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| **Julius Caesar knowledge organiser** | | | | | |
| **Context** | **Key quotations** | | | | **Plot** |
| 1. The play is set in 44BCE, when threats the existence of the Roman Empire were common and there was a lot of political infighting in Rome. 2. Some feared that Julius Caesar’s rule would lead to the enslavement of Romans, and so a group of conspirators came together and assassinated him. 3. The play covers the events before and immediately after the assassination. 4. Shakespeare may have been drawing parallels between Rome’s shift from a republic to an imperial power and the power shift in England towards the monarchy. 5. As Elizabeth I had no heirs, many feared her death would plunge the country into chaos. Censorship meant it would be dangerous to comment on this in 1599, when the play was first performed, but Shakespeare was able to do so through Julius Caesar. | **Power**  **Brutus**: “I do fear the people choose Caesar for their king.”  **Cassius:** “We petty men Walk under his huge legs and peep about To find ourselves dishonourable graves.”  **Caesar:** “Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.”  **Cassius: “**I know he would not be a wolf But that he sees the Romans are but sheep;”  **Brutus: “**He would be crowned: How that might change his nature, there's the question.”  **Caesar: “**But I am constant as the Northern Star,”  **Brutus: “**And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads, Let's all cry "Peace, freedom, and liberty!"  **Fate and free will**  **Soothsayer:** “Beware the Ides of March.”  **Cassius:** “Men at some time are masters of their fates. The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves,”  **Casca**: “I believe, they are portentous things Unto the climate that they point upon.”  **Caesar: ‘**Thrice hath Calphurnia in her sleep cried out "Help, ho, they murder Caesar!”’  **Caesar:** “She dreamt tonight she saw my statue, Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts, Did run pure blood” | | **Friendship and betrayal**  **Brutus: “**I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.”  **Caesar: “**Et tu, Brutè*?”*  **Brutus: “**So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged His time of fearing death.”  **Brutus:** “If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.”  **Cassius**: “When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.”  **Manipulation**  **Cassius: “**Therefore it is meet That noble minds keep ever with their likes; For who so firm that cannot be seduced?”  **Decius: “**And know it now: the Senate have concluded To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.”  **Antony: “**You all did love him once, not without cause. What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?”  **Antony: “**You are not wood, you are not stones, but men. And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar, It will inflame you; it will make you mad.”  **Pride**  **Caesar: “**I rather tell thee what is to be feared Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.”  **Caesar: “**Danger knows full well That Caesar is more dangerous than he.”  **Cassius: “**So often shall the knot of us be called The men that gave their country liberty. | | **Act 1**: Julius Caesar has returned to Rome victorious from battle. He and his supporters gather for a feast to celebrate a festival and Caesar’s victory. Cassius and Brutus speak privately and it becomes clear that Cassius does not believe Caesar to be a fit ruler. Caesar is suspicious of Cassius and does not wish to be around him. A wide range of worrying omens appear around the city. |
| **Act 2:** Brutus decides that Caesar must die for the public good. A group of conspirators led by Cassius try to recruit Brutus to their cause. Calphurnia, Caesar’s wife begins to have premonitions about his murder and begs him not to leave to go to the Senate. Decius coaxes Caesar into going by saying they plan to have him crowned king, and Caesar leaves with him. A soothsayer attempts to save Caesar by writing him a note with a list of all those who conspire against him. |
| **Act 3**: Caesar is surrounded by the conspirators and fails to read the note. In the Senate, Metellus pleads with Caesar on behalf of his brother, who is banished. The others begin to plead, but with no success. Casca then stabs Caesar and Brutus does the same. When Antony arrives, he is devastated and asks to speak at the funeral. During his speech, Antony manages to whip the crowd into a frenzy against the murderers. |
| **Act 4:** Antony and others plot to murder those who conspired against Caesar. Brutus and Cassius quarrel and Brutus begins to regret killing Caesar. Caesar’s ghost presents itself to Brutus. |
| **Act 5:** Antony and Octavius challenge Brutus and Cassius to meet them on the battlefield. The battle commences and Cassius is stabbed with the same blade used to kill Caesar. As the battle continues and it becomes clear they are losing, Brutus asks his comrades to kill him, but they refuse. One of his men finally holds Brutus’ sword while he runs into it and he is then buried as an honourable soldier. |
| **Key themes** | **Characters** | | | **Key terms** |
| 1. Power 2. Fate and free will 3. Friendship and betrayal 4. Manipulation 5. Pride | * Julius Caesar * Brutus * Cassius * Casca * Decius * Antony | * Calphurnia * Portia * Octavius * Soothsayer * Cinna * Flavius and Murellus | | 1. Politics 2. Symbols 3. Conspiracy 4. Republic 5. Imperial 6. Harmatia |