



American Players Theatre
Presents



ita



Tracy Michelle Arnold



Tim Gittings



ay



David Daniel



Kelsey Brennan



Nate Burger



Gavin Lawrence

William Shakespeare's
(VIRTUAL)

JULIUS CAESAR

2020 STUDY GUIDE

American Players Theatre / PO Box 819 / Spring Green, WI 53588
www.americanplayers.org

Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare

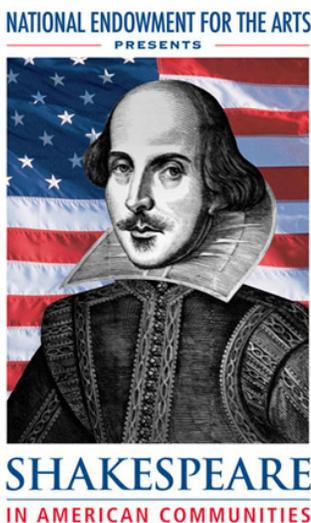
2020 Study Guide

Many Thanks!

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Who's Who in *Julius Caesar*



Brian Mani as Julius Caesar

A great general of Rome, who has recently won a civil war against Pompey and returns to Rome in triumph. He is beloved by many, almost to idolatry, and

hated by some.

Poet

A companion of Cassius. He has little sense of rhythm or rhyme, and attempts (poorly) to moralize to Brutus and Cassius.



Jim DeVita as Brutus

A noble Roman, descended from the Brutus who liberated Rome from the tyrannical monarchy of the Tarquins.

Gavin Lawrence as Mark Antony

Caesar's closest companion. A young man much given to reveling, enjoying music and plays, he runs in the sacred race of the Feast of Lupercal, touching Calpurnia on the way in the hopes of curing her barrenness.



Tracy Michelle Arnold as Cassius

A noble Roman, and the mastermind behind Caesar's assassination.



Kelsey Brennan as Marullus

A Roman elected official and friend of Flavius

Metellus

One of the conspirators against Caesar.

Titinius

An officer in Cassius' army.

Nate Burger as Flavius

One of the Tribunes of the People of Rome.

Trebonius

One of the conspirators against Caesar.

Pindarus

Cassius' Parthian bondman. With some regret, he kills Cassius at the latter's request as the price of his freedom, and flees somewhere where he'll never be found.



David Daniel as Decius

One of the conspirators against Caesar.

Lucillius

An officer in Brutus' army.

Carpenter

Leaves his shop in his best clothes to go see Caesar.

Sarah Day as Casca

A cynical Roman with no great taste for Caesar's fooling over the crown.

Dardanius

A soldier in Brutus' army, one of the last to survive and follow him. He refuses to help Brutus kill himself.



Who's Who in *Julius Caesar*



Tim Gittings as

Cinna

One of the conspirators against Caesar.

Caesar's servant

Brings his master the disturbing news that the augurers

sacrificed a beast in which they could not find a heart.

Messala

A messenger in Brutus' army.



Melisa Pereyra as

Calpurnia

Caesar's wife

Clitus

A soldier in Brutus' army, one of the last to survive and follow

him. He refuses to help Brutus kill himself.

Octavius' Servant

Is sent by his master to give Antony a message, and arrives at the Capitol to find him with Caesar's body.



Marcus Truschinski as

Cobble

Leaves his shop to go see Caesar's triumph, and takes the whole day off.

Artemidorus

Learns of the conspiracy against

Caesar and attempts to warn him, but is unable to get his message through.

Octavius

Caesar's nephew. Called to Rome by his uncle, he is greeted on its outskirts by the news of Caesar's death.

Colleen Madden as

Portia

The daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus. She is proud of both of these, and is the definition of a stoic Roman woman.

Soothsayer

Warns Caesar of the Ides of March, without giving any further details, being thereby accounted a dreamer.

Cinna the Poet

Has the misfortune of having the same name as one of Caesar's murderers, and of not being known for good writing. He is torn to pieces by a mob.

Volumnius

An officer in Brutus' army, and an old schoolfellow of his. He refuses to help Brutus kill himself.



James Ridge as

Cicero

A Senator of Rome.

Ligarius

One of the conspirators against Caesar.

Lepidus

A Senator of Rome. He is present at Caesar's death, and flees from it.



Marco Lama as

Lucius

Brutus' young servant.



Director: Stephen Brown-Fried
Stage Manager: Jacqueline Singleton
Sara Becker: Voice & Text Coach
Ele Matelan: Foley Artist

About the Play

Caesar has returned in triumph from the war against Pompey, though tribunes Marullus and Flavius express their discontent to the people at the outcome. During the celebrations, a soothsayer warns Caesar to beware the Ides of March. Cassius and Brutus discuss their fears that Caesar's ambition is to become king, despite learning from Casca that he had refused the people's offer of the crown.

Casca, Cassius, and Cinna meet during a stormy night that has been full of unnatural events, and agree the need to win Brutus over to their cause, the elimination of Caesar. Brutus meanwhile has been reflecting on the dangers of having Caesar crowned, so when the conspirators arrive at his house he agrees to the assassination plot. He is reluctant to reveal his intentions to his wife, Portia, but yields to her persuasion.

Caesar's wife Calphurnia, frightened by dreams and omens, tries to persuade him not to go to the Capitol. He agrees, but Decius reinterprets the omens in a favorable light, and he leaves, disregarding a warning on the way from Artemidorus. When Caesar refuses to grant Metellus Cimber's suit, the conspirators kill him. Caesar's friend Mark Antony meets the conspirators, who allow him to speak at Caesar's funeral following Brutus' own speech. Brutus justifies their action to the citizens and receives their support. But Antony's speech rouses them against the conspirators, and Brutus and Cassius flee. The angry people kill Cinna the poet, mistaking him for Cinna the conspirator.

Antony forms a triumvirate with Octavius Caesar and Lepidus, and they plan the deaths of the conspirators, and form an army. Brutus and Cassius join forces at Sardis, agreeing to fight together at Philippi after a fierce personal quarrel. Messala brings news of happenings at Rome, and reports that Portia has killed herself. Caesar's ghost visits Brutus at night and warns him that he will meet him at Philippi.

The two sides parley, then the battle begins. Thinking they are defeated, Cassius orders his servant Pindarus to kill him. He does so, but it is then revealed that the news was misleading, as Brutus had gained an advantage. A further battle leads to Brutus' defeat, and he too dies by suicide. Antony and Octavius acknowledge Brutus' nobility, and arrange to bury him with honor.

A Q&A with *Julius Caesar* Artists

Featuring
Stephen Brown-Fried, Director
James Ridge, Core Company Actor (Cicero/Ligarius/Lepidus)
Jake Penner, Artistic Associate

On how the *Out of the Woods* series got started

Jake Penner: I think that Carey [Associate Artistic Director, Carey Cannon] and Brenda [Artistic Director Brenda DeVita] had some titles that they just wanted to hear out loud. So we took advantage of everybody's time off, and we all got onto these virtual plays. And so that was really our transition into the rehearsal process; just seeing if there was anything positive to be found in reading a play on a communications platform that was never intended to be a platform for this. And then we had solidified the partnership with PBS, we went to the Core Company and asked, is this something that everybody is interested in doing? And everybody came back and said, yeah, let's do it.

And so we hired the slate of directors, and we put the casting together. And then Aaron Posner was good enough to be the guinea pig directing the Chekhovs, and just go in and figure out, ok, how do we map a traditional rehearsal process with this now? Totally uncharted waters for everybody at that point...as we embarked on this, I don't think we knew for sure that it was going to work. But we started with the Chekhov one acts, and we thought, hey, this is really funny, and it's really entertaining. And it's seeing this group of actors from a different vantage point – we've got a camera right up close to them now. So we get to see all the little things you might not catch in those last few seats up the Hill.

On your new rehearsal space:

Stephen-Brown Fried: I live in a one-bedroom apartment in Queens with my husband, who has also been working remotely since mid-March. I don't have an office, or even a desk. My meetings generally start earlier in the morning than his do, so I usually start the day at the large table in our dining area, where I park my laptop on a stack of art books so that my Zoom camera-angle isn't too terrifying. At some point in the mid-morning, once his meetings are starting, I switch to an armchair in the corner of our bedroom so that he can use the dining table... I'm known to get emphatic and loud, so throughout the day, I'll periodically get texts from my husband in the other room simply saying 'you're shouting.'

Jake Penner: It's been an interesting setup, because I'm watching the reading, and the director in Seattle or Chicago is watching the reading. And we're talking to each other over ear buds in our iPhones. You know, sort of hearing the audio from the laptops, hearing the audio from each other, and having to figure out how to use cloud-based tools like Google Drive and Google Docs to communicate with each other, and with stage management. And so it was just figuring out how to digitize a traditional rehearsal process in a way that we're forced to right now. But it continues to evolve, and I kind of can't wait to see what the long-term response was from *Julius Caesar*.

James Ridge: A large part of the learning curve associated with rehearsing and reading plays on an online meeting format was the hardware and connectivity issues. I have a 10-year-old laptop that worked for a couple of weeks, but when the new Zoom updates came out, I was suddenly out of luck...which I discovered five minutes before airing the *Julius Caesar* reading! I couldn't join the webinar. Quick, new laptop, different scrolling, new script format, aaarrgh!!

We discovered as well that our internet at home wouldn't support both of us [Jim and his wife, Core Company Actor Colleen Madden] meeting and working online. We needed to be connected via Ethernet cable...which I discovered during the Arms and the Man reading when I lost the WiFi connection DURING the live reading.

So now I go to one of APT's rental apartments to work. I've rearranged all the living room furniture and pinned a black curtain to the ceiling in order to create a "booth" in which to rehearse and record. Otherwise, it's business as usual.

On the Zoom Stage

Stephen Brown-Fried: I was, of course, saddened when the season needed to be postponed, though I completely understood the necessity of this very tough decision. I think that knowing that this play was to happen up the Hill added to the potency of the project for everyone involved — the reading was like getting a small glimpse into 'what might have been,' and so in that respect, there was a bittersweet aspect to it all. But in a different way, knowing that the project was intended to happen as a full production, and will, hopefully happen that way in the future, liberated us to really let this version be unique to the Zoom platform.

Because Zoom limits what's possible in terms of spectacle and staging, I found that working in this format forced our attention to be on the language in a really exciting way. I felt that I heard things in the play that I hadn't heard before as a result of how specifically focused on the language the whole ensemble was...I just can't possibly overstate how much credit the actors deserve for this project. They had to function as their own lighting, set and costume designers, not to mention sound and video technicians, all while figuring out how to translate their artistry onto a platform that is new to many of us. The success of the project is really the result of their incredible grit and ingenuity.

James Ridge: We costumed ourselves, so we were guided by the limits of our own wardrobes. Some of us read from inside a closet to simulate the darkness of the night and storm scenes. Most of us played multiple characters, but our audience is very savvy, so really we just needed to provide a signpost to suggest 'new guy' when we switched from one to another.

On the context of the play in 2020

Jake Penner: On Sunday night, when we were literally in the middle of watching and recording the Julius Caesar performance, at a certain point I pulled up my phone and I put the live feed on from State Street [in downtown Madison, WI], from on the ground on State Street. And I'm watching Mark Antony give a speech that eventually ends with inciting a riot. And I'm watching a present-day riot happen on my phone on a separate screen right next to that screen. And it was surreal to say the least.

James Ridge: The murder of George Floyd and the resultant protests were the reality in which we rehearsed and recorded Julius Caesar. I wish I had been braver that week to speak into that reality.

Stephen Brown-Fried: The play's resonances with our current times were impossible to ignore. That said, I've now directed the play three different times at three different moments in history, and the play always seems to feel incredibly timely. The play is, at its heart, about a moment of national reckoning. I hope the experience of watching it gave the audience something meaningful to contemplate as we navigate our own national reckoning.

On your favorite part of the project:

Stephen Brown-Fried: Getting to work with this incredible company of actors, and witness their amazing commitment to making thrilling art in the most challenging of circumstances!

James Ridge: I think the power of Shakespeare in a Zoom format is the chance to hear the play afresh. Artists want to innovate and test what's possible, and we discovered a lot about the format; but I've learned that I prefer the simpler choices that put the focus on the language.

Jake Penner: My favorite part has been, at the very beginning of the Sunday performances, watching Zoom get flooded with all of the people who've shown up to watch us do this. And then hearing their response afterward – they're both delighted and complimentary about the work itself. But I think the real thing that people are responding to is the fact that they get to see this acting company that has become part of their families. And knowing that they weren't going to be able to see them this summer, and then finding out that they would be able to see them, limited interaction though it was, the audience just seems so grateful that they get to watch something beautiful being made in this moment where it's very difficult to connect to people. And there's certainly enough going on in the world outside right now to cause people to want maybe a little bit of respite, or to see the events of the world being reflected back to them through art, which was certainly the case with Julius Caesar. So I guess my answer is, seeing the audience both appreciate the play and respond to it, and have it satiate some portion of what they're missing right now, even if it's not exactly the thing that we all want it to be.

William Shakespeare



William Shakespeare

Who is this guy? William Shakespeare was born in April 23, 1564, and grew up in the market town of Stratford-upon-Avon. As a playwright, poet, and actor, he spent most of his professional life in London. He died on April 23, 1616, and is buried inside the chancel of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. Surviving documents only give us glimpses into his life. From these we can ascertain that Shakespeare probably attended grammar school, studying Latin and literature. In 1582 at age eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway (she was 26 at the time), and six months later came the birth of his daughter Susanne. Do the math. They later had twins, Judith and Hamnet (1585). After achieving some prominence in London as a playwright, in 1593 he became a published poet. He most likely wrote these narrative poems when theatres were closed due to the plague. When they reopened in 1594, Shakespeare became an acting-company shareholder and leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later named The King's Men. His career spanned about twenty years, and in 1599 his company built a theatre named The Globe across the river from London. Carefully invested income in land and property made Shakespeare a wealthy landowner, and sometime between 1610 and 1613 he returned to live in Stratford-upon-Avon with his wife and his two daughters and their husbands (Hamnet had died in 1596). In 1623, seven years after his death, Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies was published. It is known as the First Folio. That's his life in a hazelnut-shell. You'll get it later.

An Exciting Time in History Shakespeare, like any good writer, was greatly influenced by the exciting energy of his time and the various worlds in which he lived. Christian texts and beliefs were being challenged with the discovery, translation, and printing of Greek and Roman classics. These made available worldviews and intellectually expanded horizons. Also, the creation of Galileo's telescope in 1609 allowed the universe to expand. It helped prove Copernicus's theory that the earth was not the center of the cosmos but revolved as a planet around the sun. The impact of these discoveries on people's beliefs fueled the dramatic and literary output that fed Shakespeare's plays. You can hear in them the voices of London, which expanded rapidly from the early 1590s to 1610 becoming an exciting metropolis. A mecca for the wealthy and power hungry, London also struggled with overcrowding, poverty, and plague. References to small-town gossip, sheep herding, and the Forest of Arden brought the voice of Stratford-upon-Avon to his work. The various worlds in which Shakespeare lived colored the pallet for the richness of his stories. He was born in the sixth year of the reign of Elizabeth I and wrote as England grew to be a world power, established colonies in the New World, and saw its population begin to shift from the countryside to the cities. The environment supporting his work was made possible by a combination of forces.

The Elizabethan World View

Queen Elizabeth ruled a society that still held a basically medieval view of both the natural world and the body politic. Despite the astronomical observations of Copernicus, published in 1543, Elizabethans held to the medieval belief that the earth was at the center of a universe, which operated with a God-given constancy and order. Like the planets in their heavens, every person had a position in society prescribed by a divinely ordained plan. Conversely, Shakespeare's society saw a correlation between celestial disorders, disruptions in the state, and diseases in the body.

The Elizabethans believed that an orderly universe should be reflected in domestic life too. The family represented a society in microcosm with the husband and father as head and each member owing certain obligations to the others. Violations of family allegiances, whether marital infidelity or filial disrespect, were viewed gravely and often formed the basis of dramatic conflict.



Queen Elizabeth

Shakespeare's plays reflect the Elizabethan belief in a divinely decreed pattern and its attendant loathing of disorder in both the family and society at large.

Elizabethan Women and Marriage

It was taken for granted in Elizabethan England that it was a parent's duty to arrange a suitable match for his daughters; and the main criteria of suitability were status and income. Marriage was, in fact, very much a business arrangement, with love and compatibility as decidedly subsidiary factors. Girls looked on it as their proper end in life, and, indeed, as their due, with the result that parents who failed to do their duty in the matter were often censured by their children as well as by their neighbors.

But while marriage was primarily a business arrangement, in which parents and guardians took the lead... changes in attitude were coming about. Many divines and moralists opposed arranged marriages (particularly enforced marriages, which were by no means rare), on the grounds that they led not only to misery but also to adultery and crime. At the same time the poets and writers of romances were extolling true love as productive of happiness and therefore far more valuable than any amount of dirty land. As a result, concessions were being made to the wishes of the young people themselves, who were gradually acquiring the right to say no. (Excerpted from Introduction to the New Penguin edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* by G. R. Hibbard.)



ACTIVITY

The Legend of Shakespeare

"I heard he was caught poaching deer at the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy and then ran away to London and took care of horses outside a playhouse."

"Oh, that's nothing. I heard Queen Elizabeth liked his character Falstaff so much that she demanded a play be written about him being in love and only had fourteen days to do it!"

"I just heard he died of a fever by drinking too much at a meeting with his poet buddies Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson!"

"Everyone knows Christopher Marlowe wrote those plays."

Ah, how rumors fly! There is no trace evidence that any of these accusations occurred, but they do make for wonderful stories.

The Shakespeare authorship issue can be an interesting topic of discussion. Whether you think non-orthodox ideas are ill-founded conspiracy theories or that the Stratford authorship is "the biggest and most successful fraud ever practiced on a patient world," or maybe you haven't even considered it, exploring the authorship issue provides a framework for many topics.

Do some research. What are the real facts for and against William Shakespeare of Stratford being the author of all those plays? Come up with a theory, strong arguments either for or against Shakespeare, and hold a debate.

Does it really matter who wrote the plays? How does knowing anything about the author affect our understanding or interpretation of their work? Does it? Pick one of your favorite books and do some background research about the author. Does it change the way to interpret the book? Why or why not?

Does the very suggestion of someone other than Shakespeare writing all those plays offend you? Why or why not? There was a group back in the late 80's, early 90's, called Milli Vanilli. The two lead singers, Rob and Fab, were awesome. I loved their music and had their cassette tape playing constantly. It later came out that they weren't really singing those songs. They were lip-syncing. I was crushed and furious and felt betrayed. How could they do that? I stopped listening to their songs, even though I really enjoyed the music, regardless of who was singing. Should I have cared so much? What is the importance of celebrities or even mythic figures to us? Why does challenging authorship bring on a strong reaction from people?

For more information about the authorship issue, check out:
http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/?page_id=18

Words, words, words...

What in the world is a kersey (coarse cloth)? What does Shakespeare mean by straight away (go immediately)? O.K., I told you. But unless you have a vast knowledge of Latin and an immense comprehension of poetry, Shakespeare's language can be pretty tough to decipher. He wrote over 21,000 different words, introducing 3,000 words in the Oxford English Dictionary. Some of the words he created are still used today, but many are not, and some now have completely different meanings from those they had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Shakespeare meant for his plays to be seen and heard, not read. His plays can be pretty static on the page. However, experiencing Shakespeare in the theatre can be wonderfully rewarding and memorable. Hopefully, after an actor has dissected the lines and meaning of the words with a dictionary in hand, the poetry of the language can allow the characters to speak in a way that moves the audience to feel the essential meaning. But let's face it, you are still asked to read this stuff, so let's figure out how Shakespeare structured and used poetic devices in his language.

Before considering the manner in which Shakespeare fashioned the dialogue of his plays, it is important to understand that Elizabethan life immersed all classes in an oral tradition. Unlike contemporary Americans who are conditioned by television, film and other visual media, Elizabethans relied heavily on the spoken word to gather important news and to amuse themselves with stories and conversation. Their ears were well tuned for fast moving dialogue and intricate poetic images.

Shakespeare relied upon the flexibility of English for contrasting sounds and rhythms. For example, he used polysyllabic words to make a line flow smoothly and swiftly ["If with myself I hold intelligence/ Or have acquaintance with mine own desires..."] and monosyllabic ones to slow it down and rhythmically punch its message ["To be or not to be/ That is the question."] He employed a vocabulary of more than 21,000 words and arranged those words in prose, as well as rhymed and blank (i.e. unrhymed) verse to create different dramatic qualities of character and atmosphere. The dramatic impact of his lines is often heightened by rich imagery and word play, and by such devices as antithesis, alliteration, and onomatopoeia.

When Shakespeare used verse he employed a structure called iambic pentameter. That means that a regular line of verse contains five units (pentameter) of a particular rhythm pattern made of a light followed by a strong stress (iambic). In other words the shape of an iambic pentameter line is:
de dum de dum de dum de dum de dum

It is a very natural rhythm in the English language; for instance,
Do you know where my mother left my lunch?

Shakespeare uses this pattern in both his blank and rhyming verse as the basis for normal speech and then creates dramatic effects by making changes in it. It sounds like a heart beat. Anyone can feel that rhythm.

When you read a sentence, the position of the individual words help you figure out the meaning of the phrase. "The monkey bit the child" and "The child bit the monkey" have different meanings depending on where the words are placed. Shakespeare often rearranges the verbs and subjects. Instead of "The monkey bit the child," he would have written "The child the monkey did bite." Instead of "I hit him" it would be "Him I hit." Shakespeare also separates words that would normally be together. For example, look at this phrase from *Measure for Measure* spoken by Isabella when challenging Angelo's authority:

But man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weep.

After stating the subject as man, the verb play doesn't appear until she has fully characterized "man," comparing him to "an angry ape."

Shakespeare omits words, delays them until other material with greater emphasis has been presented. He uses wordplay such as puns, metaphor, and simile. His stage directions were implied, spoken by actors as they gestured, wept, shook their fists. He was a poet. Poetry can be confusing, but it can also be beautiful. Because it is an art form, it is open for interpretation and is subjective. Understanding the devices Shakespeare used can help put the puzzle together, but ultimately, it is the impact the words have on you that make the story come alive.

Study of Shakespeare's texts will uncover gold mines of information, but careful listening can also reveal many facets of Shakespeare's plays. It is impossible to delineate rigid rules about his use of verse and prose, imagery or linguistic devices; just as his use of imagery changes from play to play and character to character, so does the meaning of his choice of style. Of course, someone performing the play must consider the specific language patterns; but, for an audience member, basic awareness of the linguistic variety is the first step to greater understanding and enjoyment. Learning to listen like Elizabethans is a matter of practice.



ACTIVITY

*Act II, scene i
In Brutus' Orchard*

*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 crowned:
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.
Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power. And to speak truth of Caesar,
I have not known when his affections swayed
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
Then lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
Will bear no color for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities.
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
(Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous)
And kill him in the shell.*

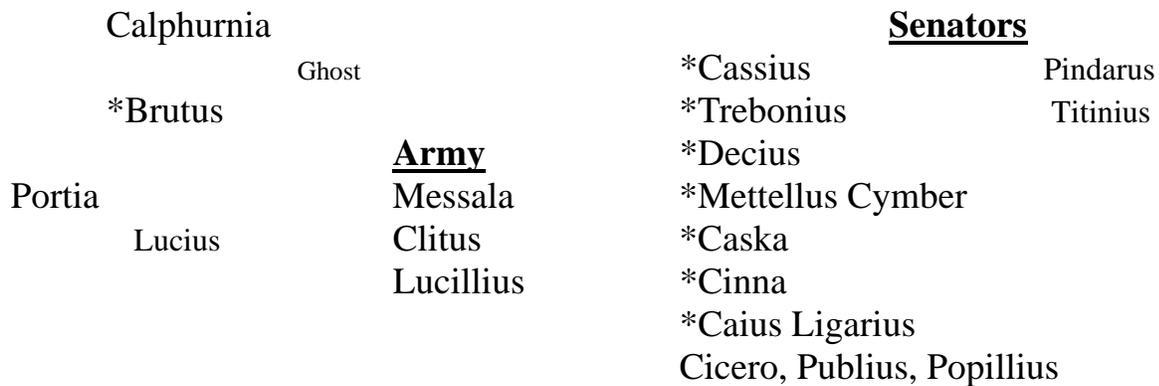
Go through this speech step by step together as a class. Take the time to look up every word that isn't clear. Just because you understand what the word "round" means today, it might not have the same meaning in this context. Practice using the rhythm of iambic pentameter, tapping out that heartbeat on your chest. If the line doesn't quite fall into rhythm, what does that tell you? Why do you think Shakespeare wanted you to pay closer attention to that line, and how it is different? How would summarize this speech in one or two sentences? Discuss the simile of Caesar as a snake. Do you agree with Brutus? Why or why not?

Character Diagram for Julius Caesar



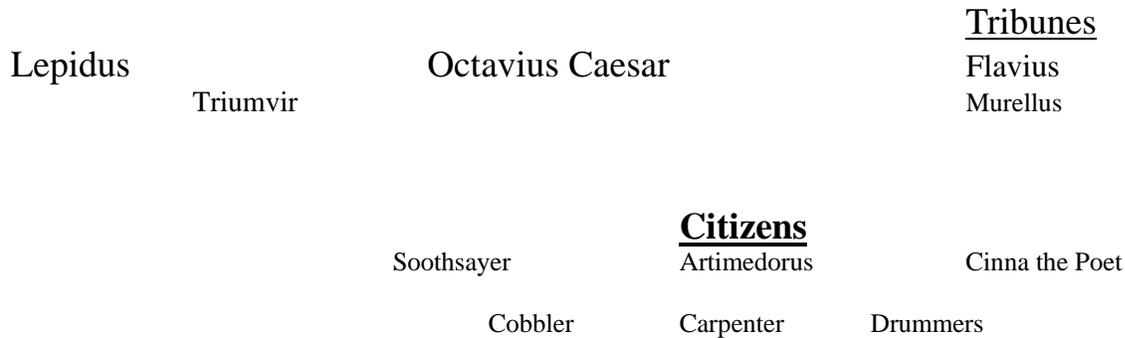
ACTIVITY: It can be difficult keeping everyone straight. Can you identify all of the different relationships between the characters? Use arrows to connect the characters (a completed diagram is on page 56)

Julius Caesar



Rulers of Rome after Caesar

Mark Antony



Character Diagram

Here is a completed character diagram.

