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| 12.2.2 | Lesson 5 |

# Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Act 1.3, lines 42–169 of *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare (from “Who’s there? / A Roman / Casca, by your voice” to “We will awake him and be sure of him”). This passage includes a dialogue between Cassius and Casca in which they discuss what will happen if Caesar becomes king, and Casca confirms his desire to join the conspiracy. Students analyze how Shakespeare develops multiple central ideas in this passage. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do two central ideas develop and interact in Act 1.3, lines 42–169?

For homework, students read Act 2.1, lines 1–93 of *Julius Caesar* (from “What, Lucius, ho! – / I cannot by the progress of the stars” to “to hide thee from prevention”) and respond to questions in preparation for the following lesson’s discussion.

# Standards

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| Assessed Standard(s) | |
| RL.11-12.2 | Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. |
| Addressed Standard(s) | |
| W.11-12.9.a | Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.   1. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”). |
| L.11-12.4.c | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.   1. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage. |
| L.11-12.5.a | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.   1. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text. |

# Assessment

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| Assessment(s) |
| Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.   * How do two central ideas develop and interact in Act 1.3, lines 42–169? |
| High Performance Response(s) |
| A High Performance Response should:   * Identify two central ideas that develop and interact in Act 1.3, lines 43–169 (e.g., exercise of power; the relationship of the individual to the state; social bonds). * Analyze how two central ideas develop and interact (e.g., The dialogue between Cassius and Casca develops the central idea of exercise of power through Cassius’s criticism of the people of Rome whose support provided the foundation for Caesar’s power. Cassius remarks that Caesar “would not be a wolf / But that he sees the Romans are but sheep; / He were no lion, were not Romans hinds” (lines 108–110). In doing so, Cassius suggests that it is not Caesar’s strength but the weakness of the people that puts Caesar in a position of power. Cassius uses the metaphor of the Roman people as “weak straws” (line 109), “trash” (line 112), “rubbish,” and “offal” (line 113) who serve as “base matter” (line 114) to fuel the “mighty fire” (line 111) of Caesar’s ambition. By comparing Caesar to predators and with fire, Cassius implies the potential danger of giving one man so much power in Rome. Cassius’s metaphors illustrate how the Romans’ willingness to accept Caesar’s power defines the relationship between individual Roman citizens and the Roman state, suggesting that Cassius’s resentment of Caesar’s exercise of power through the people is based not only on Cassius’s resentment of Caesar, but also on his opposition to a shift in the relationship between the individual and the state.). |

# Vocabulary

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| Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction) |
| * offal (n.) – the parts of a butchered animal that are considered inedible by human beings * redress (v.) – correct (something that is unfair or wrong) |
| Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions) |
| * \*unbracèd (adj.) – with doublet unfastened * \*ordinance (n.) – established order * \*thews (n.) – sinews * \*bondman (n.) – slave * \*fleering (adj.) – smiling obsequiously * \*factious (adj.) – active in the faction (against Caesar) * \*element (n.) – sky |
| Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly) |
| * bondage (n.) – the state of being a slave * straws (n.) – the dry stems of wheat and other grain plant * trash (n.) – things that are no longer wanted or useful and that have been thrown away * rubbish (n.) – things that are no longer wanted or useful and that have been thrown out * telltale (n.) – a child who tells a parent, teacher, etc., about something bad or wrong that another child has done |

* Words defined in the explanatory notes are marked with an asterisk.

# Lesson Agenda/Overview

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| Student-Facing Agenda | % of Lesson |
| **Standards & Text:**   * Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.c * Text: *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, Act 1.3: lines 42–169 |  |
| **Learning Sequence:**   1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Whole-Class Dramatic Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing | 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 65% 4. 15% 5. 5% |

# Materials

* Herbert Wise’s 1979 BBC version of *Julius Caesar* (27:10–33:21) (optional)
* Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 1) (optional)

# Learning Sequence

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| How to Use the Learning Sequence | |
| Symbol | Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol |
| **10%** | **Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.** |
| no symbol | Plain text indicates teacher action. |
| **Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.** |
| *Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.* |
| ⏵ | Indicates student action(s). |
| 🗨 | Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions. |
| 🛈 | Indicates instructional notes for the teacher. |

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda 5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.2. In this lesson, students participate in a whole-class dramatic reading of Act 1.3, lines 42–169 of *Julius Caesar* and analyze how central ideas develop and interact. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson.

* Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability 10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Read and annotate Act 1.3, lines 1–41 and respond briefly to the following questions.) Instruct students to discuss their responses in groups.

What events in lines 1–41 cause Casca to be “breathless”?

* Casca is breathless because he has seen several unusual phenomena. For example, he says he has seen “the sway of earth / [s]hakes like a thing unfirm” (lines 3–4) and “Th’ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam” (line 7). Casca has also witnessed a slave whose hand was on fire, but who “remained unscorched” (line 18).

Using context and the explanatory notes, explain what the “prodigies” are on line 28.

* The prodigies are extraordinary events or omens such as the unusual weather or strange events Casca has observed.

What does Casca believe is the meaning of the omens on lines 1–41?

* Casca says the omens are “portentous things / unto the climate that they point upon” (lines   
  31–32). He believes the omens foreshadow what will happen in Rome.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Whole-Class Dramatic Reading and Discussion 65%

Transition to a whole-class dramatic reading. Assign students the roles of Cassius, Casca, and Cinna for the dramatic reading. Post or project each set of questions for students to discuss. Instruct students to annotate for central ideas throughout the reading and discussion, using the code CI (W.11-12.9.a).

* If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
* **Differentiation Consideration**: Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

Why are Cassius and Casca concerned about the future of Rome?

Instruct students to read aloud Act 1.3, lines 42–82 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Who’s there? / A Roman / Casca, by your voice” to “’Tis Caesar that you mean, is it not, Cassius?”). Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following questions.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definitions of *unbracèd* and *ordinance* (L.11-12.4.c).

How does Cassius interpret the weather?

* Cassius explains the weather is sent from heaven as “instruments of fear and warning / Unto some monstrous state” (lines 73–74), which suggests the weather is a warning that there is something wrong in Rome. Cassius later suggests that the weather is a warning of Caesar becoming king. He describes Caesar as “a man / Most like this dreadful night” (lines 75–76), suggesting that Caesar is the source of the disruption.
* **Differentiation Consideration**: If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What imagery does Shakespeare use to develop the setting?

* Shakespeare uses words and phrases such as “blue lightning seemed to open / The breast of heaven” (lines 53–54), “dreadful heralds” (line 59), “impatience of the heavens” (line 64), “fires” (line 66), “gliding ghosts” (line 66), and “monstrous quality” (line 71) to develop the setting as a stormy, ominous night.

How does the phrase “A very pleasing night to honest men” (line 46) contribute to the development of Cassius’s character?

* Student responses may include:
  + These words draw attention to Cassius’s dishonest plans from the previous scene. In Act 1.2, Cassius says he will “throw” (line 328) letters forged to appear as if they are written “in several hands” (line 328) from “several citizens” (line 329). These previous actions complicate Cassius’s words, because although he claims in Act 1.3 that the conspirators are “honest men” (line 46), he is willing to use underhanded methods to advance his purpose.
  + At the same time, when Cassius says the stormy night is “very pleasing” to “honest men” (line 46), these words suggest that he believes that the conspirators are “honest men” whose intentions are honorable and that the omens are proof of the justice of his plans. This belief complicates Cassius’s character by showing him as both manipulative and sincere.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to read Act 1.3, lines 83–106 (from “Let it be who it is. For Romans now” to “his own hand bears / The power to cancel his captivity”). Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following questions.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definition of *thews* (L.11-12.4.c).

* Consider providing students with the definition of *bondage*.

Students write the definition of *bondage* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does Cassius suggest about Rome in lines 83–87?

* Cassius contrasts Romans of the past, “our fathers’ minds” (line 85), with contemporary Romans who are “governed with [their] mothers’ spirits” (line 86). Through this comparison, he implies that Romans have become weak in comparison to their ancestors, describing how Romans’ “yoke and sufferance show [them] womanish” (line 87).
* **Differentiation Consideration**: To support students’ comprehension, consider posing the following question:

How do Casca’s words on lines 88–91 advance the plot?

* Casca explains that the Senate plans to crown Caesar as king on the following day, saying they “[m]ean to establish Caesar as a king, / [a]nd he shall wear his crown by sea and land / [i]n every place save here in Italy” (lines 89–91).

What do lines 92–106 suggest about Cassius’s attitude towards kingship?

* Student response may include:
  + Cassius uses words like “bondage” (line 93) and “airless dungeon” (line 97). Together, these words show that for Cassius, submitting to a king is equivalent to captivity or slavery.
  + In response to Casca’s suggestion that Caesar is to be crowned king the following day, Cassius refers to “tyrants” (line 95) and “tyranny” (line 102), implying that he believes that should Caesar become king, his rule will be illegitimate and oppressive.

How do Cassius’s and Casca’s reactions to the possibility of Caesar becoming king develop a central idea in the text?

* Student responses may include:
  + Cassius’s and Casca’s reactions to the possibility of Caesar becoming king develop the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state by demonstrating their opposition to having a king. Cassius speaks in general terms of “tyrants” (line 95) and “tyranny” (line 102), suggesting that neither Casca nor Cassius fear Caesar as a man, but rather they fear the concept of having a king because it is a form of “bondage” (line 93) or “captivity” (line 106). They are as much opposed to the idea of a king as they are to Caesar as a man.
  + Cassius’s discussion of suicide develops the central idea of the exercise of power by pointing out the limits of a tyrant’s power over the individual. Cassius suggests that suicide is a way to exercise power and “defeat” tyrants (line 95). He points out the no captivity can contain the spirit, saying, “Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass / Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron / Can be retentive to the strength of spirit” (lines 96–98). His words highlight the contrast between physical restraint and the spiritual freedom offered by suicide.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to form small groups. Instruct students to reflect on the text and talk about any questions from this lesson’s discussion or passages from the text read so far that remain unclear or require additional reflection.

* Small groups engage in collaborative discussions about questions or parts of the text that require reflection.

Return to the whole-class dramatic reading and discussion. Instruct students to read Act 1.3, lines   
107–135 (from “And why should Caesar be a tyrant, then?” to “the work we have in hand, / Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible”). Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following questions.

Provide students with the definitions of *offal* and *redress*.

* Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
* Students write the definitions of *offal* and *redress* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definitions of *bondman*, *fleering*, *factious* and *element* (L.11-12.4.c).

* Consider providing students with the definitions of *straws*, *trash*, *rubbish*, and *telltale*.

Students write the definitions of *straws*, *trash*, *rubbish,* and *telltale* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How does the use of metaphors in lines 108–115 develop Cassius’s view of the people of Rome (L.11-12.5.a)?

* Student responses may include:
  + Cassius uses metaphor to criticize Romans for their weakness, which, in his view, has created a dangerous situation. He compares them to “sheep” (line 109) and “hinds” (line 110) whose weakness has allowed Caesar to become a “wolf” (line 108) or a “lion” (line 110). Through this metaphor, Cassius suggests that Caesar is only dangerous because the weakness of the people of Rome allows him to be so, and that “he would not be a wolf / But that he sees the Romans are but sheep” (lines 108–109).
  + Cassius further develops the idea that Romans would allow Caesar to control them by describing the Roman people as “weak straws” (line 109), “trash” (line 112), “rubbish,” and “offal” (line 113) who serve as “base matter” (line 114) to fuel the “mighty fire” (line 111) of Caesar’s ambition. Cassius’s uses of metaphor here demonstrates his contempt for his fellow Romans and his resentment that their weakness has allowed “[s]o vile a thing as Caesar” (line 115) to take a position of power.

How does the use of metaphor in lines 108–115 further develop a central idea in the text? (L.11-12.5.a)

* Student responses may include:
  + Cassius’s metaphors develop the central idea of exercise of power by highlighting his view that Caesar exercises power only through the weakness of the people. He states that “[Caesar] were no lion, were not Romans hinds” (line 110), suggesting that he believes that the basis of Caesar’s potential tyranny is the weakness of the people of Rome.
  + Cassius’s metaphors develop the central idea of the relationship between the individual and the state by associating Caesar’s rise to power through popular support with danger. Through the weakness of his fellow Romans, Caesar has become a “wolf” (line 108), a “lion” (line 110) who could prey on Rome and whose ambition is a “mighty fire” (line 111). In this way, Cassius suggests that the concentration of power in the hands of one man is dangerous.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following extension question to support student comprehension:

How do Cassius’s words on lines 108–115 develop the ideas he introduced about Caesar in Act 1.2?

* Cassius develops the idea that Caesar is not better than other men. He says that Romans may serve as “base matter to illuminate / so vile a thing as Caesar” (Act 1.3, lines 114–115). This builds upon the ideas Cassius introduced in Act 1.2. For example, Cassius shares the example of Caesar drowning and saying, “Help me, Cassius, or I sink” (Act 1.2, line 118). This story suggests that even though Caesar is powerful, he is not superior to other Romans.

How do lines 115–135 develop a central idea in the text?

* Student response may include:
  + Casca’s and Cassius’s discussion of the conspiracy develops the idea of social bonds through the emphasis that Cassius and Casca place on loyalty. In response to Cassius’s suggestion that he may be “a willing bondman” (line 117), Casca says that he is “no fleering telltale” (line 121). Casca’s use of the contemptuous word “fleering” here indicates the importance of loyalty and the bond between friends. His gesture in offering Cassius his hand to shake (line 121) and Cassius’s response that “[t]here’s a bargain made” (line 125), confirm the understanding that has been established between the two men.
  + The dialogue develops the central idea of ethics of honor because through the dialogue, Cassius and Casca frame the plan to assassinate Caesar as a matter of honor. Cassius first challenges Casca’s honor by suggesting that he may be a “willing bondman” (line 117), implying that if Casca supports Caesar or betrays him, then he is Caesar’s slave. Casca responds by asserting his honor through the claim that he is “such a man / That is no fleering telltale” (lines 120–121). The loyalty established between the two men is therefore one based on honor: it would be a betrayal of ethics of honor for Casca to inform against Cassius and the conspirators.
  + When discussing the conspiracy itself, Cassius calls it “an enterprise / of honorable-dangerous consequence” (lines 128–129) undertaken by “certain of the noblest-minded Romans” (line 127). In this way, Cassius establishes the assassination as an honorable exploit, one driven by ethics of honor, and in which Casca has promised he will go “as   
    far / As who goes farthest” (lines 123–124), suggesting that this is a matter of pride for him.

Lead a brief whole class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to read Act 1.3, lines 136–169 (from “Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste” to “We will awake him and be sure of him”). Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following questions.

**What do Casca’s words on lines 162**–**165 suggest about Brutus’s reputation and relationship to the conspirators?**

* Brutus is valuable to the conspiracy because he “sits high in all the people’s hearts” (line 162). Casca explains that if Brutus supports the conspiracy, the people will not see it as an “offense” (line 163), but will see it as “virtue and … worthiness” (line 165). The conspirators need Brutus because his reputation in Rome will give credibility and authority to the plan.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What does Cinna want Cassius to do to support the conspiracy?

* Cinna wants Cassius to convince Brutus to join the conspiracy. He says, “O, Cassius, if you could / But win the noble Brutus to our party—” (lines 145–146).

How does Cassius plan to persuade Brutus? How does this plan develop his description of the conspirators as “the noblest-minded Romans” (line 127)?

* Student responses may include:
  + Cassius plans to persuade Brutus by sending Cinna to deliver false letters and leave them where Brutus will find them. Cassius tells Cinna to leave a letter on the “Praetor’s chair” (line 148), to throw a letter “in at his window” (line 150), and to place a letter on “old Brutus’ statue” (line 151). Cassius believes that Brutus is “three parts” (line 159) of the way convinced, but reading the letters will help to fully convince him to join the conspirators.
  + Cassius’s plan complicates his description of the conspirators as “the noblest-minded Romans” (line 127). Previously, Cassius has appealed to Brutus on the grounds of honor, saying, “honor is the subject of my story” (Act 1.2, line 99). Here, however, he plans to use underhanded methods to persuade Brutus to join the conspiracy, suggesting that although this may be an “honorable-dangerous” (line 129) undertaking, Cassius is prepared to use dishonorable means to carry out his plans.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

* To support comprehension and fluency, consider showing Herbert Wise’s 1979 BBC version of *Julius Caesar* (27:10–33:21).

Activity 4: Quick Write 15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How do two central ideas develop and interact in Act 1.3, lines 42–169?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

* Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
* Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

* Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
* See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.
* Consider using the Short Response Rubric to assess students’ writing. Students may use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

Activity 5: Closing 5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate Act 2.1, lines 1–93 of *Julius Caesar* (from “What, Lucius, ho! – / I cannot by the progress of the stars” to “to hide thee from prevention”). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L.11-12.4.c). To support comprehension, instruct students to respond briefly to the following questions:

What does Brutus mean by “It must be by his death” (line 10)?

How does Shakespeare use metaphor to show Brutus’s concern about Caesar in lines 22–36? (L.11-12.5.a)

What do Brutus’s reflections in lines 64–93 suggest about his state of mind?

Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

* Students follow along.

# Homework

Read and annotate Act 2.1, lines 1–93 of *Julius Caesar* (from “What, Lucius, ho! – / I cannot by the progress of the stars” to “to hide thee from prevention”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text. Respond briefly to the following questions:

What does Brutus mean by “It must be by his death” (line 10)?

How does Shakespeare use metaphor to show Brutus’s concern about Caesar in lines 22–36?

What do Brutus’s reflections in lines 64–93 suggest about his state of mind?

Use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in your written responses.