

Build Skills *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act I*

Practice these skills as you read *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, Act I.

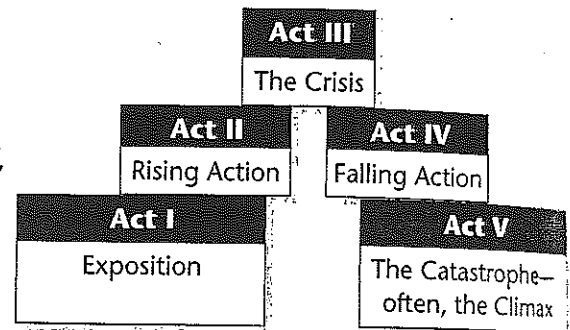
Literary Analysis

Like other tragedies, **Shakespeare's tragedies** are plays that tell of a reversal of fortune, from good to bad, experienced by a man or woman, usually of noble birth.

Shakespeare's tragedies also have these distinctive features:

- They are sometimes based on **historical characters**.
- The **hero** often displays a **tragic flaw**, a characteristic that brings about his downfall.
- Shakespeare emphasizes the hero's **internal conflict**.
- **Commoners** often play key **supporting roles** and provide **comic relief**, humorous scenes that serve as a break from the intense emotions of the play.

Shakespeare's plays are structured in five acts. In his tragedies, the **crisis**—the turning point that determines how the play will end—occurs in Act III. The **climax**, or point of greatest emotional intensity, often occurs in Act V, when the **catastrophe**, or disaster, befalls the hero.



Reading Skill

Shakespeare's plays contain unfamiliar language and references. When **reading Shakespearean drama**, use text aids:

- Review the list of *dramatis personae* (the cast of characters).
- Read the background information provided (p. 821).
- As you read the play, consult the notes, called **glosses**, beside the text. These notes define words and explain references.

Vocabulary Builder

- **replication** (rep' li kā' shən) *n.* duplicate; reproduction (p. 826) *His house is an exact replication of mine.*
- **servile** (sər' vəl) *adj.* slavelike; humbly submissive to authority (p. 828) *The butler bowed in a servile manner.*
- **spare** (sper) *adj.* lean; thin (p. 835) *She has a spare frame and is underweight.*
- **infirmity** (in fər' mə tē) *n.* weakness; physical defect (p. 837) *A doctor cured his infirmity.*
- **portentous** (pōr ten' tēs) *adj.* ominous; giving signs of evil to come (p. 839) *The portentous clouds promised snow.*
- **prodigious** (prō dij' əs) *adj.* of great size or power (p. 840) *The runner made a prodigious effort just before the finish line.*

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act I, by William Shakespeare
Vocabulary Builder

Word List

infirmity portentous prodigious replication servile spare

A. DIRECTIONS: For each of the following items, think about the meaning of the italicized word, and then answer the question.

1. When is a *servile* attitude appropriate?

2. What might be a challenge faced by someone who has an *infirmity*?

3. When might *replication* of an experiment be useful?

4. What is an example of a *prodigious* work of architecture?

5. How might the rumbling of a volcano be a *portentous* sign?

6. How might a *spare* person change his or her appearance?

B. DIRECTIONS: For each Word List word, choose the word or phrase that is most nearly opposite in meaning. In the blank, write the letter of your choice.

- ___ 1. prodigious
 A. fabulous
 B. awe-inspiring
 C. minimal
 D. enforced

- ___ 3. portentous
 A. hopeful
 B. rumbling
 C. talented
 D. capable

- ___ 2. spare
 A. extra
 B. tiny
 C. extreme
 D. obese

- ___ 4. servile
 A. obedient
 B. commanding
 C. generous
 D. uncomfortable

Julius Caesar Act I Study Questions

Directions – Respond in complete sentences to the assigned questions on your own paper.

1. What are the people doing that angers Marullus and Flavius? Why does this anger them?
2. What actions do Marullus and Flavius take to correct the situation?
3. Why does Caesar want Calpurnia to stand in Antony's path during the race in honor of the feast of Lupercal?
4. What is Antony's response to Caesar's instructions? What does this suggest about their relationship?
5. What is Caesar's reaction to the soothsayer's warning? How is this ironic?
6. What complaint does Cassius make about Brutus's behavior towards him? How does Brutus answer this complaint?

7. Cassius's story attacks what aspects of Caesar's make-up? Why does he tell Brutus this story?

8. What does Cassius mean by the following? " 'Brutus' will start a spirit as soon as 'Caesar.' "

9. How does Brutus respond to Cassius's attack on Caesar?

10. What astute observation does Caesar make of Cassius? What faults does Caesar see in Cassius's nature?

11. What information does Casca give about Marullus and Flavius?

12. At the end of scene ii, what plans does Cassius make to sway Brutus to his cause?

13. What wondrous things has Casca seen on this night?

14. What reason does Cassius give for the terrible storm?

15. What important news does Casca give Cassius about the Senate's plan?

16. What instructions does Cassius give Cinna that will help sway Brutus to their cause?

17. What reason does Casca give for wanting Brutus to join their cause?

Build Skills *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act II*

Practice these skills with *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act II*.

Literary Analysis

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar is written in blank verse. **Blank verse** is a poetic form characterized by unrhymed lines written in iambic pentameter.

- An **iamb** is a *foot* (unit of rhythm) in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable: da-DUH.
- **Pentameter** refers to a rhythmic pattern in which each line has five feet.
- In **iambic pentameter**, the typical line has five iambs, or five stressed syllables each preceded by an unstressed syllable:

Shakespeare's "upperclass" characters speak in iambic pentameter. Lower-born characters speak in prose. Sometimes, Shakespeare breaks the rhythmic pattern in a line to add contrast or emphasis.

Reading Skill

Paraphrasing a line or passage from a work means restating its meaning in your own words. To paraphrase when reading Shakespearean drama, follow these steps:

- Look for punctuation showing where sentences end.
- For each sentence, identify the subject and verb and put them into the usual order. You may also need to add helping verbs and use modern verb and pronoun forms.

As you read, paraphrase using a diagram like the one shown.

Original Lines

O conspiracy, / ^{Verb} Sham'st / ^{Subj.} thou
to show thy dang'rous brow
by night, / When evils are
most free?"
-Scene i; lines 77-79



Paraphrase

O conspiracy, are you not
ashamed to show your
dangerous face at night, when
it is easiest to be evil?

Vocabulary Builder

- **augmented** (óg men't id) *adj.* made greater; enhanced (p. 88) *Her augmented library has hundreds more books.*
- **entreated** (en trē't id) *v.* begged; pleaded (p. 849) *He entreated her for mercy.*
- **insurrection** (in' sə rek' shən) *n.* rebellion (p. 849) *The insurrection against the government started in the town square.*
- **resolution** (rez' ə lōō' shən) *n.* strong determination; a plan or decision (p. 851) *Lou stuck to his plans with firm resolution.*
- **wrathfully** (rath' fəl lē) *adv.* with intense anger (p. 853) *She shook her fist wrathfully.*
- **imminent** (im' ə nent) *adj.* about to happen (p. 860) *The lightning flash meant thunder was imminent.*

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act II, by William Shakespeare
Vocabulary Builder

Word List

augmented entreated imminent insurrection resolution wrathfully

DIRECTIONS: Write a sentence to answer each question based on the meaning of the word in *italics*.

1. What is an event that is *imminent* at your school?

2. How would you feel if your boss *augmented* your paycheck, and why?

3. Why is *resolution* necessary to achieve success in life?

4. How would a government respond to an *insurrection*?

5. If a defense lawyer *entreated* a judge, what might the lawyer want?

6. Is it helpful to behave *wrathfully* in a frustrating situation? Why or why not?

DIRECTIONS: Each item consists of a related pair of words in CAPITAL LETTERS followed by four lettered pairs of words. Choose the lettered pair that best expresses a relationship similar to that expressed in the pair in capital letters. In the blank, write the letter of your choice.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ 1. ENTREATED : PLEADED ::
A. coughed : fever
B. stirred : blended
C. entertainment : television
D. singing : choir | ___ 3. AUGMENTED : GREW ::
A. wore : eroded
B. increased : decreased
C. changed : lessened
D. planned : executed |
| ___ 2. IMMINENT : REMOTE ::
A. important : control
B. distant : aloof
C. apparent : real
D. looming : appearing | ___ 4. ATTACK : WRATHFULLY ::
A. fear : danger
B. anger : hope
C. persevere : steady
D. hug : lovingly |

Julius Caesar Act II Study Questions

1. What question is Brutus pondering at the opening of the scene?
2. What does Brutus mean by the following statement? "And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,/Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous,/And kill him in the shell."
3. How would you characterize Brutus thus far?
4. What do the conspirators plan to do?
5. According to Brutus, why is an oath among the conspirators unnecessary?
6. What does Cassius want to do with Antony? What reason does Brutus give for not killing Antony?

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act II, by William Shakespeare
Support for Writing a Character Analysis

Use the following chart to make notes for your character analysis of Brutus. Under each trait, list the scene and line numbers of a passage in which Brutus demonstrates the trait. Then, briefly quote his most important words in the passage.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Trait:</p> <p>Scene/lines:</p> <p>Quotation:</p>	<p>Trait:</p> <p>Scene/lines:</p> <p>Quotation:</p>
<p>Trait:</p> <p>Scene/lines:</p> <p>Quotation:</p>	<p>Trait:</p> <p>Scene/lines:</p> <p>Quotation:</p>

Now, use your notes to write a character analysis of Brutus. Describe his strengths in one paragraph and his weaknesses in another. Support each point you make with examples and quotations from Act II.

