

The Death of Julius Caesar, Grade 9-12

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Lesson Plan Summary: After this lesson plan, students will be able to: describe the accomplishments of Julius Caesar; analyze the events surrounding the death of Julius Caesar and its aftermath; and compare Suetonius' account of Caesar's funeral in *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* with William Shakespeare's version in *Julius Caesar*. Students will complete this lesson by writing brief eulogies that would have been appropriate for Caesar. This lesson should take a total of 50 minutes to complete.

Objectives:

Citizenship. The student understands the significance of political choices and decisions made by individuals, groups, and nations throughout history.

The student is expected to:

- evaluate political choices and decisions that individuals, groups, and nations have made in the past, taking into account historical context, and apply this knowledge to the analysis of choices and decisions faced by contemporary societies;
- describe the different roles of citizens and non citizens in historical cultures, especially as the roles pertain to civic participation.

§113.33. World History Studies. (c)(17)(A,B)

Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

The student is expected to:

- use social studies terminology correctly;
- use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation;
- interpret and create databases, research outlines, bibliographies, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;
- transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate.

§113.33. World History Studies. (c)(26)(A,B,C,D)

Procedure

- 1) Begin by reviewing the accomplishments of Julius Caesar, including his impact on Roman government.
- 2) Give students a brief synopsis of the events surrounding Caesar's death. Discuss the people involved and their immediate reactions.
- 3) Show the [plaque commemorating the location of Caesar's death](http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u/?Studyabroad,124) (<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u/?Studyabroad,124>) from the TIDES website (<http://tides.sfasu.edu>). The pictures can be found by searching the "Study Abroad" database using Julius Caesar in the advanced search.

<http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/cdm4/results.php?CISOOP1=all&CISOBOX1=Julius%20caesar&CISOFIELD1=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP2=exact&CISOBOX2=&CISOFIELD2=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP3=any&CISOBOX3=&CISOFIELD3=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOOP4=none&CISOBOX4=&CISOFIELD4=CISOSEARCHALL&CISOROOT=/Studyabroad&t=a>)

- 4) Discuss the events that occurred immediately after Caesar's death, as well as the actions of Augustus, Marc Antony, and Lepidus.
- 5) Read excerpts describing the funeral of Caesar from *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* by Suetonius (attached) and William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. (attached)
- 6) Compare how Suetonius, who wrote of Caesar within about 150 years of his death, and Shakespeare, who wrote to entertain audiences some 1500 years later, viewed Caesar's funeral.
- 7) Finally, have students write a brief eulogy (8-10 lines) that would have been appropriate for Julius Caesar. You may have them rhyme the lines if you wish.
- 8) Conclude by having students share their eulogies

Extension:

GT Extension: Have GT students create the eulogy on a "gravestone" they have created, and include at least 5 accomplishments of Caesar's life.

Caesar's Funeral
The Lives of the Twelve Caesars
By C. Suetonius Tranquillus

LXXXIV. Notice of his funeral having been solemnly proclaimed, a pile was erected in the Campus Martius, near the tomb of his daughter Julia; and before the Rostra was placed a gilded tabernacle, on the model of the temple of Venus Genitrix; within which was an ivory bed, covered with purple and cloth of gold. At the head was a trophy, with the [bloodstained] robe in which he was slain. It being considered that the whole day would not suffice for carrying the funeral oblations in solemn procession before the corpse, directions were given for every one, without regard to order, to carry them from the city into the Campus Martius, by what way they pleased. To raise pity and indignation for his murder, in the plays acted at the funeral, a passage was sung from Pacuvius's tragedy, entitled, "The Trial for Arms:"

That ever I, unhappy man, should save
Wretches, who thus have brought me to the grave! [98]
And some lines also from Attilius's tragedy of "Electra," to the same effect. Instead of a funeral panegyric, the consul Antony ordered a herald to proclaim to the people the decree of the senate, in which they had bestowed upon him all honours, divine and human; with the oath by which they had engaged themselves for the defence of his person; and to these he added only a few words of his own. The magistrates and others who had formerly filled the highest offices, carried the bier from the Rostra into the Forum. While some proposed that the body should be burnt in the sanctuary of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and others in Pompey's senate-house; on a sudden, two men, with swords by their sides, and spears in their hands, set fire to the bier with lighted torches. The throng around immediately heaped upon it dry faggots, the tribunals and benches of the adjoining courts, and whatever else came to hand. Then the musicians and players stripped off the dresses they wore on the present occasion, taken from the wardrobe of his triumph at spectacles, rent them, and threw them into the flames. The legionaries, also, of his (54) veteran bands, cast in their armour, which they had put on in honour of his funeral. Most of the ladies did the same by their ornaments, with the bullae [99], and mantles of their children. In this public mourning there joined a multitude of foreigners, expressing their sorrow according to the fashion of their respective countries; but especially the Jews [100], who for several nights together frequented the spot where the body was burnt.

LXXXV. The populace ran from the funeral, with torches in their hands, to the houses of Brutus and Cassius, and was repelled with difficulty. Going in quest of Cornelius Cinna, who had in a speech, the day before, reflected severely upon Caesar, and mistaking for him Helvius Cinna, who happened to fall into their hands, they murdered the latter, and carried his head about the city on the point of a spear. They afterwards erected in the Forum a column of Numidian marble, formed of one stone nearly twenty feet high, and inscribed upon it these words, TO THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY. At this column they continued for a long time to offer sacrifices, make vows, and decide controversies, in which they swore by Caesar.

LXXXVI. Some of Caesar's friends entertained a suspicion, that he neither desired nor cared to live any longer, on account of his declining health; and for that reason slighted all the omens of religion, and the warnings of his friends. Others are of opinion, that thinking himself secure in the late decree of the senate, and their oaths, he dismissed his Spanish guards who attended him with drawn swords. Others again suppose, that he chose rather to face at once the dangers which threatened him on all sides, than to be for ever on the watch against them. Some tell us that he used to say, the commonwealth was more interested in the safety of his person than himself: for that he had for some time been satiated with power and glory; but that the commonwealth, if any thing should befall him, would have no rest, and, involved in another civil war, would be in a worse state than before.

(55) LXXXVII. This, however, was generally admitted, that his death was in many respects such as he would have chosen. For, upon reading the account delivered by Xenophon, how Cyrus in his last illness gave instructions respecting his funeral, Caesar deprecated a lingering death, and wished that his own might be sudden and speedy. And the day before he died, the conversation at supper, in the house of Marcus Lepidus, turning upon what was the most eligible way of dying, he gave his opinion in favour of a death that is sudden and unexpected.

LXXXVIII. He died in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and was ranked amongst the Gods, not only by a formal decree, but in the belief of the vulgar. For during the first games which Augustus, his heir, consecrated to his memory, a comet blazed for seven days together, rising always about eleven o'clock; and it was supposed to be the soul of Caesar, now received into heaven: for which reason, likewise, he is represented on his statue with a star on his brow. The senate-house in which he was slain, was ordered to be shut up [101], and a decree made that the ides of March should be called parricidal, and the senate should never more assemble on that day.

LXXXIX. Scarcely any of those who were accessory to his murder, survived him more than three years, or died a natural death [102]. They were all condemned by the senate: some were taken off by one accident, some by another. Part of them perished at sea, others fell in battle; and some slew themselves with the same poniard with which they had stabbed Caesar [103].

***Julius Caesar* by Wm. Shakespeare**
Act 3. Scene II

SCENE II. The Forum.

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens
Citizens

We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

BRUTUS

Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street,

And part the numbers.

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And public reasons shall be rendered

Of Caesar's death.

First Citizen

I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Citizen

I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,

When severally we hear them rendered.

Exit CASSIUS, with some of the Citizens. BRUTUS goes into the pulpit

Third Citizen

The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

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 and others, with CAESAR's body

Here comes his body, mourned by 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.

All

Live, Brutus! live, live!

First Citizen

Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Citizen

Give him a statue with his ancestors.

Third Citizen

Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Citizen

Caesar's better parts

Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

First Citizen

We'll bring him to his house

With shouts and clamours.

BRUTUS

My countrymen,--

Second Citizen

Peace, silence! Brutus speaks.

First Citizen

Peace, ho!

BRUTUS

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

Exit

First Citizen

Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

Third Citizen

Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

ANTONY

For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.
Goes into the pulpit

Fourth Citizen

What does he say of Brutus?

Third Citizen

He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

Fourth Citizen

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

First Citizen

This Caesar was a tyrant.

Third Citizen

Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

Second Citizen

Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

ANTONY

You gentle Romans,--

Citizens

Peace, ho! let us hear him.

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 answer'd 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

Mark'd 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.

Fourth Citizen

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

All

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, bearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

Fourth Citizen

Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

ANTONY

Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:

I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

Fourth Citizen

They were traitors: honourable men!

All

The will! the testament!

Second Citizen

They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

ANTONY

You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

Several Citizens

Come down.

Second Citizen

Descend.

Third Citizen

You shall have leave.

ANTONY comes down

Fourth Citizen

A ring; stand round.

First Citizen

Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

Second Citizen

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

ANTONY

Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

Several Citizens

Stand back; room; bear back.

ANTONY

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, 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 vanquish'd 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 flourish'd 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, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

First Citizen

O piteous spectacle!

Second Citizen

O noble Caesar!

Third Citizen

O woful day!

Fourth Citizen

O traitors, villains!

First Citizen

O most bloody sight!

Second Citizen

We will be revenged.

All

Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!

Let not a traitor live!

ANTONY

Stay, countrymen.

First Citizen

Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

Second Citizen

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANTONY

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable:

What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

All

We'll mutiny.

First Citizen

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

Third Citizen

Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY

Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

All

Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

ANTONY

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:

Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?

Alas, you know not: I must tell you then:

You have forgot the will I told you of.

All

Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will.

ANTONY

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

Second Citizen

Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

Third Citizen
O royal Caesar!

ANTONY
Hear me with patience.

All
Peace, ho!

ANTONY
Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?

First Citizen
Never, never. Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

Second Citizen
Go fetch fire.

Third Citizen
Pluck down benches.

Fourth Citizen
Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

Exeunt Citizens with the body

ANTONY
Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!