



**MARIN
SHAKESPEARE
COMPANY**

**SHAKESPEARE FOR STUDENT AUDIENCES 2024
PRESENTS**

**JULIUS CAESAR
TWISTED**

APRIL 17-21, 2024

514 FOURTH STREET, SAN RAFAEL

**PLAYING FOR GOOD
ON STAGE | EDUCATION | SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**DISCOVER
EVERY
GUIDE**

Teachers, Students, and Audiences!

This Discovery Guide was compiled to enhance your experience with Shakespeare for Student Audiences 2024: *Julius Caesar Twisted*. This guide is just the beginning and I hope the information, activities, and resources inside will challenge you to engage with the play in new ways and inspire you to dig deeper into the works of William Shakespeare and the issue of mass incarceration.

If you have any questions, want to discuss the contents of this guide or our production, or are looking for more ideas about bringing Shakespeare and social justice alive in your classroom, I would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Elana Kepner (she/her), Education Director
education@marinshakespeare.org, 415.499.4487

CAST

Lion/Caesar: Pharaoh Brooks
Brute/Brutus: LeShawn Holcomb
Rock/Mark Antony: Joey Pagaduan
Thinker/Cassius: Anthony Jefferson (AJ)
Pudding/ Mr. Handsome/ Metellus Cimber: Losdini
Philly/ Mr. Brooks/ Cicero: Christopher Hammond
Chino/ Cinna/ Cinna the Poet: Joel Ochoa
Spacey/Soothsayer/American Patriot/Johnny Cash/ U.R. Hurt: Doug Nolan
Big Blue/Marullus/Casca: Mark Anthony

Additional characters played by members of the Ensemble.

CREATIVE TEAM

Adaptators: Lesley Currier & the Artists at Solano Prison 2022
Director: Lesley Currier
Scenic Designer: Jon Tracy
Costume Designer: Tammy Berlin
Lighting Designer: Jackson Currier
Sound Designer: Roger Clay

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

MARIN SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

Artistic Director: Jon Tracy
Managing Director: Lesley Currier
Education Director: Elana Kepner
Social Justice Director: Alejandra Wahl
Production Manager: Jackson Currier
Shakespeare for Social Justice Director: Suraya Susana Keating
Associate Artists: Aejay Mitchell, Cathleen Riddley, Elena Wright, Joey Pagaduan, Leontyne Mbele-Mbong, Michael Torres, Nick Musleh, Nina Ball, Stevie DeMott

DAY ROOM CHARACTERS

Lion: A shotcaller, the leader of a prison faction. He would like to rule with absolute authority.

Brute: Lion's next-in-command. He is loyal to Lion, but worries that Lion's leadership could get everyone enmeshed in a war.

Rock: Friend to Lion.

Thinker: A shotcaller, leader of a rival prison faction. He thinks Lion's unchecked power is dangerous for everyone.

Big Blue: A drug dealer loyal to Thinker.

Chino: A client of Big Blue's.

Philly: An older follower, has seen a lot.

Pudding: A follower, looks out for himself.

Spacey: Maybe he has some mental health challenges, maybe he is on drugs, or maybe he is tapped into something. He is unpredictable and sometimes irrational.

TV CHARACTERS

Mr. Handsome: Host of "Making History Fun!", a TV program that makes world history come alive.

Mr. Books: Co-host of "Making History Fun!"

American Patriot: A candidate for the U.S. Senate

Johnny Cash: A businessman

MTV Singer

U.R. Hurt and Lucky Casino: A personal injury lawyer and his client

CHARACTERS FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR*

Marullus: A tribune who admonishes the commoners for celebrating Caesar's triumph over Pompey. He represents the discontent among some Romans towards Caesar's growing power.

Cassius: A skilled manipulator and a key conspirator against Caesar who plays a significant role in convincing Brutus to join the conspiracy.

Brutus: A noble Roman senator known for his integrity and honor. Brutus is conflicted between his loyalty to Rome and his friendship with Caesar.

Cicero: A wise and respected philosopher and senator, known for his oratory skills.

Casca: A cynical and skeptical senator who is among the conspirators against Caesar.

Metellus Cimber: A senator involved in the conspiracy against Caesar.

Cinna: Another senator and a conspirator against Caesar.

Julius Caesar: The titular character and a powerful Roman dictator. Caesar's growing power and ambition lead to his assassination by the conspirators.

Soothsayer: A mysterious figure who warns Caesar to "Beware the Ides of March," foreshadowing his impending doom.

Mark Antony: A loyal friend of Caesar and a skilled politician who aligns himself against the conspirators. He delivers a famous speech at Caesar's funeral, inciting the Roman citizens against the conspirators.

Calpurnia: Caesar's wife, who has ominous dreams warning of Caesar's death and tries to convince him to stay home on the day of the assassination.

Cinna the Poet: A harmless poet mistaken for Cinna the conspirator by an angry mob.

Roman Citizens: Represent the general populace of Rome, whose sentiments sway throughout the play based on the speeches and actions of the characters.



Julius Caesar Twisted features the following scenes from the first three acts of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

Act 1, Scene 1: Marullus, a Roman tribune, reprimands the citizens of Rome for celebrating Caesar's return from battle. He questions their loyalty and reminds them of their previous support for Pompey, Caesar's rival. Marullus condemns their fickle nature and accuses them of ingratitude towards Pompey's memory.

Act 1, Scene 2: Caesar encounters a soothsayer who warns him of the Ides of March, but he brushes off the prophecy. Later in the scene, Cassius, a senator, approaches Brutus, a close associate of Caesar, expressing concern over Caesar's growing power and suggesting that he is a threat to Rome's freedom. Cassius appeals to Brutus's sense of honor and patriotism, attempting to persuade him to join a conspiracy against Caesar. Brutus, although conflicted, agrees to consider Cassius's arguments.



"Cowards die many times before their deaths; / The valiant never taste of death but once."

CAESAR (ACT 2, SCENE 2)

Act 1, Scene 3: On a stormy night in Rome, Casca meets Cicero and they discuss the unusual natural phenomena and Casca's belief that these are omens warning of impending doom. Cassius arrives and shares his concerns about Caesar's growing power. He begins to recruit conspirators, including Casca, to join him in his plot to assassinate Caesar.

Act 2, Scene 1: Brutus, troubled by his conflicted feelings towards Caesar's rise to power, decides to join the conspiracy against him. The conspirators gather, including Cassius, Casca, and Cinna, and pledge their allegiance to the cause of protecting Rome from tyranny.

Act 2, Scene 2 On the eve of the Ides of March, Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, begs Caesar not to go to the Senate, as she has had ominous, and she thinks, portentous dreams about his death. However, Cinna convinces Caesar to disregard her warnings by interpreting the dreams positively and Caesar leaves for the Senate.

"Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!"

CONSPIRATORS (ACT 3, SCENE 1)

Act 3, Scene 1: The conspirators assassinate Caesar in the Senate, with each conspirator taking turns stabbing him. The conspirators proclaim liberty and freedom, believing they have acted in the best interests of Rome. Mark Antony arrives and mourns Caesar's death, vowing to seek justice for murder. Brutus addresses the crowd, justifying the assassination as a necessary sacrifice for the good of Rome.

Act 3, Scene 2: Mark Antony delivers a powerful funeral oration for Caesar, stirring up the crowd with his rhetoric. He cleverly manipulates the crowd's emotions, turning them against Brutus and the other conspirators. Antony's speech incites a riot, leading to chaos in Rome and setting the stage for further conflict.

"Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;"

MARK ANTONY (ACT 3, SCENE 2)



"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 oft interred with their bones;"

MARK ANTONY (ACT 3, SCENE 2)

Act 3, Scene 3: A poet named Cinna encounters a group of citizens who mistake him for Cinna the conspirator. Despite his protests and attempts to clarify his identity, the citizens attack him, fueled by their anger and desire for vengeance against those associated with Caesar's assassination.

SHAKESPEARE

THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND



Let's talk about the dude himself: William Shakespeare. He was born on April 23rd, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, a small town on the Avon River. His dad was a glove maker and his mom came from a pretty wealthy family. But young Will was always more interested in writing than in gloves (can you blame him?).

In 1582, when he was just 18, Will married Anne Hathaway (not that one). They had 3 children, Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith.

Shakespeare went off the grid for a bit after his twins were born in 1585. Historians can only guess what he was up to during these “lost years.” He may have been on the run from the law for deer poaching, working as a Latin and Greek tutor, acting with a traveling theatre troupe, serving in the military, or just helping out with the family business in Stratford.

By 1592, we know Shakespeare, now in his early 20s, had moved to London and started acting and writing plays for a theatre company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Eventually, he became a part-owner of the company and they even built a new theatre called the Globe. Talk about a power move. He also performed for Queen Elizabeth I herself and may have even written plays at her request.

Shakespeare had a prolific career as a playwright and poet, with 38 (or more) comedies, tragedies, and histories to his name, as well as 154 sonnets, 3 epic poems, and a handful of other bits of verse. And this is just the writing we know about! Some scholars think there are Shakespeare plays and other works lost to history. Imagine that garage sale find!

Shakespeare continued to write and act until he retired to Stratford in 1613, shortly before the Globe Theatre burned down during a performance of *Henry VIII*. William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, meaning he died on his 52nd birthday. Iconic, right?

Now, you might be thinking, "Okay, but why should I care about this dead White dude?" Well, let me tell you, Shakespeare was a trailblazer. He wrote plays that dealt with all sorts of topics, from love and jealousy to power and betrayal. He liked to mix comedy, drama, the supernatural, political commentary, a crude joke or two, and lots of sword fights. And he created characters that were so complex and deeply human that people still study them today. He is also credited with inventing so many words and phrases we still use, like “eyeball,” “gloomy,” “swagger,” “break the ice” and “wild goose chase.”

More than 400 years after his death, Shakespeare continues to be the most-produced playwright in the world. His plays have been translated into over 100 languages, including French, Japanese, Arabic, and even Klingon, the fictional language spoken by the alien species in the Star Trek franchise.

So there you have it, folks. William Shakespeare: word-smith, playwright, poet, actor, businessman, student of the human condition, and total icon.

POV: Pharoah Brooks

REDEEMING TIME

In 2022, I found myself doing *Julius Caesar Twisted* because the Shakespeare class at Solano State Prison was deciding what play they wanted to do. Someone mentioned *Julius Caesar*, and I was the only one who had done it in the past. The class felt so strongly about it. I proposed an idea: how about we put our own twist on it? The idea was to make an echo of what happened in the story of Julius Caesar to play out within the prison while they're watching *Julius Caesar* on TV. Everybody was excited about the ideas and immediately went to work. The process consisted of several writers coming up with ideas and making edits and cuts every week, while our Director, Lesley Currier, put the whole script together in multiple drafts.



I found myself in prison in the first place because of the lack of validation I received as a child growing up in my household. Since I didn't get that validation at home, I looked for it on the streets, working with individuals who would commit crimes, and do things that would harm people. When somebody didn't pay me for drugs that I gave them, I brutally beat them with a bat, and they had to be airlifted to Stanford Medical from the Central Valley. I felt empowered by selling drugs and breaking the rules because of the strict upbringing that I had. I now understand how unhealthy relationships in your household can truly affect your trajectory in life.

What helped me get out of prison is empathy and humility. Before I could truly be humble and empathize with another person, I had to understand myself. I had to understand why I behaved in such a way, and why I acted how I acted, to show myself some compassion and understanding, something I never got from others. Anger management was a big help. When events start up a reaction in me, I can recognize it, take a deep breath, and not be drawn into anger and react in ways that will harm myself or other people. That awareness still helps me today. So when I see someone do something that could possibly draw a reaction out of me, I'm very mindful.

The Shakespeare group also helped me, because it allowed me to express different emotions, and create together as a team. I was encouraged to be funny, be deeply emotional, write, make music, and to help lead others in making each production a success.

To work with professional actors now is a dream come true. While we had several months in prison to work on a play, this process moves at a much faster pace. I appreciate the talent, artistry, maturity, skill level, and professionalism of the cast members. The first play I ever did with Marin Shakespeare was *Julius Caesar*. Then we did *Julius Caesar Twisted* in 2022. So now that I'm out and no longer incarcerated, this experience is truly a reflection of how my life has turned full circle.

Pharaoh Brooks (Lion/ Caesar) is an author, actor, musician, counselor, and yoga instructor who is committed to strengthening the connection of people. Pharaoh currently works as a care coordinator for the SF Heart division of Urban Alchemy, working directly with the unhoused population, providing social services like vital documents, shelter, GA assistance, detox, and mental health treatment.

INCARCERATION NATION

MASS INCARCERATION BY THE NUMBERS

The United States houses 25% of the global prison population and the largest number of people who are incarcerated of any country worldwide, with 1.9 million people as of 2024.

Over the last 50 years, the state and federal prison population has grown by about 700%

Nationally, Black Americans are disproportionately incarcerated, making up 40% of the incarcerated population, and just 13% of the broader U.S. population.

Black Californians constitute 5% of the state's population, and 28% of the prison population.

California has an incarceration rate of 549 per 100,000 people, or 199,000 people, meaning that it locks up a higher percentage of its people than most democratic countries on earth.

There are 800,000 people on parole, 2.9 million people on probation, and an estimated 79 million people with a criminal record of some kind.

Despite the national crime rate being at its lowest since 1963, in 14 states, the prison population grew by 5% or more in 2022. Meanwhile, in 2022 California saw an almost 4% drop in the state's prison population.

Nearly half of youth in foster care have a brush with the criminal legal system by the age of 17, and a significant portion of individuals incarcerated in state prisons—38%—were first arrested before the age of 16.

Facts are hyperlinked to their sources.

POV: Alejandra Wahl

WHY SHAKESPEARE IN PRISON?

Shakespeare's plays have some of the most epic stories told! His stories are like rollercoasters – full of drama, action, and juicy gossip. When we get into these stories, whether we are actors or an audience member, we're not just reading lines; we're stepping into the shoes of kings, queens, lovers, and villains. We learn about high-stakes emotional experiences in life like love, jealousy, betrayal, and redemption – stuff that hits close to home, even in our modern age. When we act these stories out, and tell these stories to our loved ones, we build a strong sense of community and feel safe and loved.

Prisons are places without a sense of community, safety, and love. Due to many external pressures and issues, our state prisons are full of hurt people who have hurt people. Just like the characters in Shakespeare's plays, who have done many things and made many mistakes on their journeys to find understanding and compassion, we believe that everyone in prison deserves a chance to find redemption, healing, and a safe community to live in.

Just like you do at school, participants in our theatre classes in prison get the chance to learn about and discuss Shakespeare, and create original plays, poems, and songs inspired by the plays. In a place that is all about keeping people isolated and divided from each other, having a safe space to express yourself and be accepted for who you really are is not only important, it's healing. These programs get people from all walks of life coming together to put on a play. They work together, laugh together, and yes, sometimes mess up together. But that's what makes it fun! They learn to trust each other, support each other, and become a family.

The Shakespeare programs in prison aren't just about putting on a show – they are about learning skills that can help you succeed, both in and out of prison. When participants tackle those complicated plots, they're learning to think critically, solve problems, and express themselves in new ways. Plus, they're gaining confidence and learning how to build healthy relationships with others – and more importantly, themselves!

The best part of all? Shakespeare's stories are all about redemption – about making mistakes, learning from them, and becoming a better person. When participants who are incarcerated dive into those stories, they see a reflection of themselves – flawed, yes, but capable of change. They start to believe in themselves again, to see a future beyond those prison walls. And that is the real magic of Shakespeare, and why we work so hard to make sure that theater programs in prison stay alive and well.



So the next time you hear a story about prisons and the people who are incarcerated in them, take a second and think about Shakespeare and *Julius Caesar Twisted*, too. Behind those bars and barbed wire, something amazing is happening. Human beings like you and me are discovering a whole new world of possibilities, one play at a time. And now, they are the ones writing the stories that inspire us like Shakespeare does, inspiring others to find their own magic, too!

Alejandra Wahl is the Social Justice Program Director for Marin Shakespeare Company and has co-facilitated Shakespeare classes in various prisons since 2017. An avid student and lover of Shakespeare, Alejandra has been studying Shakespeare and performing since her youth. Alejandra holds a B.A in English Literature and Theater Arts from Cal State University East Bay.

TYRANTS THROUGH THE AGES

Julius Caesar (100 BCE - 44 BCE) is a pivotal figure in Roman history. His governance over the Roman Republic from 49 BCE to 44 BCE is often scrutinized, with some regarding him as a tyrant due to his manipulation of political structures and centralization of authority. He bypassed traditional republican processes, used military force to seize control, and established himself as a dictator for life, undermining the principles of republican government. Caesar's grab for power played a major role in bringing down the Republic and paving the way for the establishment of the Roman Empire.

Throughout history, there have been plenty of other rulers like Caesar – tyrants, dictators, and autocrats, who weren't afraid to bend the rules a bit (or a lot) to get what they wanted:

1. **Nebuchadnezzar II** (c. 634 - c. 562 BCE) - Reign: approximately 605 BCE - 562 BCE - Known for aggressive military campaigns and imposing heavy taxes on conquered territories.
2. **Qin Shi Huang** (259 BCE - 210 BCE) - Reign: 221 BCE - 210 BCE - Established authoritarian rule in China marked by centralization of power and brutal suppression of dissent.
3. **Genghis Khan** (c. 1162 - 1227) - Reign: 1206-1227 - Known for ruthless conquests, employing terror tactics, and imposing brutal rule over conquered lands.
4. **Gaius Octavius (Augustus)** (63 BCE - 14 CE) - Reign: 27 BCE - 14 CE - Centralized power, suppressed opposition, and ended the Roman Republic, laying the foundations for autocratic rule.
5. **Caligula** (12 - 41 CE) - Reign: 37 CE - 41 CE - Known for erratic cruelty, declaring himself a god, and extravagant spending, instilling fear among Roman subjects.
6. **Vlad the Impaler** (1431 - 1476/77) - Reign: 1456-1462, 1476-1477 - Ruled Wallachia brutally, infamous for impalements and repression to maintain control.
7. **Ivan the Terrible** (1530 - 1584) - Reign: 1547-1584 - Established a reign of terror, executed thousands, and suppressed dissent through fear.
8. **Oliver Cromwell** (1599 - 1658) - Reign: 1653-1658 - Ruled England with military force, dissolved Parliament, and suppressed dissent.
9. **Robespierre** (1758 - 1794) - Reign: 1793-1794 - Associated with Reign of Terror, executed his political opponents, and ruled France with authoritarianism during the French Revolution.
10. **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1769 - 1821) - Reign: 1804-1814/1815 - Centralized power, waged wars of conquest, and suppressed opposition, establishing a dictatorship in France.
11. **Joseph Stalin** (1878 - 1953) - Reign: 1922-1953 - Ruled USSR with an iron fist, implemented purges, collectivization, and widespread repression, leading to millions of deaths.
12. **Adolf Hitler** (1889 - 1945) - Reign: 1933-1945 - Established fascist dictatorship in Germany, responsible for the Holocaust and the atrocities of World War II.
13. **Mao Zedong** (1893 - 1976) - Reign: 1949-1976 - Implemented authoritarian policies, leading to millions of deaths through famine, purges, and political persecution.
14. **Francisco Franco** (1892 - 1975) - Reign: 1939-1975 - Established fascist regime in Spain, ruled with repression and censorship, suppressing dissent.
15. **Saddam Hussein** (1937 - 2006) - Reign: 1979-2003 - Ruled Iraq with oppression, initiating wars and committing atrocities against his own people.
16. **Muammar Gaddafi** (1942 - 2011) - Reign: 1969-2011 - Ruled Libya with authoritarianism, suppressing dissent and human rights abuses.
17. **Kim Jong-il** (1941 - 2011) - Reign: 1994-2011 - Continued authoritarian rule in North Korea, enforcing cult of personality and extreme repression.
18. **Bashar al-Assad** (Born 1965) - Reign: 2000-Present - Continued authoritarian rule in Syria, using violence and repression to suppress dissent.
19. **Vladimir Putin** (Born 1952) - Reign: 1999-2008, 2012-Present - Accused of consolidating power in Russia, suppressing opposition, undermining democratic institutions, and seizing land belonging to other sovereign nations.
20. **Xi Jinping** (Born 1953) - Reign: 2012-Present - Centralized power in China, cracked down on dissent, and intensified censorship, raising concerns about authoritarianism.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the performance:

- What do you already know about the story of *Julius Caesar*? What are you curious to learn about?
- How do you think watching a live performance differs from reading or watching a film adaptation?
- What do you think are some of the key themes and ideas in *Julius Caesar* and what are some parallels in the setting of a contemporary prison?
- What role do you think theater plays in our society? Why do you think people still perform plays that are hundreds of years old?
- What do you think are some of the challenges of performing an adaptation of *Julius Caesar*? How do you think actors and directors approach bringing such an iconic story to life in a new adaptation?

After the performance

- How did the live performance compare to your expectations? What surprised you the most?
- How did the actors and director approach the story and characters of *Julius Caesar Twisted*? What creative choices did they make?
- How did the live performance differ from reading or watching a film adaptation?
- What themes and ideas from the play stood out to you the most? How do you think the actors and directors conveyed these themes on stage?
- What was your favorite scene or moment from the play? Why did it resonate with you?
- What did you learn about theater by watching a live performance? How did it deepen your understanding and appreciation of the play?
- What did you learn about Shakespeare's language by watching a live performance?
- What did you learn about the prison system and mass incarceration?
- What questions are you left with? What do you wonder about?

About the play

- If you have read Shakespeare's play, what are the biggest changes made in adapting the text? Why do you think those changes were made?
- How are Lion, Brute and the other contemporary characters, similar to their counterparts in *Julius Caesar*? How are they different?
- What is the role of the various TV commercials and segments in the play? How do they add to the themes of the play?
- In the final moments of the play, Brute says, "I wonder what will happen next." What do you think happens next? Will Lion's power, like Caesar's, continue to influence the other characters beyond his death? Have the conspirators saved themselves from war, or contributed to the rising conflict?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

RHETORICALLY SPEAKING

Grade Level: 9-12

Duration: 60-90 minutes (though this could be extended into a multi-day lesson)

Materials: Copies of Mark Antony's speech from Act 3, Scene 2 of *Julius Caesar*, Copies of contemporary or historical political speeches (see some recommendations below)

Introduction (10 minutes):

- Begin the lesson by discussing the importance of persuasive speaking in everyday life. Ask students to share examples of situations where persuasion is used (e.g., advertisements, debates, political speeches).
- Introduce the concept of rhetoric as the art of effective communication, particularly in persuading an audience.
- Explain that students will be analyzing persuasive speeches: Mark Antony's speech from *Julius Caesar* and a contemporary or historical political speech.
- Review Act 3, Scene 2 and explain the context of the speech, if needed.

Analyzing Mark Antony's Speech (20 minutes):

- Read through Antony's speech as a class, stopping to discuss notable rhetorical devices and persuasive techniques used by Antony including repetition, parallelism, rhetorical questions, irony, ethos, pathos, and logos. Check out americanrhetoric.com for definitions and examples of these and other rhetorical devices.
- Break students into small groups and assign each group a specific section of the speech to analyze in detail. Ask them to identify the main arguments, emotional appeals, and rhetorical devices used in their assigned section.
- Have each group present their findings to the class, allowing for discussion and clarification.
- Ask for volunteers to read a section, or the whole speech aloud, emphasizing the rhetorical devices they found.

Compare and Contrast (25 minutes):

- Distribute a contemporary or historical political speech to each group.
- Ask students to read the speech aloud within their group, taking notes on the persuasive techniques employed and discussing the similarities and differences between Mark Antony's speech and the political speech. Encourage them to consider the effectiveness of each speaker's rhetoric in achieving their goals.
- Reconvene as a class and facilitate a discussion comparing the two speeches. Encourage students to share their observations and insights.
- Discuss: which speech did you find the most persuasive and why? How does language influence belief and action?

Here are some political speeches that can be compared and contrasted to Mark Antony's. Text and analysis of these speeches and other terrific resources and videos can be found at <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/>.

- Barack Obama's 2008 Democratic National Convention Speech
- Hillary Clinton's 2016 Democratic National Convention Speech
- Greta Thunberg's Speech at the United Nations Climate Action Summit (2019)
- Jacinda Ardern's Speech on Gun Control in New Zealand (2019)
- Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (1863)
- Winston Churchill's "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" Speech (1940)
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" Speech (1963)
- Margaret Thatcher's "The Lady's Not for Turning" Speech (1980)
- Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Address (1994)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

RHETORICALLY SPEAKING

MARK ANTONY (Act 3, Scene 2)

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 oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men--
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

THE POWER OF THE MOB

Grade Level: 6-12

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials: Copies of the play or copies of Act 3, Scene 2

Introduction (10 minutes)

The Roman Citizens are key characters in *Julius Caesar*, representing the entire populace of Rome and demonstrating the susceptibility of the crowd to manipulation and irrational behavior

- Ask students to define "mob mentality" and discuss contemporary and historical examples: the Salem Witch Trials, social media cancel culture, Nazi Germany, sports riots, etc.
- If needed, provide a brief overview of *Julius Caesar* or read through the plot summary of the first three acts included in this guide.

Mob Scene (20 minutes)

- Divide the class into small groups and assign each group to one of two monologues from the scene: Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" or Brutus' "Romans, Countrymen and Lovers."
- Have each group read their monologue aloud and identify how their character manipulates the crowd. Are they inciting the mob intentionally or unintentionally? What tactics are they using? Look at the reactions of the Roman Citizens in the scene. Discuss their reactions.
- Open this up to a class discussion.

Making the Mob (30 minutes)

- Assign volunteers to play the roles of Antony and Brutus. They will read the speeches aloud, so give them a moment to rehearse.
- The rest of the class will play the Roman Citizens. Encourage them to listen to the speeches and react to what is being said. They should respond verbally and can use the lines of the citizens in the scene, or jeer, heckle, or cheer as they see fit. Remind them that by the end of Antony's speech, they should be ready to riot against the conspirators.
- Have Brutus and then Antony read their speeches. The speakers should try to whip the crowd into a frenzy. The mob should allow themselves to get carried away.
- If there is time, allow more students to play Antony and Brutus and/or read the entire scene aloud.
- Discuss: How did it feel to play any of these roles? To wield the power of Brutus or Antony? To get carried away in being the mob? Did the students as part of the mob find themselves doing or feeling anything unexpected? How did the students playing Antony and Brutus feel about the mob? Which of the speeches is most persuasive? Which of the student actors was the most persuasive and why?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

ADAPTING SHAKESPEARE

Grade Level: 6-12

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials: Copies of *Julius Caesar* or scenes from the play*

This lesson works best if the class has some familiarity with Julius Caesar beyond viewing Julius Caesar Twisted. It can easily be adapted for another Shakespeare play.

Introduction (10-15 mins):

- Set up the idea of an adaptation: *Julius Caesar Twisted* is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* set in a modern-day prison, where the politics, characters, and events mirror the politics, characters, and events in Shakespeare's play.
- If you haven't read *Julius Caesar* in class, take some time to go over the plot or read through the summary of the first three acts in this guide. Discuss the main themes.
- Look briefly at the scenes the students can choose from and make sure everyone has a basic understanding of what is happening in these moments in the play
- Discuss the importance of setting in literature and drama and how it influences the tone, characters, and action.
- Brainstorm some possible alternative settings for *Julius Caesar* as a class. These could be contemporary, historical, or imaginary. Some examples: A modern-day political campaign, a high school student council election, a mob-owned club in 1920s NYC, a futuristic dystopian society, or a Viking village. Check out the list of tyrants in this guide for further inspiration.

Adapt a Scene (25-30 mins)

Students will choose a new setting for *Julius Caesar* and adapt one scene or monologue from the play.

- Divide the class into pairs or small groups. Each group will pick a setting and then a scene to adapt.
- Taking into account how their new setting affects the dialogue, the characters, and other elements of the play like costumes and props, ask each group or pair to rewrite their scene or monologue. Encourage creativity and out-of-the-box thinking. The adaptation doesn't need to be word for word or even have the same character and plot. How can they be inspired by the original text while still making it their own?

Presentations (10-15 minutes)

- Give the groups the opportunity to describe their new setting before performing their scene.
- Discuss: How did creating an adaptation deepen their understanding of the original play? Which aspects of adaptation are easy and which are difficult?

**Recommended text for this lesson: Act 1, Scene 1 (Tribunes and Citizens), Act 2, Scene 1 (Brutus: "It must be by his death..."), the beginning of Act 3, Scene 1 (Caesar's Assassination), Act 3, Scene 2 (Mark Antony's funeral speech).*

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

WHAT IS IN A MEME?

Grade Levels: 6-12

Materials: Memes

Duration: 25 minutes

Introduction (5 Minutes)

- Share a few of your favorite internet memes, including memes related to *Julius Caesar* (some are included below) and others.
- Discuss the images in the memes and what makes them “meme-able”: open to many interpretations, simple storytelling, symbols of shared meaning, etc.

Make a Meme (20 minutes)

- Display the blank memes on the following pages (or pick other popular meme templates from imgflip.com/memegenerator). In groups, partners, or individually, ask the students to choose one of the images and generate the text to turn it into a meme related to the themes or characters in *Julius Caesar* and/or *Julius Caesar Twisted*. Give them 5-10 minutes to craft their text.
- Ask each group/student to present their text for their meme. Discuss their choice of image and text. What about the image inspired them or reminded them of an element of the play? Is this new meme funny and does it make sense to the other students? How do memes relate to subtext?
- Extension: Use the meme generator on imgflip.com/memegenerator to add the text to the image and share the new memes. *Share your meme with us by emailing Education Director Elana Kepner at education@marinshakespeare.org and you may see them featured on IG for #mememonday!*

Julius Caesar Memes



Cassius convincing Brutus to help assassinate Julius Caesar



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN A MEME? CONTINUED

Meme Templates





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