

Grade 10 Mini-Assessment – Excerpt from *Julius Caesar*

Act III, Scene ii

Today you will read an excerpt from *Julius Caesar*, Act III, Scene ii by William Shakespeare, and watch a short video of part of the scene. You will then answer several questions based on the text and video. I will be happy to answer questions about the directions, but I will not help you with the answers to any questions. You will notice as you answer the questions that some of the questions have two parts. You should answer Part A of the question before you answer Part B, but you may go back and change your answer to Part A if you want to.

Take as long as you need to read and answer the questions. If you do not finish when class ends, come see me to discuss when you may have additional time.

Now read the passage, watch the video, and answer the questions. I encourage you to write notes in the margin as you read the passage.

Excerpt from *Julius Caesar*, Act III, Scene ii

by William Shakespeare

(shortened for assessment purposes)

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;

5

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.

10

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:

15

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?

20 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 Lupercal¹

25 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,

30 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;

35 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.

Antony:

40 But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.

45 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:

50 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:

¹ A yearly Roman festival that celebrated the god of fertility

55 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.

Antony:

60 Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet² you know how Caesar loved you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, bearing the will of Caesar,

65 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:

70 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!

Antony:

75 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?

² Fitting or proper

Several Citizens:
Come down.

Second Citizen:
80 Descend.

(ANTONY comes down.)

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:
85 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:
90 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,
95 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;
100 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 statua,
105 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
110 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.

Second Citizen:
O noble Caesar!

Fourth Citizen:
115 O traitors, villains!

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:
120 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,
125 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,
130 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;
135 I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor dumb mouths,

140 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.

Antony:
Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

All
145 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:
150 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 drachmas³.

Second Citizen:
Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

Antony:
155 Hear me with patience.

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,
160 To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.

³ A form of currency

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.

165

Second Citizen:

Go fetch fire.

(Exit Citizens with the body of Caesar)

Antony:

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

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Video: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xsikfr_friends-romans-countrymen-lend-me-your-ears_creation

QUESTIONS:

1. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Read the following lines from Act III, Scene ii of *Julius Caesar*.

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,
A rushing out of doors,

Based on these lines, what is the meaning of *rent* as used in this excerpt?

- A. unspeakable atrocity
- B. poor decision
- C. long-lasting impression
- D. tear in a piece of cloth

Part B: Which two words or phrases from these lines help the reader interpret the meaning of *rent* as it is being used?

- A. "in this place"
- B. "ran Cassius' dagger through"
- C. "envious"
- D. "well-beloved"
- E. "stabb'd"
- F. "cursed steel"