

Julius Caesar

Before We Start
Handout 1

Name _____

Date _____ Hour _____

Character and Term List

Below is a list of the major characters and terms.

Characters

- Julius Caesar:** Caesar is a leader in both in the military and the senate. His recent victories lead the people to offer him the crown, but he refuses. Other leaders fear he will become ambitious and thus view him as a threat.
- Octavius Caesar:** Octavius is Julius Caesar's adopted son and heir apparent. After Caesar's death he rules Rome with Marc Antony and Lepidus as part of the triumvirate.
- Marcus Antonius:** Loyal to Julius Caesar, Marcus Antonius seeks revenge against the conspirators and shows some ambition of his own. Referred to as Marc Antony.
- Lepidus:** He is a member of the triumvirate. Lepidus seems to have less power than either Marc Antony or Octavius Caesar although Octavius relies on him considerably.
- Cicero:** Cicero is a member of the Roman senate who is known for delivering excellent speeches. He is unaware of the conspiracy.
- Publius:** Publius is another member of the Roman senate.
- Popilius Lena:** Popilius Lena is unaware of the conspiracy. He is also a member of the Roman senate.
- Marcus Brutus:** Dedicated to preserving freedom in Rome by preventing the rise of a sovereign, Marcus Brutus overcomes his loyalty to Caesar for what he believes is the greater good. Referred to as Brutus.
- Cassius:** Cassius is a Roman general who conspires against Julius Caesar, using treachery and deceit to accomplish his own desires.
- Casca:** Casca is a Roman who dislikes Julius Caesar and works to persuade Brutus and Cassius that Caesar's ambition will destroy Rome.
- Trebonius:** Trebonius is a member of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar.
- Ligarius:** Ligarius is also a member of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar.
- Decius Brutus:** Decius Brutus is a member of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. He plays a pivotal role in the plot.



Shakespeare's actors only got their lines as the play was in progress. They found out who else was playing the day of the performance.



Julius Caesar

Before We Start
Handout 1, continued

Character List and Term List

- Metellus Cimber:** Metellus Cimber is a member of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar.
- Cinna:** Cinna is also a member of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar.
- Flavius & Marullus:** As elected officials, Flavius and Marullus fault the masses for switching their allegiances quickly and easily. These tribunes are punished for anti-Caesar activities.
- Cinna, a poet:** Cinna is a poet who unfortunately shares the same name as one of the conspirators.
- Calpurnia:** Calpurnia is the wife of Julius Caesar. She fears for his safety, but, ultimately, her pleas cannot overcome his wishes.
- Portia:** She is the wife of Marcus Brutus. Portia senses Brutus' unease but is unable to help him.
- Terms**
- Characters:** Characters are the names of all the people who appear in the play, listed at the very beginning, often under the title *Dramatis Personae*, a Latin phrase which means "people of the play." After their initial identification, you will find the name of each character, capitalized (and often abbreviated), before he or she speaks.
- Acts:** Acts are the divisions of the plot or action into sections and indicated with Roman numerals.
- Scenes:** Scenes are subdivisions within acts. The beginning of each scene describes the physical appearance of the stage for this section, suggesting the real surroundings for the historical time and action of the play; usually printed in italics.
- Stage directions:** These are the directions given in brackets or parentheses to a character before his or her speech. They are unspoken but important for understanding characters and their behavior at the time.
- Costumes:** Costumes are the clothing actors wear that help us to identify the individual characters, usually telling us when and where they lived. For example, if we were to actually stage a performance of *Julius Caesar*, we could indicate the time period by the type of military clothing.
- Lighting:** Lighting is the use of artificial lights and spotlights to suggest time of day or night, as well as to highlight certain areas of the stage and certain key characters in a particular scene.

