

12.2.2 Lesson 9

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Act 2.2, lines 1-137 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight” to “The heart of Brutus earns to think upon”), in which Decius convinces Caesar to come to the Capitol. Students analyze how Shakespeare develops Caesar’s character as vain and ambitious through his interactions with Decius in these lines. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Shakespeare develop Caesar’s character in Act 2.2, lines 1-137?

For homework, students read and summarize Act 2.3 and Act 2.4, box unfamiliar words, and look up their definitions. Additionally, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how the interactions between characters advance the plot and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL. 11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
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.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>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

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

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 Shakespeare develop Caesar's character in Act 2.2, lines 1-137?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze how Shakespeare develops Caesar's character (e.g., In these lines, Decius's manipulation of Caesar demonstrates that Caesar's weakness lies in his vanity. Decius flatters Caesar by reinterpreting Calphurnia's dream, in which Caesar's statue "like a fountain with an hundred spouts, / Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans / Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it" (lines 82-84), as a "vision fair and fortunate" (line 89). Decius continues to flatter Caesar by informing him that the Senate plans to crown him. Decius succeeds in convincing Caesar to appear at the Capitol by targeting Caesar's vanity, just as he told the conspirators he would do in Act 2.1. Caesar says little in response to Decius, suggesting that he is content to listen to Decius tell him what he wants to hear: that Calphurnia's dream is not full of "warnings and portents / And evils imminent," but rather a vision of his future greatness, and that he is in fact about to be crowned (lines 85-86). Decius's approach to persuading Caesar, and his success in doing so, suggests that his judgment of Caesar in Act 2.1, lines 219-228 is accurate: Caesar is vain and open to flattery. Moreover, Caesar's willingness to be flattered and to go the Capitol upon hearing that he is to receive a crown suggests that he was insincere in his earlier refusal of kingship in Act 1.2, and that he is indeed as ambitious as the conspirators suspect.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- whelpèd (v.) - given birth
- entrails (n.) - internal organs of an animal

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

- None.

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

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

- littered (adj.) - given birth to
- amiss (adj.) - wrong
- mock (n.) - an act of ridicule

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.c • Text: <i>Julius Caesar</i> by Williams Shakespeare, Act 2.2: lines 1-137 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 15% 4. 55% 5. 10% 6. 5%

Materials

- 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.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read Act 2.2, lines 1-137 (from “Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight” to “The heart of Brutus earns to think upon”), and analyze how Shakespeare develops Caesar’s character through his interactions with Decius.

- 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 Act 2.1, lines 335-362 (from “Here is a sick man that would speak with you” to “That Brutus leads me on. / Follow me then”) and respond to the following prompt: Explain how the references to “sickness” in lines 347-354 differ in meaning from Brutus’s statement in line 277 that he is “not well in health, and that is all.”) Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their responses to the homework question.

- Initially, sickness is the excuse that Brutus uses to explain his odd behavior to Portia. Portia believes Brutus is being dishonest, and the audience knows Brutus is lying. Sickness, then, becomes a metaphor for the secret plot to kill Caesar. Brutus and Ligarius use sickness as a code to talk about the conspiracy and affirm their shared

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

purpose. Ligarius assures Brutus that if Brutus has in hand an “exploit worthy the name of honor” (line 343), then Ligarius will “discard [his] sickness” along with his head covering, and so reveal himself to be allied with the conspirators (line 347). As the conversation continues, however, sickness becomes a metaphor for the condition of Rome when Brutus describes the assassination as “[a] piece of work that will make sick men whole” (line 354), referring to Rome’s citizens who live under Caesar’s potentially corrupt tyranny in this context. Next, sickness is used as a metaphor for the cure of Rome’s sickness; in order to revive the “sick men” of Rome, Ligarius asks, “[A]re not some whole that [the conspirators] must make sick?” (line 355). “[S]ome whole” refers to Caesar and “make sick” (line 355) refers to the assassination. Sickness is both the lie used to cover up the plot against Caesar and the actual act of Caesar’s murder.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

15%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 2.2, lines 1-137 (from “Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight” to “The heart of Brutus earns to think upon”). Instruct students to focus on how Shakespeare develops Caesar’s character in these lines.

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

Why does Caesar refuse to believe Calphurnia’s dream and the omens?

- 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*.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

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

Instruct students to read Act 2.2, lines 1-60 (from “Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight” to “And for thy humor I will stay at home”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *whelpèd* and *entrails*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015
© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

- Students write the definitions of *whelpèd* and *entrails* on their copies of the text or on a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *littered*.
- Students write the definition of *littered* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How do Shakespeare's choices about how to begin the scene establish mood?

- Student responses should include:
 - Caesar's words create a tense and foreboding mood in lines 1-3. He states, "Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight" (line 1), implying that there is unrest among the gods and the citizens of Rome. Caesar also reveals that Calphurnia has screamed three times in the night, "Help ho, they murder Caesar!" (line 3), intensifying the foreboding mood with the suggestion of Caesar's death.
 - In lines 5 and 6, Caesar commands his servant to ask the priests to make a sacrifice to interpret his fate, suggesting that Caesar is concerned about Calphurnia's outbursts in the night.
 - The ominous stage direction "[t]hunder and lightning" at the beginning of the scene creates an ominous mood and suggests danger is near (line 0.1).
- The focus excerpt in this lesson begins and ends with stage directions. Stage directions are identified using "0.1" in the line reference to show that the stage direction follows the numbered line.

Why does Calphurnia not want Caesar to go to the Capitol?

- Student responses should include:
 - Caesar suggests in the scene's opening lines that Calphurnia has dreamt of a group of people who "murder Caesar!" (line 3).
 - Calphurnia sees omens that are "beyond all use" (line 25), or so unusual that she "fear[s] them" (line 26). Calphurnia states that she "never stood on ceremonies" (line 13), meaning she never believed in omens. However, "the watch" (line 16) saw several bad omens in the night including a lioness in the street and "graves" that "yawned and yielded up their dead" (line 18).

What effect do the omens in lines 13-26 create?

- Omens like “clouds ... Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol” (lines 19-21) and ghosts that “shriek and squeal about the streets” (line 24) suggest danger for Caesar and build upon the unease he expresses in lines 1-7. The omens create a tense mood or atmosphere.

How does the statement “[c]owards die many times before their deaths; / The valiant never taste of death but once” (lines 34-35), develop Caesar’s point of view of death and fate?

- Caesar’s statement “[c]owards die many times before their deaths; / The valiant never taste of death but once” suggests that Caesar believes it is better to face death without fear rather than to be constantly tormented by the threat of death. Cowards, or those who do not confront danger or challenge, fear death, and this fear leads them to experience death many times in their imaginations. The brave face danger and challenge without fear of death. Thus, the brave experience death only once, when they physically die.

What does Caesar’s response to the omens suggest about his character?

- Caesar’s disregard for the omens suggests he is arrogant. Instead of taking the omens as a warning, Caesar sees them as a challenge from the gods, who, he believes, provide the bad omens “in shame of cowardice,” or to test his courage (line 44). But Caesar values his pride over his own life, which he demonstrates by stating twice that he “shall go forth” despite the bad omens (line 51). Caesar also believes that he “is more dangerous” than any danger that would befall him (line 48). Caesar’s confidence also suggests that he sees himself as above the powers of fate, which contradicts his statement that one’s death is “purposed by the mighty gods,” or decided by the gods (line 28).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following extension question to deepen students’ understanding:

How does Shakespeare use figurative language to develop Caesar’s response to the omens?

- Student responses may include:
 - Caesar says, “Danger knows full well / That Caesar is more dangerous than he,” personifying danger by giving danger the human ability to know (lines 47-48). However, Caesar undermines the power of danger by suggesting that Caesar himself is more powerful.
 - Recalling Calphurnia’s earlier reference to the omen of a lioness who “whelpèd” (line 17), or gave birth, in the streets, Caesar uses metaphor to reassert

his belief in his own authority when he says that he and danger are “two lions littered in one day” (line 49), and that Caesar is the more powerful lion.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to read Act 2.2, lines 61-112 (from “Here’s Decius Brutus; he shall tell them so” to “Give me my robe, for I will go”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *amiss* and *mock*.
 - Students write the definitions of *amiss* and *mock* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What do Shakespeare’s specific word choices in lines 66-68 suggest about Caesar’s character?

- Shakespeare’s specific word choices emphasize that it is choice, not weakness, that keeps Caesar from the Capitol. Caesar is careful to point out that “[c]annot is false, and that I dare not, falser,” and repeats that “I will not come today” (lines 67-68). These word choices show Caesar’s pride; Shakespeare’s choice of verbs emphasizes that Caesar chooses to refrain from going to the Capitol not because he is weak or afraid, but because he does not wish to.

How does Decius convince Caesar to go to the Capitol?

- Although Calphurnia sees her dream of Caesar’s statue spouting blood as “warnings and portents / And evils imminent” (lines 85-86), Decius claims she actually saw a “vision fair and fortunate” (line 89). Decius claims that Caesar’s “statue spouting blood” (line 90) means that Caesar will be seen as a great ruler under whose rule “great Rome shall suck / Reviving blood” (lines 92- 93), and that people will want tokens of him: “tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance” (line 94). By reinterpreting Calphurnia’s dream in these ways, Decius appeals to Caesar’s vanity to convince him to go to the Capitol.

How does Caesar’s response to Decius develop Caesar’s character?

- Student responses may include:
 - Caesar’s response to Decius suggests that he is easily flattered and swayed. At first, Caesar relents to Calphurnia, but when Decius reinterprets Calphurnia’s

dream to mean that Caesar will be a great ruler from which “great Rome shall suck / Reviving blood” (lines 92-93), and that the Senate plans to give “mighty Caesar” (line 99) a crown, Caesar changes his mind.

- Caesar’s reaction to Decius develops his character further by demonstrating Caesar’s pride. Decius convinces Caesar that he would appear to be “afraid” if he failed to attend the Senate (line 106). Faced with the prospect of appearing weak or nervous, Caesar concludes that Calphurnia’s fears are “foolish” (line 110).
- Caesar changes his mind after Decius suggests that “the Senate have concluded / To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar” (lines 98-99), implying that Caesar may be as ambitious as the conspirators suspect, and that his refusal of the crown in Act 1.2 may have been an act (lines 98-99).
- Caesar’s brief response to Decius affirms Decius’s opinion of Caesar: “But when I tell him he hates flatterers, / He says he does, being then most flatterèd” (Act 2.1, lines 224-225). In other words, Caesar welcomes and is easily manipulated by compliments.

What effect do Trebonius and Brutus’s asides create in the text?

- Trebonius’s and Brutus’s asides create tension by suggesting that Caesar is about to die. Trebonius’s aside reveals that the conspirators are about to kill Caesar, as Trebonius predicts, “so near will I be / That your best friends shall wish I had been further” (line 132-133). Brutus’s aside reveals his heart “earns,” or grieves, for Caesar because Brutus loves Caesar, yet knows that he and the others will kill Caesar (line 137).

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 Shakespeare develop Caesar’s character in Act 2.2, lines 1-137?

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.

File: 12.2.2 Lesson 9 Date: 2/13/15 Classroom Use: Starting 2/2015
© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

- 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, students read and summarize Act 2.3 and Act 2.4 (from “*Caesar, beware of Brutus, take heed of Cassius*” to “And bring me word what he doth say to thee”). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text (L. 11-12.4.c).

Additionally, instruct students to develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how the interactions between characters advance the plot. Instruct students to prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read and summarize Act 2.3 and Act 2.4 (from “*Caesar, beware of Brutus, take heed of Cassius*” to “And bring me word what he doth say to thee”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Additionally, develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how the interactions between characters advance the plot. Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.