

JULIUS CAESAR

CURRICULUM GUIDE

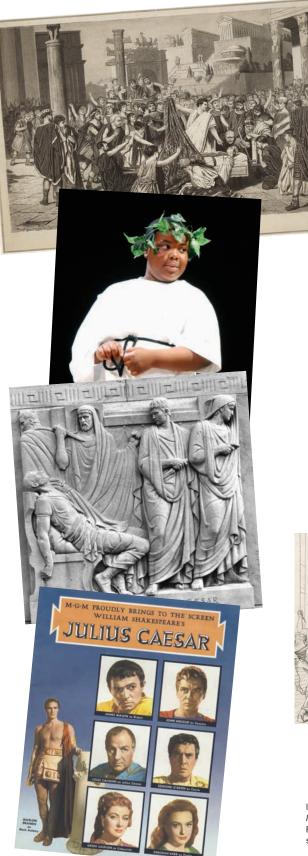
FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

A companion to the Folger Shakespeare Library Edition



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ON THE COVER: Adolphe Roargue after Vincenzo Camuccini. Mort de César. Print, 19th century. Folger Shakespeare Library.

See more images of Julius Caesar from the Folger collection at www.folger.edu/digitalcollection.



Image 1) Hugo Kaeseberg and J.C.G. Feldweg after Julius Kleinmichel. Shakespeare, Julius Cäsar, act III scene 2. Print, 1879. Folger Shakespeare Library. Image 2) 2003 Children's Shakespeare Festival. Folger Shakespeare Library. Image 3) John Gregory. Julius Caesar bas relief. Marble, 1932. Folger Shakespeare Library. Image 4) Julius Caesar. MGM Promotional Program, 1953. Folger Shakespeare Library.

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At the Folger, we love to see students take Shakespeare and make it their own. We believe that Shakespeare is for everyone and that students of all ability levels can successfully engage with his works.







Photos from Folger student Shakespeare festivals, classroom visits, and teacher workshops by Mignonette Dooley, Mimi Marquet, Deidra Starnes, and Lloyd Wolf.

SHAKESPEARES FOR EVERYONE!

Situations, complex relationships, and deep emotions that today's students can and do—relate to. At the Folger Shakespeare Library, we love to see students take Shakespeare and make it their own. We believe that Shakespeare is for everyone and that students of all ability levels can successfully engage with his works.

The best way to *learn* Shakespeare is to *do* Shakespeare. What does this mean? Put simply, it is getting students up on their feet and physically, intellectually, and vocally engaging with the text. We believe that students learn best using a performance-based methodology and that performance can build a personal connection with the text that traditional teaching methods may not.

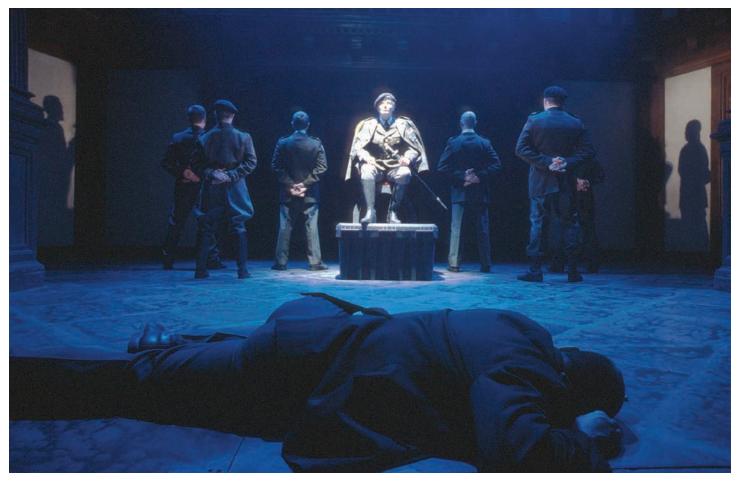
Performance—which is not the same thing as "acting"—activates the imagination. Active learning invigorates the mind and stays with the learner. Shakespeare's genius with language, his skill as a dramatist, and his insight into the human condition can instill even the least academically motivated student with a passion not only for Shakespeare but also for language, drama, psychology, and knowledge.

The Lesson Plans and Tips for Teaching Shakespeare included in this Curriculum Guide provide practical, classroom-tested approaches for using performancebased teaching techniques. We have also included a Synopsis, a Fact Sheet, and Famous Lines and Phrases from the play and interesting facts to share with students.

Remember that enthusiasm is more important than expertise. There is always more for everyone to learn, so enjoy the ride with your students!

Robert Young Director of Education Folger Shakespeare Library

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Above: Alex Webb (Julius Caesar) and Aquila ensemble. Below: David Caron (Mark Antony). Julius Caesar. Folger Theatre's presentation of Aquila Theatre Company, directed by Robert Richmond, 2000. Photos by Ken Cobb. Folger Shakespeare Library.

JULIUS CAESAR SYNOPSIS

n Rome, people are celebrating the triumphant return of Julius Caesar, a noted general. A soothsayer advises Caesar that the fifteenth of March (the ides of March) will be a dangerous day for him. Two Roman nobles, Cassius and Brutus, discuss Caesar's growing power. Cassius urges Brutus to oppose Caesar for fear that Caesar may become king. Brutus ponders joining the conspiracy against Caesar and ultimately agrees to join with the conspirators. On the ides of March, Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, persuades him to stay home because she fears for his safety. However, after hearing that the senators plan to crown him, Caesar changes his mind and decides to go. In the street, Caesar brushes aside attempts to warn him of the conspiracy. Inside the Senate, the conspirators gather around Caesar and stab him to death, bathing their arms and hands in his blood. Mark Antony learns of the assassination and sends Brutus a message that he will follow Brutus as he followed Caesar. Brutus gives Antony permission to speak at Caesar's funeral and inflamed by Antony's words, the people set off to attack the conspirators. Antony joins with Octavius to raise an army and fight against Brutus and Cassius. The opposing armies confront each other at Philippi. Brutus and Cassius are defeated, and Brutus kills himself. Antony praises Brutus as the only honorable conspirator, and Octavius orders Brutus' funeral rites. Learn more at www.folger.edu/editions.





See more images from Julius Caesar at the Folger collection at www.folger.edu/digitalimagecollection.

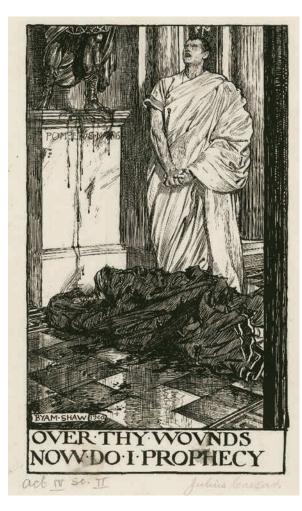
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JULIUS CAESAR CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

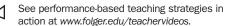
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FROM ONE CLASSROOM TEACHER TO ANOTHER







It is critical in reading any play by Shakespeare to allow students the breathing room to make their own discoveries about both the language and the story.

Dear Colleagues,

Although the plot of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar is literally based on "ancient history"—in particular the writings of the Roman historian Plutarch—the beauty of the play does not arise from the history that Shakespeare based it on, but rather from the language he enlivened it with. A historian is trained to report the facts, but an artist is allowed to add poetic elements to the language to make the story timeless. As an artist, Shakespeare paints a picture of Caesar that is ever open to interpretation. I am not sure that another author exists that gives teachers and students the flexibility that Shakespeare does. Depending on how you read it, Julius Caesar is a play about Caesar or Brutus, superstition or arrogance, friendship or duty. It is critical in reading any play by Shakespeare to allow students the breathing room to make their own discoveries about both the language and the story. It is also critical to approach the language as something living and organic, not something that is "Greek" to the reader.

I can distinctly remember the first year that I taught English and being terrified to see *Julius Caesar* as a part of the freshmen curriculum. Although I loved this play, I was concerned about how I was going to actually teach it to high school students in a way that would be engaging. As a new teacher, I was primarily focused on what I believed would be the challenges of connecting a sixteenth-century play that takes place in 44BC to my students. I was forgetting the beauty of Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar* is "only" a play that takes place in 44BC with a bunch of actors running around the stage in togas if that is the only way you decide to read it. Allow yourself and your students the freedom to make it a play about whatever you choose.

Christina Porter Revere High School, Revere, MA

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TIPS FOR TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

Performing Shakespeare even at the most rudimentary level, script in hand, stumbling over the difficult words—can and usually does permanently change a student's relationship with the plays and their author.



t the Folger, we believe that **Shakespeare is for everyone**. We believe that students of all ability levels, all backgrounds, and at all grade levels can—and do—successfully engage with Shakespeare's works.

Why? Because Shakespeare, done right, inspires. The plays are full of explosive family situations and complex relationships that adolescents recognize.

Performance is particularly crucial in teaching Shakespeare, whose naked language on the page may be difficult to understand. "Performance" in this sense does not mean presenting memorized, costumed, fully staged shows, although those can be both satisfying and educational. Performance means getting students up on their feet, moving around a classroom as characters, and speaking the lines themselves.

Remember:

- Enthusiasm is more important than expertise—there is always more for everyone to learn, so enjoy the ride with your students!
- 2. Trust Shakespeare's original language, but don't labor over every word.
- Pick out key scenes that speak most clearly to your students. You do not have to start with Act 1, Scene 1.
- 4. Use the text to explain the life and times, not vice versa.

The following two Lesson Plans will give you practical ways to get started using this approach in your classroom.

Want More?

Folger Education's Shakespeare Set Free Toolkit is a comprehensive resource for teaching Shakespeare, with lesson plans, activity guides, podcasts, videos, and other teaching tools. Learn more at www.folger.edu/toolkit.

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TEACHING SHAKESPEARE FAQS

How long does it take to teach a play? A Shakespeare unit can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks, depending on your students. You may want to spend a few days to introduce the play's major characters and themes, or you could spend a couple of weeks exploring several scenes, key ideas, and multiple interpretations. Full play units, such as the ones in *Shakespeare Set Free*, can take up to six weeks to teach. You do **NOT** need to start with Act 1, Scene 1 and you do **NOT** need to labor over every word.

Do I need to teach the entire play?

Sometimes it is better to do just part of a play rather than the whole play. Or you might opt for a Shakespeare sampler, using several scenes from different plays.

Which edition of the play is best to use with students?

The Folger Shakespeare Library paperback editions are relatively inexpensive, and easy to use, with the text on one page and footnotes and scene summaries on the facing page. Be aware that Shakespeare plays in literature anthologies often edit out some of the more bawdy content content which students often love. They are also very heavy to carry around when students are performing scenes.

You can install the **Free Electronic Shakespeare Reader** on your hard drive on any Windows computer at *www.shakespeare.ariyam.com*. This is a downloadable piece of software that allows you to have all of Shakespeare's 38 plays instantly at your fingertips. Once you have it, there is no Internet connection required. It also provides in-depth full-text searching to all of Shakespeare's plays. You can also download the text online from sites such as *www.opensourceshakespeare.org*.

Should I start with the movie?

One disadvantage with watching a film version first is that students equate this version with the play and have difficulty realizing that scenes and lines can be interpreted and enacted in many different ways. One way around this is to start with one scene which your students read and perform. Follow this activity by showing clips from several film versions of the same scene. This strategy enables allow for some meaningful discussion about possible interpretations.

What if I have never read the play before? Learn along with your students—model for them the enthusiasm and excitement that comes with authentic learning.

Do I need to teach about the Globe Theatre or Shakespeare's Life?

The simple answer is "No." While telling students that Shakespeare had three children and that he and Anne Hathaway had to get married might be interesting, it really doesn't help them understand the plays. It's much better to integrate some facts about Elizabethan life when they come up in the plays. So when Francis Flute protests, "Let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, that's the perfect opportunity to explain the Elizabethan stage convention of young men playing the female parts.

Are student projects helpful?

Designing Globe Theatres out of sugar cubes and Popsicle sticks, designing costumes, creating Elizabethan newspapers in the computer lab, doing a scavenger hunt on the Internet, or doing a report on Elizabethan sanitary conditions has nothing to do with a student's appreciation of Shakespeare's language. If you want to give students a project, have them select, rehearse, and perform a scene.

What is a "trigger scene?"

A trigger scene is a short scene from a play that introduces the students to key characters and plot elements. Most important, the trigger scene shows students that they can uncover the meaning of Shakespeare's texts as they "put the scene on its feet."

Tried and true trigger scenes for beginning Shakespeare:

Julius Caesar, 3.3 (Cinna the poet is attacked by mob)

Hamlet, 1.1 (Ghost appears to soldiers)

Macbeth, 1.3.38 onwards (Macbeth meets the witches)

A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1.2 (The rustic actors are introduced)

Much Ado About Nothing, 4.1 (Beatrice urges Benedick to kill Claudio)

Othello, 1.1 (lago rudely awakens Brabantio)

Romeo and Juliet, 3.5 (Juliet angers her parents)

The Taming of the Shrew, 2.1 (The two sisters quarrel)

Twelfth Night, 2.2 (Malvolio returns ring to "Cesario")

Want More?

Folger Education's *Shakespeare Set Free* Toolkit is a comprehensive resource for teaching Shakespeare, with lesson plans, activity guides, podcasts, videos, and other teaching tools. Learn more at *www.folger.edu/toolkit*.

JULIUS CAESAR | LESSON PLAN 1 PRE-READING FOR JULIUS CAESAR



Monisha Baker Hampton High School Hampton, VA

Play/Scenes Covered

This is a pre-reading activity for classes beginning *Julius Caesar*. It may be adapted for use with other plays that focus on issues of friendship.

Meeting the Standards

This lesson plan covers NCTE Standards 1,3,4,5, and 8.

What's On for Today and Why

Students will examine some of the issues of friendship and leadership that they will encounter in reading *Julius Caesar*. Through creating "friendship committees" to develop a class friendship constitution, they will begin to think about many of the issues they will read about in the play.

This lesson will take one to two 50-minute periods.

What To Do

1. Break your class into groups of four to five students who will serve as a "friendship committee." Each group is responsible for listing ten qualities or traits that qualify a person as a friend. They should also list five friendship infractions that could end the friendship. 2. When the groups are done listing their traits, have each group elect a Friendship Constitution Representative who will represent their group at a Friendship Summit. The purpose of this summit will be to derive a class Friendship Constitution incorporating ideas from each group.

3. Have the Friendship Summit meet in front of the whole class. The final Friendship Constitution should include a representative ten friendship traits and five friendship infractions, selected from the individual groups' work. Each Representative should attempt to include at least two of his or her group's ideas in the final Constitution. At the end of the process, the Summit should vote on its proposed Constitution.

4. Conclude the exercise with a group discussion about the overall task and about the relationship of the task with the play they are about to read. As far as the final friendship Constitution, what do they feel they would alter or change? Did they find the task meaningful? How did they like working on something so subjective with a group? Could they draw any conclusions about coming to a consensus in a large group? That question can lead into more play-specific questions: what is the role of personal friendships in creating a group governing structure? How easy is it to maintain friendships in a political context?

5. Post the friendship Constitution in the classroom. As you read *Julius Caesar*, return to the Constitution when examining the actions of the main characters. How often do the characters live up to the class expectations? How often are they in default?

6. As an optional extension, create a Friendship Infraction Committee to make decisions on friendship infractions and other issues between friends. The Committee could also pass judgment on friendship infractions in *Julius Caesar*.

What You Need

Folger edition of Julius Caesar

How Did It Go?

If students found the project a bit difficult, that can work as an excellent springboard to talk about how difficult ruling Rome must have been in Caesar's day. How complete were they able to make their group handouts? Could students identify the way personal friendships worked in the Summit process?

Want more?



Find more ideas and resources on teaching Julius Caesar at www.folger.edu/teachingjuliuscaesar.

JULIUS CAESAR | LESSON PLAN 2 BETRAYAL OR HONEST MISTAKE?



Amy Rosoff Baltimore City College High School Baltimore, MD

Play/Scenes Covered Julius Caesar 5.3 From the Folger Shakespeare Library Edition

Meeting the Standards

This lesson plan covers NCTE Standards 3,4, 6, and 12.

What's On for Today and Why

Julius Caesar hinges largely on the theme of betrayal. Students must wrestle with the questions that Brutus himself considers: Does loyalty come first to a friend, a superior, a nation, or the self? Is betrayal justified if it is committed out of loyalty to some other, worthy cause? Shakespeare presents a microcosm of these larger questions in the final act of the play by presenting an ambiguous moment in which it is unclear whether a betrayal has occurred or not.

In Act 5 scene 3, the character Pindarus, a bondsman to Cassius, says he has witnessed the capture of the loyal soldier, Titinius. This devastating news serves as the final straw for Cassius, who proceeds to kill himself, first freeing Pindarus. Pindarus runs off and immediately thereafter Titinius enters, making it clear that Pindarus has given Cassius a false report.

This lesson asks students to consider the motivations of the character of Pindarus (i.e., Has he lied to Cassius, or has he made an honest mistake?), and to make decisions about how they would direct this scene based on their understanding of these motivations and the underlying themes of the play. This lesson takes two 50-minute class periods to complete.

What To Do

1. Read the scene aloud from the opening through Titinius' death (line 100), having students take parts. This works best if students read on their feet so that the effect of Titinius leaving, being presumed dead, and then reentering can be made clear.

2. Discuss the events of the scene, making sure that students understand what has occurred. Discuss the various reasonsTitinius might have given a false report:a) The battle occurs at a distance sohe cannot see who is who; b) He lies toCassius to incite Cassius' suicide and gain

3. Divide students into six groups of threesix students per group.

4. Explain that each group is going to use a different method to present the scene and that by manipulating the scene, each group's scene will take a clear position on whether Pindarus lies or makes a mistake.

5. Assign each group a perspective and a method of "spinning" the scene. Use the Betrayal or Honest Mistake Handout to assign groups and clarify instructions. (Note: this lesson assumes that students have had practice with tableaux, editing, and the effect of inflection. If this is not true for students, consider choosing only one method and taking time to teach this method.)

6. Give students 15–20 minutes to prepare their scene. Groups of three will have only a Cassius, Pindarus, and Titinius. Larger groups can include Messala and a director. 7. Have students present their versions with the two versions of each method, presenting one after the other so that the differences can be compared.

8. Conduct a discussion in which students talk about which perspective they would use to portray this moment if they were directing the play. They should defend their positions by connecting this scene to other moments and aspects of the play (i.e., Based on your knowledge of the play, which portrayal seems most in concert with the play as a whole?)

What You Need

Folger edition of *Julius Caesar* Index cards or large post-its Poster board or flipchart paper Betrayal or Honest Mistake Handout

How Did It Go?

To assess student's ability to defend their reading of the scene, conduct an "exit poll" in which students explain the reason they would direct this scene one way or another. As they leave the room, have them attach their cards to a piece of poster board or flipchart paper, which is divided into two sides that represent "honest mistake" and "betrayal." You can offer students feedback on their responses based on the strength of the evidence they have offered. This visual will provide an interesting index of the class' perspective on the play and its themes.

Want more?



Find more ideas and resources on teaching Julius Caesar at www.folger.edu/teachingjuliuscaesar.

JULIUS CAESAR | HANDOUT BETRAYAL OR HONEST MISTAKE?

GROUP 1: HONEST MISTAKE

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience that Pindarus honestly believes that Titinius has been captured.

Method: Tableau Vivant

Begin with the actors frozen in a way that represents a moment or idea in the scene. Have each character say one line and move to a new frozen position, creating a second frozen image. The tableau must emphasize Pindarus' intention to make an honest report.

GROUP 2: BETRAYAL

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience (though not to Cassius) that though Pindarus knows what has really happened, he claims Titinius has been captured only to incite Cassius' suicide and gain his freedom.

Method: Tableau Vivant

Begin with the actors in a way that represents a moment or idea in the scene. Have each character say one line and move to a new, frozen position, creating a second frozen image. The tableau must emphasize Pindarus' intention to betray Cassius.

GROUP 3: HONEST MISTAKE

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience that Pindarus honestly believes that Titinius has been captured.

Method : Editing

Cut lines from the text so what remains is a scene that emphasizes Pindarus' intent to give an honest report.

GROUP 4: BETRAYAL

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience (though not to Cassius) that though Pindarus knows what has really happened, he claims Titinius has been captured only to incite Cassius and gain his freedom.

Method : Editing

Cut lines from the text so what remains is a scene that emphasizes Pindarus' intention to betray Cassius.

GROUP 5: HONEST MISTAKE

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience that Pindarus honestly believes that Titinius has been captured.

Method: Inflection and Gestures

Read the scene so that the body language and the voice inflection of the actors emphasize Pindarus' intention to give an honest report.

GROUP 6: BETRAYAL

Perspective: Your group's performance will make it clear to the audience (though not to Cassius) that though Pindarus knows what has really happened, he claims Titinius has been captured only to incite Cassius and gain his freedom.

Method: Inflection and Gestures

Read the scene so that the body language and the voice inflection of the actors emphasize Pindarus' intention to betray Cassius. (You may go as far as to suggest that Titinius has conspired with Pindarus.) Shakespeare most likely borrowed from historical sources for Julius Caesar, including an English translation of Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans by the Roman historian Plutarch. The line "constant as the northern star" (3.1.58) is used in the lyrics of the Joni Mitchell song "A Case of You." Tori Amos, Diana Krall, and Prince, as well as other artists, have recorded popular covers.

Scholars generally believe that Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* in 1599, about the same time he wrote the comedy As *You Like It* and the history play *Henry V. Julius Caesar* was first published in 1623, when it appeared in the First Folio, the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays.

Julius Caesar is based on an actual historical figure of the same name who made himself ruler of Rome in 44BC.

Denzel Washington played the role of Brutus in a 2005 production of *Julius Caesar* on Broadway.

DID YOU KNOW?

Learn more at www.folger.edu/shakespeare.

The first English-language film of Julius Caesar was shot using college students as the cast and crew at Chicago's Northwestern University in 1950. None of the actors were paid, except for Charlton Heston, a recent Northwestern grad who went on to become an Oscar winner and Hollywood superstar.

In 1599, a Swiss traveler named Thomas Platter visited London and wrote about seeing Julius Caesar in his diary. This is the earliest recorded mention of Julius Caesar and some scholars believe Platter may have seen one of the first performances of the play!

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FAMOUS LINES AND PHRASES FROM JULIUS CAESAR

Did you know you're quoting Shakespeare when you say...

Beware the ides of March. Soothsayer 1.2.21

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars But in ourselves... Cassius 1.2.147–48

But for mine own part, it was Greek to me. Casca 1.2.294–95

Cowards die many times before their deaths; The valiant never taste death but once. Caesar 2.2.34–35

Et tu, Bruté?—Then fall, Caesar. Caesar 3.1.85

Cry "Havoc!" and let slip the dogs of war... Anthony 3.1.299

Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause... Brutus 3.2.14–15

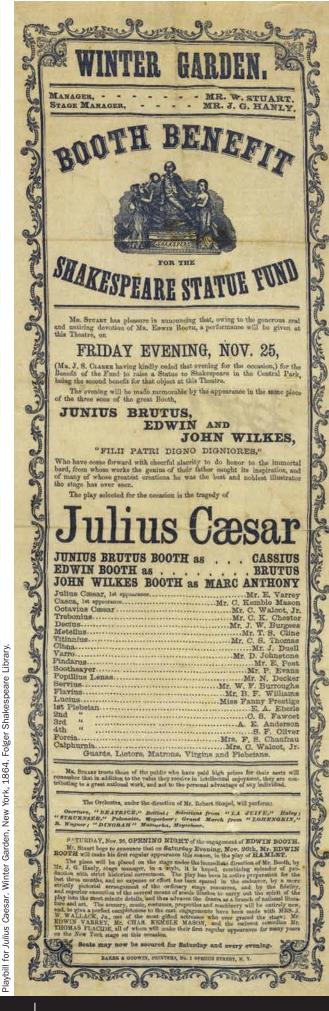
Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; The good is often interrèd with their bones. Antony 3.2.82–85

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Antony 3.2.101

This was the most unkindest cut of all. Antony 3.2.195

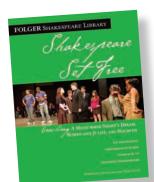
There is a tide in the affairs of men Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune... Brutus $4.3.249{-}50$

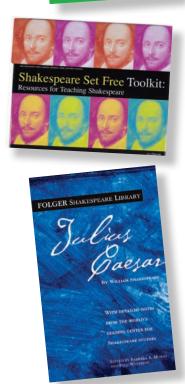
This was the noblest Roman of them all... His life was gentle and the elements So mixed in him that nature might stand up And say to all the world "This was a man." Antony 5.5.74,79–81



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SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES







Shakespeare Set Free

The Shakespeare Set Free series offers innovative, performance-based approaches to teaching Shakespeare from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the world's leading center for Shakespeare studies. This volume includes unit plans on *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet,* and *Macbeth* and day-by-day teaching strategies that successfully immerse students of every grade and skill level in the language and the plays themselves—created, taught, and written by real teachers in real classrooms. Other volumes focus on *Hamlet, Henry IV, Part 1, Othello* and *Twelfth Night*.



Available at the Folger Gift Shop 202–675–0308, or www.folger.edu/shop.

Shakespeare Set Free Toolkit

Think of it as Shakespeare in a box! Everything you need to teach Shakespeare, all in one place: the Doing Shakespeare Right guide to getting started; *Shakespeare Set Free* curriculum guide; two-line scene cards; a flash drive with instructional videos, podcasts, handouts, scripts, and images; *The Play's the Thing* DVD that follows a 5th grade class preparing for a festival; and the *Macbeth* Edition DVD, which includes a film of the smash 2008 Folger Theatre/Two River Theater Company production.



Available at the Folger Gift Shop 202–675–0308, or www.folger.edu/shop.

Play-by-Play: Julius Caesar

Folger Education's "Play-by-Play" website section contains resources on each of the most commonly taught plays, all in one place. Find *Julius Caesar* lesson plans, podcasts, videos, and more.



Learn more at www.folger.edu/teachingjuliuscaesar.

Making a Scene: Shakespeare in the Classroom

Folger Education's blog features new ideas, tips, and resources for teaching Shakespeare. With the teaching community commenting, Folger educators explore what works and what doesn't in today's classroom. Join the conversation!



[➡] Learn more at *www.folger.edu/edblog.*

Bard Notes

A monthly update just for teachers with our newest classroom activities, lesson plans, teacher workshops, and more for K–12 educators.



Learn more at www.folger.edu/enews.



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culture, and the arts. It is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection and a primary repository for rare materials from the early modern period (1500–1750). The Folger is an internationally recognized research library offering advanced scholarly programs in the humanities; an innovator in the preservation of rare materials; a national leader in how Shakespeare is taught in grades K-12; and an award-winning producer of cultural and arts programs—theater, music, poetry, exhibits, lectures, and family programs. By promoting understanding of Shakespeare and his world, the Folger reminds us of the enduring influence of his works, the formative effects of the Renaissance on our own time, and the power of the written and spoken word. A gift to the American people from industrialist Henry Clay Folger, the Folger—located one block east of the U.S. Capitol—opened in 1932. Our Folger Education division is a leader in how Shakespeare is taught today. It provides online resources to millions of teachers and students in grades K–12 each year, trains teachers across the country in performance based teaching of Shakespeare, hosts student Shakespeare festivals and family programs, and publishes the groundbreaking Shakespeare Set Free series and the Folger G

Editions, the leading Shakespeare texts used in American classrooms today.

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