

12.2.2 Lesson 7

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their reading and analysis of *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare. Students read Act 2.1, lines 123-205 (from “Give me your hands all over, one by one” to “For he will live and laugh at this hereafter”), in which Brutus convinces the conspirators that they do not need an oath to bind them to their plot, and that to kill Mark Antony is both wrong and unnecessary. Students analyze how the central ideas of ethics of honor and exercise of power develop and interact over the course of this passage. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do two central ideas develop and interact over the course of the passage?

For homework, students read Act 2.1, lines 206-252 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Peace, count the clock. / The clock hath stricken / three” to “Therefore thou sleep’st so sound”) and respond to a series of questions. Additionally, students preview Act 2.1, lines 253-333 (from “Brutus, my lord. / Portia! What mean you? Wherefore rise you now?” to “All the charactery of my sad brows, / Leave me with haste”) and respond to a series of questions.

Standards

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. 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”).
L. 11-12.4.c	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. 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 standards usage.
L. 11-12.5.a , b	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. b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

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 over the course of the passage?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas in the text (e.g., exercise of power and ethics of honor).
- Analyze how the ideas interact and develop over the course of the passage (e.g., In this passage, the central ideas of exercise of power and ethics of honor interact as Brutus convinces the conspirators that they need no oath to kill Caesar, and that unlike killing Caesar, slaying Mark Antony would be unnecessary and wrong. Brutus explains through rhetorical questions that their plot needs no oath to “prick” (line 135) or incite them to bring about justice by killing Caesar, because Brutus believes their cause is truly just. Brutus believes that he and the other conspirators are acting on their consciences in plotting to kill Caesar, in accordance with their sense of honor. Brutus then convinces them that to kill Mark Antony after killing Caesar would be to “cut the head off and then hack the limbs” (line 176), an unnecessary and unethical exercise of power and violence. Brutus says their exercise of power in killing Caesar should make them look like “sacrificers” and not “butchers” (line 179), meaning that their act should look “necessary and not envious” (line 191) to the people, who will view them as “purgers” of tyranny rather than crude “murderers” (line 193). Brutus’s persuasions develop the central idea of exercise of power, which interacts with the central idea of ethics of honor. His arguments for their planned exercise of power appeal to the consciences of the conspirators and their sense of honor.).

Vocabulary

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Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- carrions (n.) - the flesh of dead animals
- bastardy (n.) - illegitimacy
- contriver (n.) - someone who plots
- hew (v.) - to strike forcibly with an ax, sword, or other cutting instrument

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

- None.

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

- oath (n.) - a formal and serious promise to tell the truth or to do something
- butchers (n.) - people who kill a lot of people or animals in a brutal or cruel way
- hereafter (adv.) - after this

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.c, L.11-12.5.a, b • Text: <i>Julius Caesar</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 2.1: lines 123-205 	
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. 10% 2. 10% 3. 10% 4. 50% 5. 15% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 12.2.1 Lesson 4) (optional)

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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

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.2. In this lesson, students read Act 2.1, lines 123-205 (from “Give me your hands all over, one by one” to “For he will live and laugh at this hereafter”). Students analyze how two central ideas develop and interact over the course of this passage.

- Students look at the agenda.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are using the 12.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool, instruct them to refer to it for this portion of the lesson introduction. Post or project substandard L.11-12.5.b. Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the substandard means. Lead a brief discussion about the substandard.
- The standard requires students to analyze the slight differences in words that have the same meaning.

- If necessary, provide students with the following definitions: *nuances* means “very slight differences” and *denotations* means “the explicit or set meanings of words,” or in other words, “the dictionary definition of a word.”

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Read Act 2.1, lines 94-205 and respond briefly to the following question: How does Cassius exercise power through language?) Instruct students to discuss their responses in pairs.

- Cassius tells Brutus, “every one doth wish / You had but that opinion of yourself / Which every noble Roman bears of you” (lines 99-101). With these words, Cassius appeals to Brutus’s sense of honor. Cassius knows that Brutus is proud of his reputation for honor and knows he can use it to manipulate Brutus. After hearing Cassius’s words, Brutus agrees to join the conspiracy to kill Caesar, and says, “Caesar must bleed for it” (line 184). By using flattery to persuade Brutus to make an important decision, Cassius shows how language can be a powerful tool for exerting influence or control over other people.

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 words: *carrions*, *bastardy*, *contriver*, and *hew*.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *oath*, *butchers*, and *hereafter*.
- Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 2.1, lines 123-205 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Give me your hands all over, one by one” to “For he will live and laugh at this hereafter”). Ask students to listen for how Shakespeare develops central ideas in this excerpt.

- 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 Brutus reject the need for an oath?

- 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

50%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below 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).

Instruct student groups to read Act 2.1, lines 125-151 (from “No, not an oath. If not the face of men” to “Of any promise that hath passed from him”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Why does Brutus believe an oath is unnecessary?

- Student responses may include:
 - Brutus does not want any of them to swear an oath because he believes that if their motives are “weak” enough to warrant an oath (line 127), then every man involved in the plot should walk away and give up the plan: “break off betimes, / And every man hence to his idle bed” (lines 127-128). It is better to let Caesar’s “tyranny range on” (line 129) than to devalue their convictions with an oath.
 - Brutus believes the conspirators’ cause is so strong that it can “kindle cowards” (line 132) and “steel with valor / The melting spirits of women,” (lines 132-133). People swear oaths for “bad causes” (line 142) when they are unsure of their cause’s righteousness. Brutus believes that the conspirators’ cause is just and therefore needs no oath other than the spoken words of Romans.

How does Brutus’s reluctance to swear an oath relate to the central idea of ethics of honor?

- Student responses may include:
 - Brutus’s reluctance shows that he believes Romans are both honest and brave. If these men are Romans who have “spoke the word” of what they do (line 136), then they will follow through with it. They will not “palter” (line 137) or change their minds out of fear. Furthermore, Brutus states that he does not believe they need

an oath “when every drop of blood / That every Roman bears” would feel illegitimate if he were to break even the small part of a promise (lines 147-148).

- By using rhetorical questions, Brutus suggests that there is a “bond” among “secret Romans” (lines 135-136), which he equates with the bond of “honesty to honesty engaged” (line 138). Brutus implies that honor and honesty are fundamental to the ties between Romans. In this way, Brutus equates ethics of honor with Roman values.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to reread Act 2.1, lines 125-151 (from “No, not an oath. If not the face of men” to “Of any promise that hath passed from him”) and annotate the words and phrases that refine Brutus’s argument against taking an oath independently. Lead a brief whole-class discussion of the following question:

How does Brutus’s monologue develop a central idea in the text?

- Using a series of rhetorical questions, Brutus appeals to his fellow conspirators on the grounds of a shared set of ethics that he associates with Roman values. With his first rhetorical question, Brutus implies that as men of honor, they need no “spur” but justice (line 134). His second and third questions develop the idea that as men of honor and Romans, the conspirators will keep their word, calling on the “bond /... [of] secret Romans” (lines 135-136) and on the “oath” of “honesty to honesty engaged” (lines 137-138). Through these rhetorical questions, Brutus appeals to the idea that honorable Romans are duty-bound to see justice done, and that this ethic of honor compels them to act against Caesar. In the final part of his monologue, Brutus suggests that any of the conspirators who fails to keep his word can no longer be considered a Roman and is “guilty of a several bastardy” (line 149), since “every drop of blood / That every Roman bears” is bound to maintain his honor (lines 147-148). This again suggests that the ethic of honor is ingrained in all Romans.
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Instruct students to return to their groups and read Act 2.1, lines 152-205 (from “But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him?” to “For he will live and laugh at this hereafter”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What is Brutus’s opinion of Mark Antony? How does Shakespeare use figurative language to develop this opinion? (L.11-12.5.a)

- Student responses should include:
 - Brutus does not believe that Mark Antony is a threat, and so argues to Cassius that “[the conspirators’] course will seem too bloody” (line 175) if they kill Mark Antony. According to Brutus, it is unnecessary to kill Antony, who has no power without Caesar and is “but a limb of Caesar” (line 178). Later Brutus suggests that Antony is too frivolous to be deeply distressed by Caesar’s death because Antony is “given / To sports, to wildness, and much company” (lines 202-203).
 - Shakespeare uses metaphor in Brutus’s description of Antony’s relationship with Caesar: “Antony is but a limb of Caesar” (line 178), so to kill Antony in addition would be “[t]o cut the head off and then hack the limbs” (line 176). Caesar is the head while Antony is a limb that belongs to the same body. Therefore, Brutus believes it would be unnecessarily malicious to attack Antony, when Caesar’s death ought to cripple him, much like an arm is crippled beyond use if the head is removed.

How does Brutus justify the murder of Caesar in lines 175-196?

- Student responses may include:
 - When Brutus tells Cassius that the conspirators should be “sacrificers, but not butchers” (line 179), Brutus justifies Caesar’s murder as a necessary act, performed for the greater good. Brutus repeats this idea later on, by referring to the conspirators as “purgers, not murderers” (line 193), suggesting that the aim of the conspiracy is to rid Rome of the threat that Caesar poses.
 - Brutus claims that the aim of the conspiracy is to kill “the spirit of Caesar” more than Caesar himself (line 180). Brutus states that he wishes they could kill Caesar’s spirit and not “dismember Caesar” (line 183), clarifying that he holds no ill will toward Caesar himself and does not really want to kill Caesar, only the potential for tyranny that Caesar represents. In this way, Brutus seeks to justify the murder as almost bloodless, as a murder of the spirit rather than a murder of the body.

According to Brutus, what is the difference between “sacrificers” and “butchers” (line 179)? (L.1112.5.b)

- Student responses may include:
 - Brutus believes “sacrificers” like the conspirators kill to achieve a greater good, as sacrifice means to get rid of one thing for the sake of another. But “butchers” kill “wrathfully” and unnecessarily (line 185). When Brutus says, “Let’s be sacrificers, but not butchers” (line 179), he means that the conspirators’ cause ought to have an ethical purity. Brutus also says they ought to “carve him as a dish fit for the

gods, / Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds” (lines 186-187): Brutus wants Caesar to die for a higher purpose and does not wish his murder to be a pointless slaughter.

- Brutus implies that “sacrificers” (line 179) will be received better by the public than “butchers” (line 179). He wants the people to see them as “purgers, not murderers” (line 193), to see what they have done as good and just, rather than cruel and unwarranted.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What does Brutus’s discussion of the “spirit of Caesar” (line 180) suggest about his motives?

- Brutus’s remark that the conspirators “all stand up against the spirit of Caesar / And in the spirit of men there is no blood” (lines 180-181) implies that the assassination of Caesar is to be a symbolic as much as a physical act. The conspirators wish to eliminate what Caesar stands for, not Caesar himself. Indeed, Brutus wishes there were a way to “come by Caesar’s spirit / And not dismember Caesar!” (lines 182-183). Brutus’s aim is to destroy the idea of Caesar, not the man. If it were possible, Brutus would prefer that there were “no blood” involved (line 181).

Lead a brief whole class discussion of student responses.

Instruct half of the student groups to consider the central idea of ethics of honor as they answer the following question, and instruct the other half to consider the central idea of exercise of power. Instruct groups to answer the question before sharing out with the class.

How do Brutus’s ideas about the plan to assassinate Caesar develop a central idea in the text?

- Student responses may include:
 - Brutus’s ideas about the plan to assassinate Caesar develop the central idea of ethics of honor. Brutus believes that to kill Antony would be against good conscience because it would be “envious” (line 191), or malicious. Brutus does not think they should be “butchers” (line 179) by slaying Antony, but should keep their cause just and pure by only killing Caesar. For Brutus, the decision to kill Antony is a moral issue. Killing Caesar is not political maneuvering for Brutus, who sees the assassination as the best course of action for Rome.

- Brutus's ideas about the plan to assassinate Caesar develop the central idea of exercise of power. Brutus wants their exercise of power in killing Caesar to appear "necessary and not envious" (line 191), so that it will be well received. Brutus believes that if they kill Antony, the public will see them as "murderers" and not the "purgers" (line 193) that they see themselves as. Brutus believes the assassination's true purpose as an exercise of power is to save Rome from the tyranny of a single ruler. Killing Antony, Brutus fears, will tarnish the assassination's true purpose.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

How do two central ideas develop and interact over the course of the passage?

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 Act 2.1, lines 206-252 of *Julius Caesar* (from "Peace, count the clock. / The clock hath stricken / three" to "in the brains of men. / Therefore thou sleep'st so sound"). 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:

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Summarize lines 206-252.

How do lines 206-252 develop the conspirators' view of Caesar's character?

Also for homework, instruct students to preview Act 2.1, lines 253-333 (from “Brutus, my lord. / Portia! What mean you? Wherefore rise you now?” to “All the charactery of my sad brows, / Leave me with haste”) in preparation for close reading of Act 2.1, lines 253-333 in 12.2.2 Lesson 8. 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:

Summarize lines 253-333.

What does the interaction between Portia and Brutus in lines 253-288 suggest about their relationship?

How does Portia show “the strong proof of [her] constancy” (line 322)?

How do Portia's gestures of kneeling and wounding herself develop a central idea in the text?

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

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read Act 2.1, lines 206-252 of *Julius Caesar* (from “Peace, count the clock. / The clock hath stricken / three” to “in the brains of men. / Therefore thou sleep'st so sound”). 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:

Summarize lines 206-252.

How do lines 206-252 develop the conspirators' view of Caesar's character?

Also for homework, read Act 2.1, lines 253-333 (from “Brutus, my lord. / Portia! What mean you? Wherefore rise you now?” to “All the charactery of my sad brows, / Leave me with haste”) in preparation for reading Act 2.1, lines 253-333 in the following lesson. 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:

Summarize lines 253-333.

What does the interaction between Portia and Brutus in lines 253-288 suggest about their relationship?

How does Portia show “the strong proof of [her] constancy” (line 322)?

How do Portia’s gestures of kneeling and wounding herself develop a central idea in the text?

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