

12.2.2 Lesson 13

Introduction

In this lesson, students read Act 3.1, lines 231-301 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Mark Antony - / Pardon me, Caius Cassius ” to “With carrion men groaning for burial”), focusing their analysis on Antony’s soliloquy, in which Antony stands over Caesar’s corpse and pledges vengeance against the conspirators. Students consider the different ways in which Antony and Brutus interpret Caesar’s death and the events leading up to it. Students consider the ways in which these conflicting interpretations of events drive the action of the play. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Antony’s soliloquy advance the plot of the play?

For homework, students read and summarize Act 3.1, line 302 to Act 3.2, line 12 of *Julius Caesar* (from “You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?” to “The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence”). Additionally, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on the interactions between Brutus and the Plebeians, and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

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Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W. 11-12.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>a. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> 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").</p>
L. 11-12.4.a, c	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>c. 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.</p>

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 does Antony's soliloquy advance the plot of the play?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze how Antony's soliloquy advances the plot of the play (e.g., Antony's soliloquy advances the plot by establishing a new conflict in the play, between Antony's interpretation and the conspirators' interpretation of Caesar's death. In the first four lines of his soliloquy, Antony immediately establishes that his allegiance lies with Caesar, emphasizing his love for Caesar who he calls "the noblest man / that ever lived" (Act 3.1, lines 282-283). Antony then echoes the imagery in Brutus's speech to craft his opposing interpretation of Caesar's death as the very bloody and cruel "savage spectacle" that Brutus argues against (Act 3.1, line 244). While Brutus frames Caesar's assassination as a necessary sacrifice for the good of Rome, declaring, "Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods / Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds" (Act 2.1, lines 186-187), Antony describes the conspirators as "butchers" and Caesar's body as a "bleeding piece of earth" (Act 3.1, lines 280-281) to emphasize the horror of Caesar's death and the "destruction" Caesar's murder will bring to Rome (Act 3.1, line 291). Antony's soliloquy suggests that his interpretation of Caesar's death is irreconcilable with Brutus's view of the assassination as a ritual act necessary to bring about peace. Thus, Antony's soliloquy advances the plot not only by setting up a new conflict in the play centered around competing understandings of Caesar's death, but also by suggesting that the conflict will result in more action, namely "war" (Act 3.1, line 299).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- strife (n.) - very angry or violent disagreement between two or more people or groups

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- light (v.) - to fall unexpectedly on or upon

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- utterance (n.) - vocal expression; speech
- meek (adj.) - having or showing a quiet or gentle nature; not wanting to fight or argue with other people
- ruins (n.) - the remaining pieces of something that was destroyed
- woe (n.) - a feeling of great pain or sadness
- prophesy (v.) - to state that something will happen in the future; predict
- custom (n.) - something that is done regularly by a person
- confines (n.) - the limits or edges of something
- monarch (n.) - a person (such as a king or queen) who rules a kingdom or empire

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.a, c • Text: <i>Julius Caesar</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 3.1: lines 231-301 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading and Jigsaw Activity 4. Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 35% 4. 35% 5. 10% 6. 5%

Materials

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 13 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

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- Free audio resource: <https://librivox.org/julius-caesar-by-william-shakespeare/>
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 1) (optional)

Learning Sequence

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.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	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.11-12.5. In this lesson, students read Act 3.1, lines 231-301 of *Julius Caesar* and analyze how Antony's soliloquy advances the plot of the play.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read Act 3.1, lines 231-301 of *Julius Caesar*. Respond briefly in writing to the following question.) Instruct students to discuss their responses in pairs.

How does Antony's character continue to develop over the course of lines 231-301?

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- Lines 231-301 show that Antony's pledge of friendship and "love" to the conspirators (line 241) is a strategic decision intended to prevent the conspirators from discovering his true feelings about their "foul deed" (line 300), and his plans to exact revenge on the "butchers" (line 281) who "shed" Caesar's "blood" (line 284). These lines suggest that Antony's loyalty to Caesar is genuine, and that he is a man who knows how to manipulate others and hide his own feelings in order to further his own agenda.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified for homework (L. 11-12.4.c).

- Students may identify the following word: *strife*.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *utterance, meek, ruins, woe, prophesy, custom, confines, and monarch*.
- Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading and Jigsaw Activity

35%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 3.1, lines 231-301 of *Julius Caesar* (from "Mark Antony— / Pardon me, Caius Cassius" to "With carrion men groaning for burial.")

- Students follow along, reading silently.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

How does Antony's soliloquy establish a new conflict in the play?

- For this and other masterful readings in 12.2.2, consider using <https://librivox.org/julius-caesar-by-william-shakespeare/> or another audio version of *Julius Caesar*.

Inform students that this part of the lesson includes a jigsaw discussion, in which half the students answer one set of questions and the other half answers a different set. Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project the following focus questions:

Focus Question 1: What do Cassius's words and actions suggest about his opinion of Antony in this scene?

Focus Question 2: What do Brutus's words and actions suggest about his opinion of Antony in this scene?

Assign half of the student pairs to respond to Focus Question 1, and the other half of the student pairs to respond to Focus Question 2. Instruct students to review this lesson's focus excerpt (Act 3.1, 235-301) and work in their pairs to answer their focus question, drawing on evidence from throughout the focus excerpt in their responses.

- Students work in their pairs to answer their focus question.

Once student pairs have answered their focus question, instruct each pair to form a group of 4 with a student pair that answered a different focus question. Instruct student groups to compare Cassius's and Brutus's opinions of Antony, drawing upon evidence from throughout the focus excerpt to support their analysis.

- See below for possible student responses.

What do Cassius's words and actions suggest about his opinion of Antony in this scene?

- Student responses may include:
 - Cassius warns Brutus, "You know not what you do" (line 255) because he thinks it is a mistake to allow Antony to "speak" at Caesar's "funeral" (line 257). Cassius's warning suggests that he believes Antony is their enemy, rather than, as Antony promised, "friends ... with ... all" (line 241) the conspirators.
 - Cassius's warning against allowing Antony to speak at the funeral suggests that he thinks Antony has the power to persuade, or "move[]" the common "people" (line 258), and that this power makes him a threat to the conspirators.
 - Cassius's aside to Brutus, "I know not what may fall. I like it not" (line 268) suggests that he believes Antony will cause trouble for the conspirators.

What do Brutus's words and actions suggest about his opinion of Antony in this scene?

- Student responses may include:
 - Brutus's insistence that allowing Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral will "advantage more than do us wrong" (line 267) suggests that he believes Antony does not intend, or have the power, to move[] the "people" as Cassius fears (line 258).
 - Brutus responds to Antony's questions about the reasons behind Caesar's death by reassuring him that "Our reasons are so full of good regard / That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar / You should be satisfied" (lines 245-247). This statement

suggests that Brutus believes Antony will be moved by the conspirators' reasons, rather than by his emotions.

- Brutus's confident command that "You shall not in your funeral speech blame us / But speak all good you can devise of Caesar / And say you do 't by our permission" (lines 270-272) suggests that although there is a possibility Antony may intend to speak against the conspirators, Brutus believes Antony will obey his orders.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

35%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.a).

Instruct student groups to read Act 3.1, lines 280-301 (from "O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth," to "With carrion men groaning for burial") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What do lines 280-283 suggest about where Antony's loyalties lie?

- Student responses may include:
 - Antony begs Caesar's forgiveness for being "meek and gentle" (line 281) with the conspirators, saying, "O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth" (line 281). This statement suggests that Antony is ashamed of his previous show of friendship with the conspirators, and worried about what Caesar would think of his submissive attitude.
 - Antony refers to the conspirators as "butchers" (line 281), suggesting that he believes their actions are bloody and horrific, and is therefore opposed to them.
 - Antony gives Caesar the highest compliment by referring to him as "the noblest man" (line 282). This praise demonstrates the love and respect that Antony has for Caesar, and suggests that his loyalty lies with Caesar, rather than the "butchers" who killed him (line 281).

What course of action does Antony want to take in response to Caesar's death?

- Antony's threat, "Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!" (line 284) suggests that he wants to avenge Caesar's death by fighting the conspirators.

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What does Antony “prophecy” will be the outcome of Caesar’s death in Act 3.1?

- Student answers may include:
 - Antony predicts that Caesar’s death will bring death and destruction to all of Rome when he states, “A curse shall light upon the limbs of men; / domestic fury and fierce civil strife / Shall cumber all the parts of Italy” (lines 286-290). Antony then describes these horrors, such as “infants quartered with the hands of war” (line 294).
 - Antony predicts that Caesar’s ghost will return, “ranging for revenge” (line 296) for the “foul deed” (line 300) of Caesar’s murder. With the goddess Ate “come hot from hell” (line 297), “Caesar’s spirit” (line 296) will “let slip the dogs of war” (line 299), or unleash a war against the conspirators.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

How does Antony’s description of the future clarify what *light* (Act 3.1, line 288) means in this context? (L.11-12.4.a)

- Antony states that a “curse” will “light” upon all Romans (line 288), and then proceeds to describe the horrible “war” (line 294) and “blood and destruction” (line 291) that will occur in the future. Antony’s prediction suggests that the “curse” he speaks of will bring about the “dreadful” (line 292) events he describes. Therefore, *light* means “to happen to or befall.”

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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- Consider instructing students to reread Brutus’s description of Caesar’s assassination in Act 2.1, lines 179-193 (from “Let’s be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius” to “We shall be called purgers, not murderers”) before they respond to the following questions.

How does Antony’s description of Caesar’s death in Act 3.1 compare to the way in which Brutus describes the assassination in Act 2.1, lines 179-193? What does this comparison suggest about how Antony sees Caesar’s death?

- Student responses may include:
 - While planning Caesar’s assassination, Brutus describes the conspirators as “sacrificers, but not butchers” (line 179) and “purgers, not murderers” (line 193),

while Antony describes them as “butchers” (Act 3.1, line 281). This suggests that Antony understands Caesar’s death as a violent murder.

- Antony’s repeated references in Act 3.1 to Caesar’s “blood” (line 284) and “bleeding” (line 280) and his many “wounds” (line 285) contrasts with Brutus’s description of the assassination, in which he imagines killing the bloodless “spirit” of Caesar, rather than his body (Act 2.1, line 181). Antony’s emphasis on how horrible and disgusting Caesar’s death was suggests that he sees Caesar’s death as a bloody murder.

Compare how Antony and Brutus use figurative language in their descriptions of Caesar’s death.

- Student responses should include:
 - In Act 2.1, lines 186-187, Brutus compares the process of killing Caesar to the act of making a sacrificial offering to the gods when he counsels, “Let’s carve him as a dish fit for the gods” (line 186). Brutus then contrasts this with a description of a pointless and bloody death when he says, “Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds” (line 187). This comparison suggests that Brutus understands Caesar’s death as a necessary sacrifice for the good of all, rather than an ordinary and potentially senseless killing like that of an animal.
 - In his soliloquy, Antony draws upon the same imagery that Brutus uses in Act 2.1, when he describes Caesar’s body in Act 3.1 as “thou bleeding piece of earth” (line 280) and the conspirators as “butchers” (line 281) in order to emphasize that Caesar’s assassination was the very bloody and cruel “savage spectacle” that Brutus argues against (line 244). Antony reinforces this connection when he calls for war using the imagery of rotting corpses, or “carrion men groaning for burial” (lines 299-301), a very similar image to that of Brutus’s “carcass fit for hounds” (Act 2.1, line 187).

How does Antony’s description of the consequences of Caesar’s death in Act 3.1 compare to the consequences that Brutus envisions in Act 2.1, lines 179-193?

- In Act 3.1, Antony predicts that Caesar’s death will have disastrous consequences for all of Rome’s citizens because it will bring death, “war” (line 294), and “destruction” (line 291) to all people—“men” (line 288), “mothers” (line 293), and “infants” (line 294) alike. Antony’s prediction contrasts with Brutus’s vision of Caesar’s assassination as a “sacrifice[]” for the good of Roman people (Act 2.1, line 179), which he believes will “purge[]” (Act 2.1, line 193) Rome of evil, and therefore heal, or bring peace, to Rome.

Lead a brief whole class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

How does Antony’s soliloquy advance the plot of the play?

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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and summarize Act 3.1, line 302 to Act 3.2, line 12 of *Julius Caesar* (from “You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?” to “The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence”). Instruct students to develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on the interactions between Brutus and the Plebeians, and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read and summarize Act 3.1, line 302 to Act 3.2, line 12 of *Julius Caesar* (from “You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?” to “The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence”). Develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on the interactions between Brutus and the Plebeians, and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

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