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Julius Caesar
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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All references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *Julius Caesar*, copyright 1991.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Understanding Shakespeare's Language**

Objective: Understanding poetic writing

Activity

Rewrite the following script in Shakespeare's language so that it would make sense to the characters in the play.

Friend 1: Hey! What's hap'nin'?

Friend 2: Not much, t'sup?

Friend 3: How ya' doin'?

Friend 1: Where ya' goin'?

Friend 3: Takin' my drivin' test, man, gonna wheel and deal.

Friend 2: Hope you get a cool test guy, man.

Friend 3: Thanks, man.

Friend 1: Where ya' goin' when you're done?

Friend 3: Probly run the mall, man. Wanna go?

Friend 1: No, I'm gonna dig the game on TV.

Friend 3: OK, man. Later.

We have begun the script for you.

Caius Robertus: "Ho! Prithee, what goeth forth?"

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II**Rhyming**

Objective: Presenting drama in another, more modern form

Activity

Operas are plays with spoken words being sung instead. The lyrics for most operas are written in the native language of the composer.

Today, there are innovations set to a musical (instrumental) background, but a few don't really carry their own tune. Such a type is "rap," which usually has a rhyming scheme with a rhythm or music background.

Review the discussion in *Julius Caesar* that takes place between Caesar and Calpurnia in Act II, Scene II and write rap lyrics that would be suitable for the situation. Picture what Calpurnia has seen in her dream and how she tries to relate it to Caesar. Find terms for what you perceive and translate these images into modern day language.

Keep in mind that there is a lot to be covered in a relatively short stanza, and certain rhyming schemes must fall into a certain rhythm. Write two stanzas (verses) in an appropriate rhythm.

A simple beginning might be:

"Had a dream, had a dream, had a dream last night
Huge yellow cats out lookin' for a fight ... "

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Diagram****Objective:** Making a Venn Diagram**Activity**

A Venn Diagram is used to illustrate the interaction of thoughts, actions, people, places, or things and how they can influence other events. In the example of the Venn Diagram that follows, notice how the intersecting circles create four overlapped areas where there is a relationship between the three original people in an imaginary novel.

For example, if section 1 is a hypothetical Father, section 2 is a Mother, and section 3 is a Child, the intersecting area A would concern the interaction between Father and Mother. Section B would concern interaction between Father, Mother, and Child. Section C would concern interaction between Father and Child. Section D would concern interaction between Mother and Child.

1A and 2A represent what might be a discussion, an argument or some type of contact between the Father and Mother. The other interaction points illustrate the same among other family members.

The actions could be described as follows:

Section A – Father and Mother influence each other.

Section B – Father and Mother are influenced by Child. Child is influenced by Father and Mother.

Section C – Father is influenced by Child, and Child is influenced by Father.

Section D – Mother is influenced by Child, and Child is influenced by Mother.

Draw a Venn diagram using any three characters in Act III, and explain how their areas of concern influence each other, directly or indirectly.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act V**Newspaper Reporting**

Objective: Writing a news story about the play

Activity

News reporters must make notes on events they witness, especially when they might influence the general public, for example. In the instance of a war, people who read a particular newspaper await factual news from the front lines and depend on their news commentary to make proper evaluations. A reading public does not expect exaggeration or creativity in news reporting, nor can people base their assessment of a war on anything but objective facts.

You, as reporter for the *New York Times*, have been asked to cover the battle of Philippi in Act V of *Julius Caesar*, and have been sent to the front lines. With your notebook in hand, you must not forget to answer the basic questions, as they will help you to report the action at the front.

You will want to answer the questions of “Who, Where, Why, What, When, and How” without inserting your opinion, so that no one is influenced by your slant on the event, but only by the outcome of the war. List your answers to each of those basic questions before you proceed with your coverage.

Your first paragraph should be a short, condensed version of what happened and should be interesting enough to induce the reader to finish your entire article. It might start something like this:

Antony's war came to a satisfactory conclusion for today as Caesar's murderers were forced to abandon their fight. Brutus committed suicide without implicating his accomplice in that bloody deed.

When your story is complete, write a front-page, banner headline for it. It might read:

BRUTUS DIES BY OWN SWORD; ANTONY'S REVENGE COMPLETE!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Metaphor

Objective: Recognizing a metaphor

Activity

Similar to the simile, the metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things, but without the use of the words *like* or *as*.

Metaphors are used primarily to paint pictures by use of exaggeration to the extent that a person could be likened to a common figure that would exemplify the character. In Act III, Scene I, for example, Antony compares Caesar to a hunted animal that had been caught, when he says, "Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart, here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand...O world, thou wast the forest to this hart...." He goes on to use the word "heart" as a play on the word "hart", which means a mature male deer.

There are many other metaphors in the play. Find at least four more of them in addition to the ones we have listed; explain their meaning or what you think Shakespeare was trying to tell us about a character or thing.

Begin with Cassius' statement to Brutus in Act I, Scene II, where he says, "I, your glass ..." Explain why he says that and what he means by it.

Additionally, find these listed in the Acts given, cite the line with the metaphor, who says it, and follow with the appropriate explanations.

- Act I, Scene II – Cassius "...rudeness is a sauce to his good wit."
- Act I, Scene III – Cassius "...he would not be a wolf, but that he sees the Romans are but sheep..."
- Act II, Scene I – Brutus "...lowliness is young ambition's ladder..."
- Act II, Scene I – Brutus "...For Antony is but a limb of Caesar...."

List the others you find on the chart that follows and explain them in the same manner.