

# 12.2.2 Lesson 19

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read Act 5.3, lines 1-79 of *Julius Caesar* (from “O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!” to “But kill’st the mother that engendered thee!”), in which Cassius mistakes Titinius’s movements on the battlefield for defeat and takes his own life. Students participate in an evidence-based discussion as they draw upon their previous work with tragedy to analyze how Cassius’s death contributes to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Cassius’s death contribute to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*?

For homework, students read and summarize Act 5.3, lines 80-123 of *Julius Caesar* (from “What, Pindarus! Where art thou, Pindarus?” to “We shall try fortune in a second fight”) and respond to two discussion questions. Additionally, students read and summarize Act 5.4, lines 1-33 (from “Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!” to “And bring us word unto Octavius’ tent / How everything is chanced”).

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## 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	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. 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").
SL.11-12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11-12 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)
L. 11-12.5.a	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. 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 does Cassius's death contribute to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*?

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze how Cassius's death contributes to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar* (e.g., Although Cassius is not a tragic hero because he is not at the center of the play's conflict, his death contributes to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar* by presenting the death of an important character. Cassius's involvement in the conspiracy and, ultimately, his own "hateful error" (line 75) result in his death. Cassius's dying remark, "Caesar, thou art revenged / Even with the sword that killed thee" (lines 50-51), represents a moment of recognition and awareness, in which Cassius acknowledges that his initial error of judgment in killing Caesar has now brought about his own downfall. Although Cassius's men have just won an important victory, and Brutus remains alive, Titinius suggests that the conspirators' "day is gone" (line 70). In this way, Shakespeare implies that, while the action of the play has not yet concluded, the conflict begun with Caesar's death has reached a partial resolution with the death of one of the leaders of the conspiracy, Cassius.).

## Vocabulary

**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- regard (v.) - look at (someone or something)

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

- None.

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

- slew (v.) - killed (someone or something), especially in a battle or war
- yonder (adv.) - at or in that place; over there
- bowels (n.) - the long tube in the body that helps digest food and carries solid waste out of the body
- bosom (n.) - a person's chest

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, <a href="#">SL.11-12.6</a>, L.11-12.5.a</li> <li>Text: <i>Julius Caesar</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 5.3: lines 1-79</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>Homework Accountability</li> <li>Masterful Reading</li> <li>Reading and Discussion</li> <li>Quick Write</li> <li>Preparation for End-of-Unit Assessment (Optional)</li> <li>Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5%</li> <li>10%</li> <li>10%</li> <li>45%</li> <li>10%</li> <li>15%</li> <li>5%</li> </ol>

## 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)

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## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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 5.3, lines 1-79 of *Julius Caesar* and analyze how Cassius's death contributes to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*.

- 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 5.1, line 72 to Act 5.2, line 6 of *Julius Caesar*. Additionally, conduct a brief search into the historical figure of Epicurus and his beliefs using <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/epicurus/>. Then respond briefly in writing to the following questions.) Instruct students to discuss their responses in pairs.

**What does Cassius's statement "[Y]ou know that I held Epicurus strong / And his opinion. Now I change my mind" (Act 5.1, lines 84-85) suggest about his attitude toward death and fate?**

- Epicurus's "opinion" (line 85) refers to a system of philosophy that attacks superstition and divine intervention, and does not believe that there is punishment after death for

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wrongdoings. Cassius's statement that he used to believe strongly in Epicurus's ideas implies that Cassius was once skeptical about superstitions. However, he has since "change[d]" his "mind" (line 85), suggesting that he now believes in the power of fate, or "partly credit[s] things that do presage" (line 86), such as the bad omens he describes to Messala.

**What does the conversation between Cassius and Brutus in lines 102-132 suggest about their respective values?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Brutus responds to Cassius's question about what he will do if they lose the battle by explaining that he believes suicide is "cowardly and vile" (line 113), and that it is best to let the "high powers" (line 116) decide his fate. This response suggests that Brutus values the "patience" (line 115) required to trust in divine guidance, as well as the courage that it takes to face "what might fall" (line 114), or the uncertainty of the outcome of battle, without fear.
  - Cassius responds to Brutus's argument against suicide by asking, "Then, if we lose this battle, / You are contented to be led in triumph / Thorough the streets of Rome?" (lines 118-120). Cassius's shocked tone suggests that he believes that military defeat is an unbearable outcome, and suggests that he values victory and the preservation of his freedom, honor, and dignity.
  - Brutus responds to Cassius's question by reassuring Cassius, "Think not, thou noble Roman, / That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome" (lines 121-122). This suggests that despite his stance against suicide, Brutus also values his freedom, honor, and dignity.

**How do Act 5.1 and Act 5.2 advance the plot of the play?**

- Act 5.1 and Act 5.2 set the stage for the final battle between Antony, Octavius, Brutus, and Cassius. Brutus declares that, regardless of the outcome of the battle, he will not be taken prisoner, and reflects that "this same day / Must end that work the ides of March begun" (Act 5.1, line 124). These words establish the battle that begins in Act 5.2 as the deciding event in the conflict begun with Caesar's assassination.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 5.3, lines 1-79 of *Julius Caesar* (from “O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!” to “But kill’st the mother that engendered thee!”) Ask students to listen for the effect that Shakespeare creates through the events in this passage.

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

What effect do the events in this passage create for the audience?

- 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

45%

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 student groups to read Act 5.3, lines 1-55 of *Julius Caesar* (from “O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!” to “Where never Roman shall take note of him”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definition of *regard*.

- Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing it to the group.
  - Students write the definition of *regard* on their copies of the text or in their vocabulary journals.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *slew*, *yonder*, *bowels*, and *bosom*.
  - Students write the definitions of *slew*, *yonder*, *bowels*, and *bosom* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Why does Cassius choose to die? What does this decision suggest about his character?

- Student responses should include:

- Cassius chooses to end his life by asking Pindarus to stab him because Cassius believes he has lost the battle, because of Brutus's over-“eager[]” decision to send all his troops into battle at once (Act 5.3, line 7). He also believes that his best friend Titinius is dead because Pindarus has informed Cassius that Titinius “is enclosed round about / With horsemen” (Act 5.3, lines 29-30), and has been captured by the enemy. Cassius feels like a “coward” (Act 5.3, line 36) for doing nothing while his best friend was captured, and he fears the shame of being “led in triumph / Thorough the streets of Rome” (Act 5.1, lines 119-120), as he described to Brutus in Act 5.1.
- Student responses may include:
  - Cassius's decision to commit suicide suggests that he is impulsive, because he makes a crucial decision without confirming the facts presented to him by Pindarus. Rather than taking the time to determine the truth of the events Pindarus describes, Cassius hurriedly tells Pindarus to “come down, behold no more” (Act 5.3, line 35) and immediately thereafter gives Pindarus the order to “stab[]” him (line 49.1).
  - Cassius's decision to commit suicide suggests that he has a strong sense of loyalty and honor to his friends, because he would rather die than live a “coward” (Act 5.3, line 36) who watched his “best friend ta'en before [his] face!” (line 37).
  - Cassius's decision to end his own life suggests that he has a strong sense of duty and honor to his country and his cause, because he would rather die than “fly further off!” or run away, as Pindarus orders him (Act 5.3, line 9), or be “ta'en” by the enemy (line 33).
  - Cassius's decision to end his own life suggests that he believes in his own free will, rather than putting his faith in “high powers” (Act 5.1, line 116), unlike Brutus, who in Act 5.1 describes Cato's suicide as “cowardly and vile” (line 113), and states that he would rather leave his own fate to “high powers” (line 116).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding questions:

### How does the news Titinius brings in lines 5-8 advance the plot of the play?

- Titinius informs Cassius that Brutus's decision to send all his troops into battle at once was a fatal mistake, and that “[Brutus's] soldiers fell to spoil, / Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed” (lines 7-8). In other words, the battle has turned against them.

### What does Pindarus advise Cassius to do? How does Cassius respond?



- Pindarus advises Cassius to flee because Antony's troops have entered Cassius's "tents," or his camp (line 10). Cassius refuses, and instead asks his "best friend" Titinius (line 37) to go see if the approaching troops are "friend or enemy" (line 19), because he is unsure whether or not his forces have beaten Antony.

#### What does Cassius request of Pindarus in lines 21-23? Why?

- Cassius asks Pindarus to climb a hill and observe the situation on the battlefield because his "sight" is bad (line 22).

#### What realization do Cassius's final words convey?

- Cassius's final declaration, "Caesar, thou art revenged / Even with the sword that killed thee" (lines 50-51), suggests that he realizes that his role in Caesar's assassination has led to his downfall, because Antony's desire to avenge Caesar's death has led to civil war that Cassius believes he has lost. Cassius recognizes that Pindarus uses the very same sword that Cassius used to kill Caesar to stab Cassius, which reinforces the connection that Cassius sees between his death and Caesar's death.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student groups to read Act 5.3, lines 56-79 of *Julius Caesar* (from "It is but change, Titinius, for Octavius" to "But kill'st the mother that engendered thee!") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

#### What effect does the exchange between Titinius and Messala in lines 56-59 have on the audience?

- Student responses may include:
  - The audience is aware of the fact that Cassius has mistaken his own victory for defeat and has committed suicide, while Messala and Titinius still believe Cassius to be alive and well, and look forward to "comfort[ing]" Cassius with their good "tidings" (line 59). Thus, the exchange between Titinius and Messala creates tension for the audience.
- Consider explaining to students that the exchange between Titinius and Messala is an example of *dramatic irony*. Define *dramatic irony* for students as "a plot device in which the reader or audience's knowledge is greater than that of at least one of the characters."

#### What meaning do Titinius and Messala attribute to Cassius's death through their use of figurative language in lines 67-79? (L.11-12.5.a)

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- Student responses may include:
  - In Act 5.3, lines 69-70, Titinius compares Cassius's death to the "setting sun" (line 67) and uses the same imagery when he declares that the "sun of Rome is set. Our day is gone" (line 70). The imagery of day coming to an end creates a connection between the fate of Cassius and that of Rome, implying that Cassius's downfall has resulted in the ultimate defeat of the republican cause, and the end of the conflict between the two armies.
  - In the lines, "O setting sun, / As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night, / So in his red blood Cassius's day is set" (lines 67-69), Titinius compares Cassius's death to the setting sun. Titinius's repeated use of the color red emphasizes the bloody and violent nature of Cassius's death, as it seems that even the sky reflects the blood that has been shed.
  - Messala responds to Titinius by asserting that "mistrust of good success" is responsible for Cassius's death (line 74). He develops this idea through his personification of "hateful error" as "melancholy's child" (line 71) who "kill'st [its] mother" (line 75). He further describes "error" as a child who shows men "things that are not" (line 77). This description suggests that Messala believes Cassius's death is meaningless, since Cassius ultimately takes his own life because of his mistaken perception of his own victory as defeat. This is an error born from his pessimism, or his "mistrust of good success" (line 74).
  - Messala's personification of "hateful error" as a "child" that "kill'st [its] mother" suggests that Messala believes that Cassius's own "melancholy," or pessimism, has brought into the world that which killed him. Messala believes that Cassius is responsible for his own downfall.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student groups to answer the question below before sharing out with the class.

- Consider reviewing the conventions of tragedy from 12.2.2 Lesson 1 before students engage in this discussion.

### What are some conventional elements of tragedy?

- Student responses may include:
  - A tragedy includes a tragic hero who is faced with a great misfortune, often ending with his or her death.

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- Tragedy evokes feelings of pity and fear in the audience.
- A tragic hero has an aspect of his or her character that leads to his or her downfall. This characteristic is known as a tragic flaw.
- A tragedy always includes a conflict, which is most often resolved by the downfall of the tragic hero.
- A tragic hero has a moment in which he or she recognizes the unresolved conflict or his or her own tragic flaw.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

**To what extent does Cassius's death conform to the conventions of tragedy?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Cassius suffers a great misfortune that results in the loss of his life and his cause. Cassius initially successfully leads the conspiracy against Caesar, but his misfortune is in mistaking his own victory for defeat when he believes that he has lost the battle and his best friend Titinius, and so takes his own life.
  - Cassius's death is the result of a tragic flaw, or an aspect of his character that leads to his own downfall. Cassius's death is the result of his own "error" (line 75), or his mistaken perception of events, which comes from the fatal flaw of pessimism, or "mistrust of good success" (line 74).
  - Messala's reflection that just as "Cassius' day is set" (line 69) so "the sun of Rome is set" (line 70) suggests that Cassius's death represents the beginning of the resolution of the conflict that has driven the action of the play. As Cassius himself recognizes in his dying breath, "Caesar, thou art revenged" (line 50). With the death of Cassius, the conspirators' "day is gone" (line 70), and the conflict begun with Caesar's assassination has been partially resolved because Cassius, one of the lead conspirators, has died.
  - The revelation that Cassius has mistaken a military victory for a military loss and the death of his best friend evokes pity or sadness in the reader, because Cassius has taken his own life needlessly as a result of his own flawed perception of events.
  - Cassius's death aligns with the conventions of tragedy because he has a moment of realization in which he recognizes his tragic flaw. In his dying breath, Cassius reflects that the conspirator's cause is lost when he says, "Caesar, thou art revenged" (line 50), and he demonstrates an understanding that his own actions

led to his downfall when he notes that he is dying on the same sword as Caesar (line 51).

- Cassius's death does not conform to the conventions of tragedy, in that Cassius does not neatly fit the role of the primary character or hero of the play. Cassius appears to play more of a supporting role in the events of the play, while Brutus and Antony emerge more clearly as central characters.
- Cassius's death does not conform to the conventions of tragedy, because although the beginnings of resolution seem to be present, and Titinius suggests that the conspirators' "day is done" (line 70), the action of the play has not yet concluded. The conspirators have not yet lost the battle, and Brutus is still alive. The conflict between the conspirators and Antony has not yet been fully resolved.
- Cassius's death does not conform to tragic conventions in that the pity his death evokes in the audience is dulled by his previous actions in the play as a scheming and ambitious man responsible for the murder of Caesar.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- Consider asking students which passages they found difficult or problematic. 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 Cassius's death contribute to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*?**

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.

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## Activity 6: Preparation for End-of-Unit Assessment (Optional) 15%

- The following optional in-class activity prepares students for the 12.2.2 Part 1 End-of-Unit Assessment, in which students perform small-group dramatic readings of key scenes in *Julius Caesar*. Instruct students to meet in the small groups established in 12.2.2 Lesson 16. Post or project the following definition for students:

*Affect* means “feeling or emotion.”

Pose the following question for students to answer in their small groups before sharing out with the class.

**What is the role of *affect* in a dramatic reading?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Speaking with affect helps to communicate the meaning behind the words in a dramatic reading.
  - Speaking with affect engages an audience.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to practice their small-group dramatic readings. Explain that during this practice time, students should focus on their affect.

- Student groups practice their dramatic readings with a focus on affect.
- Standard SL.11-12.6 will be assessed in the 12.2.2 Part 1 End-of-Unit Assessment. Students were introduced to SL.11-12.6 in 12.1.1 Lesson 11. Consider explaining to students that rehearsals for the 12.2.1 Part 1 End-of-Unit Assessment are an opportunity to practice adapting their speech to a variety of contexts and tasks and to demonstrate mastery of standard, formal English.
- Students may instead meet outside of class to practice their dramatic readings, in which case the time allotted to this activity should be added to Activity 4: Reading and Discussion.

## Activity 7: Closing 5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and summarize Act 5.3, lines 80-123 (from “What, Pindarus! Where art thou, Pindarus?” to “We shall try fortune in a second fight”). Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

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**What do Brutus’s words in Act 5.3, lines 105-107 suggest about his relationship with Caesar?**

**How do Brutus’s reactions to Titinius and Cassius’s deaths contribute to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*?**

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

Additionally, instruct students to read and summarize Act 5.4, lines 1-33 (from “Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!” to “And bring us word unto Octavius’ tent / How everything is chanced”).

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read and summarize Act 5.3, lines 80-123 (from “What, Pindarus! Where art thou, Pindarus?” to “We shall try fortune in a second fight”). Respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

**What do Brutus’s words in Act 5.3, lines 105-107 suggest about his relationship with Caesar?**

**How do Brutus’s reactions to Titinius and Cassius’s deaths contribute to the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*?**

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

Additionally, read and summarize Act 5.4, lines 1-33 (from “Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!” to “And bring us word unto Octavius’ tent / How everything is chanced”).