humours — vapors
 augurer — one who interprets omens

“plucking the entrails of an offering forth” — removing the internal organs of a sacrificed animal (to predict the future)
 portents — signs or warnings of the future
 tinctures — sacred relics stained with the blood of martyrs
 cognizance — device worn by a lord’s servant to indicate his allegiance

ACT III

“spaniel-fawning” — begging like a dog
 enfranchisement — to be set free
 Olympus — the mountain of the gods in classical mythology
 “infants quartered” — small children torn limb from limb
 Ate — (AH — tay) the Greek goddess of obsession and strife
 havoc — slaughter and chaos
 “carrion men” — corpses (being fed on by animals)
 orator — one who makes speeches
 brands — wood and flax strips used to light a fire, e.g. a funeral bier
 rid — fled, removed

ACT IV

proscription — outlawed, condemned
 divers — diverse, various
 wrangle — quarrel
 “itching palm” — greedy

ACT V

sufficeth — is sufficient
 hilts — handle of the sword
 smatch- relish, pleasure

What Did He Say?

This is an opportunity to test your comprehension of Shakespeare's language. Below you will find passages from *Julius Caesar*. Answer the questions for each passage as specifically as possible.

CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you or other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born as free as Caesar; so were you:
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.

1. What virtue does Cassius see in Brutus? What does he mean by "outward favour?"
2. What does "lief" mean?
3. What is the "thing" he does not want to "live to be in awe of?"
4. What kind of image of Caesar does Cassius paint with this speech?
5. What does Cassius hope to achieve with this speech?

BRUTUS

It must be by his death: and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.

1. To whom is Brutus speaking? Who must die?
2. What does he mean by "the general?"
3. Brutus makes alludes to poisonous snakes, which come out of hiding on sunny days. What is the significance of this? In his metaphor, what is the "bright day?" What is the "adder?"
4. What is the "sting" he is talking about?
5. By the last line, is Brutus certain that the man he intends to kill would otherwise do him harm? Support your answer.

Who Said That?

Match the spoken line to the character who speaks it. One character has two quotes. Three characters have none of the quotes listed below.

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| A. | "Beware the Ides of March." | JULIUS CAESAR |
| B. | "Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius?" | THE GHOST OF CAESAR |
| C. | "Why man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus." | BRUTUS |
| D. | "I am thy evil spirit, Brutus." | CASSIUS |
| E. | "I draw a sword against conspirators;
When think you that the sword goes up again?
Never, till Caesar's three and thirty wounds
Be well avenged." | MARK ANTONY |
| F. | "When I tell him he hates flatterers,
He says he does, being then most flattered." | CASCA |
| G. | "You have some sick offence within your mind
Which by the right and virtue of my place
I ought to know of." | DECIUS BRUTUS |
| H. | "When beggars die, there are no comets seen;
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." | OCTAVIUS CAESAR |
| I. | "Et tu, Brute?" | CALPURNIA |
| J. | "How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown?" | PORTIA |
| K. | "Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war:" | SOOTHSAYER |
| | | CINNA THE CONSPIRATOR |
| | | CINNA THE POET |

Test Your Understanding

- Shakespeare's plays are most often written in:
 - rhyming couplets
 - Old English
 - blank verse
 - prose
- Shakespeare wrote in what language?
 - Old English
 - early modern English
 - Middle English
 - Latin
- The soothsayer warns Caesar to beware:
 - the Vernal Equinox
 - the Ides of March
 - the Ides of May
 - Brutus and Cassius
- What image or metaphor does Brutus use to rationalize his decision to kill Caesar?
 - a tree that must be cut down before it gets too tall
 - a fire that must be put out before it spreads
 - a snake's egg that must be crushed before it hatches
 - a lion cub that must be killed before it grows up
- Which of the following men does NOT participate in the conspiracy against Caesar in this play?
 - Cicero
 - Cinna
 - Casca
 - Decius Brutus
- Who forms the Second Triumvirate of Rome?
 - Antony, Brutus, and Cassius
 - Brutus, Cassius, and Casca
 - There is no Second Triumvirate
 - Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus
- Who attempts to warn Caesar about the conspirators' plot on the day he is murdered?
 - Portia
 - Brutus
 - Lucius
 - Artimedorus
- In Shakespeare's play, what are Caesar's dying words?
 - "I will be revenged on you all."
 - "Marcus Antonius shall triumph."
 - "Et tu, Brute? Then fall Caesar."
 - "Et tu, Brute? I shall revenge."
- Whose speech turns the citizens of Rome against the conspirators?
 - Mark Antony
 - Brutus
 - Calpurnia
 - Octavius Caesar
- Portia reportedly kills herself by:
 - swallowing fire
 - stabbing herself
 - drinking poison
 - drowning herself in the Tiber
- Where does the Ghost of Caesar tell Brutus they will meet again?
 - Carthage
 - Phillipi
 - the afterlife
 - the Capitol
- Where does the final battle between the conspirators and the Triumvirate take place?
 - Phillipi
 - Rome
 - Carthage
 - Egypt
- Which of the following characters is alive at the end of the play?
 - Brutus
 - Cassius
 - Portia
 - Octavius
- At the end of the play, who is called "the noblest Roman of them all"?
 - Julius Caesar
 - Marc Antony
 - Octavius Caesar
 - Marcus Brutus
- The ruler(s) of Rome at the end of the play is/are:
 - Antony and Octavius
 - Marc Antony alone
 - Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus
 - Octavius Caesar alone

Additional Topics for Discussion

About the Play

1. Who is the hero of *Julius Caesar*? In the end, who “wins” and who “loses”? Why is the play called *Julius Caesar* and not *Marcus Brutus*?
2. Compare and contrast Julius Caesar and Marcus Brutus. In the course of the play, Caesar is called a “tyrant,” and Brutus is called “the noblest Roman of them all.” What evidence is there for these judgments? Does the reverse ever seem to be true?
3. In some ways, *Julius Caesar* seems to be a play about public relations and “spin.” How does the public’s perception of events in the play sometimes outweigh the events themselves? How do various characters try to manipulate these perceptions?
4. While the historical Caesar is often seen as a powerful ruler, Shakespeare calls attention to a number of his ailments and handicaps. Identify these, and discuss why Shakespeare might have presented Caesar in this manner.
5. Omens, often used in Shakespeare’s plays, appear many times in *Julius Caesar*. Identify as many examples as you can of events in the play which are (or are perceived to be) omens. What does Shakespeare’s use of these omens suggest? What do the different reactions to the omens tell you about each of the characters? Look in particular at the interpretations of the storm by Casca, Cicero and Cassius. Why does Shakespeare spend so much time on their conflicting interpretations of this event?
6. Based on the evidence in the play, who would be the best leader for Rome? Caesar? Brutus? Cassius? Antony? Octavius? Discuss the positive and negative leadership qualities of each of these characters.

About this Production

1. Brutus states that the killing of Caesar should be a solemn and noble sacrifice, not a brutal murder. Describe the assassination of Caesar in this production. Is it ritualistic, or merely savage? Is it both at once? How does the way violence is portrayed in this production affect your perception of the characters and of the world of ancient Rome?
2. What elements of Roman art and architecture are suggested by the scenery for this touring production? What kind of place is “Rome” for this play and this director? Is the scenery evocative of any other times or places?
3. Although the world of the production is inspired by ancient Rome, the costumes are very contemporary. Why do you think this choice was made? Which elements of the production, or pieces of costumes, feel more “ancient” and which feel more contemporary or timeless?

Teachers:

Do you have activities or exercises to suggest for this play? We are always looking for new ideas to inspire students (and teachers). Send your suggestions to info@ShakespeareNJ.org, and we will share them with other teachers, or maybe even include them in future study guides.

Follow-up Activities

CRITIC’S CORNER

Write a review of this production of *Julius Caesar*. Be sure to include specific information and your own reactions to both the acting and the design elements (like set, costumes and sound). Explain what you liked about the production, and what you disliked, and support your opinions. Then submit your review to The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey’s Education Department, or see if it can be published in your school newspaper.

“ALERT THE MEDIA!”

Julius Caesar is a play about people who live in the public eye and are deeply concerned about the public’s opinion. Select a series of events from the play, and “cover” them in the style of a newspaper or television journalist. For example, create a news bulletin on the death of Caesar, an analysis of Antony’s funeral oration, interviews with Cassius and Brutus.

“I LEARN BY THIS LETTER...”

Write a letter from the point of view of one of the characters, discussing an event or situation in the play. For example, a letter from Portia to a friend about the changes in Brutus, or a letter from Calpurnia to a friend about her recurring nightmares.

CASTING CALL

Imagine that you are a movie director about to put together a new film version of *Julius Caesar*. Choose the eight main characters (in your opinion) and list five words that describe each character. Using these descriptions decide what actor you would cast in each role. Defend your decision by explaining why that particular actor seems right for the character Shakespeare depicts.

THE FIFTEEN-MINUTE CAESAR:

Divide into five groups, and have each group take one act of the play. Your task is to create a three-minute version of your act, using only Shakespeare’s words. Choose carefully the lines from your act that carry the most important information and advance the story. When each group is done, you will have a 15-minute version of *Julius Caesar* which you can perform for the class. Afterwards, discuss both the process of adaptation and how your “abridgement” compared to the full-length performance.

PUBLIC RELATIONS NIGHTMARE:

Imagine that the conspirators have asked you to create a public relations campaign designed to persuade the citizens of Rome that Republicanism, not dictatorship or monarchy, is the best form of government for Rome. Your campaign may include: a symbol or icon (thinking about existing political symbols in the real world), a propaganda broadcast (audio or video), a song or anthem, an Ides of March monument for the Capitol, or any other persuasive ideas you come up with. Present the elements of your campaign to your fellow students.

REACHING ACROSS THE AISLE

While Shakespeare compresses the time frame of the play, Caesar’s death was followed by almost two full years of warfare between the Republican faction and the followers of the Triumvirate. Imagine that you and a partner are senators who have been fighting on opposing sides, and have survived the final battle at Phillipi. How would you achieve reconciliation? Explain to your former enemy what it was that you were fighting for, and why you feel that your decisions were (or were not) justified.

Artwork Credits:

p3: Photo of the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre, the Main Stage venue of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, 1998.

p4: Engraving of William Shakespeare by Droeshout from the First Folio, 1623.

p11: Ancient Roman portrait bust of Julius Caesar.

p17: Photo of William Mezzo as Caesar's Ghost in The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's 2005 Main Stage production of Julius Caesar. (Copyright Gerry Goodstein, 2005).

Stop, in the Name of Love

It is interesting to note that the word "love" (and variants of the word) appear 56 times in Julius Caesar. This might seem to be a very high number of occurrences in a play focusing on jealousy, murder and political intrigue.

One of the most notable appearances of the L-word is Brutus' "...we will deliver you the cause, / Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him, / Have thus proceeded."

"Blood will have blood, they say..."

One of the innovations of the theatre of Shakespeare's day was the more realistic (and gory) depiction of stage violence. In the earlier Greek theatre, violence was never shown. The audience was informed of a murder or a great battle by a messenger. No one ever saw the events on stage.

In Shakespeare's London, however, theatre companies competed to present plays with "shock and splatter." As with today's horror movies, a thrillingly graphic death scene could help a play sell many more tickets.

Since the washable synthetic "stage blood" of today had not yet been developed, theatres obtained large quantities of pig's blood from slaughterhouses for use on stage. One can only imagine the work involved in laundering the costumes for the original production of *Julius Caesar* between performances.

Who Said That? Answer Key

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| A. Soothsayer | G. Portia |
| B. Brutus | H. Calpurnia |
| C. Cassius | I. Caesar |
| D. Ghost | J. Cassius |
| E. Octavius | K. Marc Antony |
| F. Decius Brutus | |

Test Your Understanding Answer Key

1. c 2. b 3. b 4. c 5. a 6. d
 7. d 8. c 9. a 10. a 11. b 12. a
 13. d 14. d 15. c

Sources for this Study Guide:

THE ANNOTATED SHAKESPEARE, Introductions, Notes, and by A.L. Rowe

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE: JULIUS CAESAR, edited by David Daniell

THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL SHAKESPEARE: JULIUS CAESAR, edited by Timothy Seward

THE OXFORD SHAKESPEARE: JULIUS CAESAR, edited by Arthur Humphreys

THE PELICAN SHAKESPEARE: JULIUS CAESAR, edited by William Montgomery, with an introduction by Douglas Trevor

THE SOURCEBOOKS SHAKESPEARE: JULIUS CAESAR, edited by Robert Ormsby

ASIMOV'S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE by Isaac Asimov

THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO SHAKESPEARE, by Laurie Rozakis

FREEING SHAKESPEARE'S VOICE by Kristin Linklater

THE FRIENDLY SHAKESPEARE by Norrie Epstein

THE MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE by Richard Lederer

SHAKESPEARE A TO Z by Charles Boyce

SHAKESPEARE FOR BEGINNERS by Brandon Toropov

SHAKESPEARE FOR DUMMIES by Doyle, Lischner, and Dench

SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY by Caroline Spurgeon

SHAKESPEARE IN PERFORMANCE, Consultant Editors Keith Parsons and Pamela Mason

SHAKESPEARE: THE INVENTION OF THE HUMAN by Harold Bloom

SHAKESPEARE OUR CONTEMPORARY by Jan Kott

THEATRE: A WAY OF SEEING, Third Edition by Milly S. Barranger

THE ESSENTIAL SHAKESPEARE HANDBOOK, by Leslie Dunton-Downer and Alan Riding



Meeting the Core Curriculum Content Standards

In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted Core Curriculum Content Standards that set out to clearly define what every New Jersey student should know and be able to do at the end of his/her schooling. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is committed to supporting teachers by ensuring that our educational programs are relevant to standards-based teaching and learning.

Viewing a performance at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and participating in the post-performance discussion can serve as a powerful springboard for discussion, writing, and other outlets for higher-order thinking. On this page you will find suggestions for ways to align your study of our production to each standard.

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY STANDARDS

As a theatre dedicated to the classics, we are continually engaged in exploring some of the world's greatest literature, and the relationship between the written text and performance. Our philosophy and practice follow the four underlying assumptions of the Language Arts Literacy CCCS: that "language is an *active process* for constructing meaning," that "language develops in a *social context*," that language ability increases as learners "engage in texts that are *rich in ideas and increasingly complex in language*," and that learners achieve mastery not by practicing isolated skills but by "*using and exploring language* in its many dimensions." In the practice of theatre, we merge all areas of the language arts, as the standards suggest, "in an integrated act of rehearsal, reflection, and learning." Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Read a scene from the play as a class and use context clues to interpret new words and expand vocabulary

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Analyze a portion of the text, isolating specific imagery, meanings, references, and then compare those instances to other passages in the play. (i.e. How does Shakespeare use dream imagery in Macbeth, or weather imagery in A Midsummer Night's Dream.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Compare and contrast the printed text with the staged version you have just seen, as well as any number of staged versions available on-line.

Maintain a reading journal/active blog, that classmates can comment on using specific prompts about the play. (i.e. How would you feel in Hermia's position?, Do you think Brutus is acting in the best interest of Rome?, etc...)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Participate in a post-show discussion

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Write a new ending for the play in blank verse or in modern prose

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS STANDARDS

According to both No Child Left Behind and the New Jersey CCCS, the arts (including theatre) are a core subject and "experience with and knowledge of the arts is a vital part of a complete education." In the area of performing arts, performances, workshops and study guide exercises developed by The Shakespeare Theatre address all five state standards.

Below, you will find just a few of the possibilities for aligning your study of our productions to each of these standards.

STANDARD 1.1: All students will use aesthetic knowledge in the creation of and in response to dance, music, theatre and visual art.

Discuss the use of metaphor in both the text and the design of the production; discuss how the play expresses cultural values of its period and/or of today.

STANDARD 1.2: All students will utilize those skills, media, methods, and technologies appropriate to each art form in the creation, performance, and presentation of dance, music, theatre and visual art.

Perform a monologue or scene from the play; participate in a classroom workshop that develops the physical and technical skills required to create and present theatre.

STANDARD 1.3: All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of dance, music, theatre and visual art.

Participate in a post-show discussion of elements such as physicality and creating motivated action; discuss the relationship between play text and production design.

STANDARD 1.4: All students will develop, apply and reflect upon knowledge of the process of critique.

Write a review of the production using domain-appropriate terminology; develop a class rubric for effective theatrical presentations; compare and contrast the play with work by other artists.

STANDARD 1.5: All students will understand and analyze the role, development, and continuing influence of the arts in relation to world cultures, history, and society.

Discuss the representation of social issues (class, political leadership, etc.) in the play; research how the historical period affected the writer's work; compare the play to work from other historical periods.

About The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey

The acclaimed Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of the leading Shakespeare theatres in the nation. Serving approximately 100,000 adults and young people annually, it is New Jersey's largest professional theatre company dedicated to Shakespeare's canon and other classic masterworks. With its distinguished productions and education programs, the company strives to illuminate the universal and lasting relevance of the classics for contemporary audiences. The longest-running Shakespeare theatre on the East Coast and the seventh largest in the nation, The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2012, and is proud to be launching into its second half-century with a brand new support facility housing all its administrative and technical shops, as well as a new rehearsal hall, classroom spaces, and extensive costume, property and scenic inventory.



The company's 2014 Main Stage Season will feature six productions presented in its 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre from June through December. In the summer, an Outdoor Stage production is also presented at the Greek Theatre, an open-air amphitheatre nestled in a hillside on the campus of the College of Saint Elizabeth in nearby Morristown.

In addition to being a celebrated producer of classic plays and operating *Shakespeare LIVE!* (one of the largest educational Shakespeare touring programs in the New York/New Jersey region), The Shakespeare Theatre is also deeply committed to nurturing new talent for the American stage. By providing an outstanding training ground for students of the theatre, and cultivating audiences for the future by providing extensive outreach opportunities for students across New Jersey and beyond, The Shakespeare Theatre is a leader in arts education. For additional information, visit our web site at www.ShakespeareNJ.org.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is one of 23 professional theatres in the state of New Jersey. The company's dedication to the classics and commitment to excellence sets critical standards for the field. Nationwide, the Theatre has emerged as one of the nation's most exciting theatres under the leadership of Artistic Director, Bonnie J. Monte since 1990. It is one of only a handful of Shakespeare Theatres on the east coast, and in recent years has drawn larger and larger audiences and unprecedented critical acclaim. The opening of the intimate, 308-seat F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theatre in 1998, provided the Theatre with a state-of-the-art venue with excellent sightlines, and increased access for patrons and artists with disabilities.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is a member of ArtPride, The Shakespeare Theatre Association, and is a founding member of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance.

The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey's programs are made possible, in part, by funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional major support is received from The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the F.M. Kirby Foundation, The Edward T. Cone Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and Drew University, as well as contributions from numerous corporations, foundations, government agencies and individuals. The Shakespeare Theatre is an independent, professional theatre company located on the Drew University campus.

