

Julius Caesar Literary Analysis

What is a Literary Analysis?

- A literary analysis is not merely a summary of a literary work.
- Instead, it is an argument about the work that expresses a writer's personal perspective, interpretation, judgment, or critical evaluation of the work.
- This is accomplished by examining the literary devices, word choices, or writing structures the author uses within the work.
- The purpose of a literary analysis is to demonstrate why the author used specific ideas, word choices, or writing structures to convey his or her message.

Requirements

- Two full pages (three maximum), double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman, MLA Format.
- Develop and support a thesis statement to answer one of the following topics or design and submit your own topic.
- Use at least 5 quotes from the play to support your thesis.

Topics: Choose 1

1. Were the conspirators justified in killing Caesar? Trace the arguments made by the conspirators as they plotted against Caesar. Using evidence from the play, evaluate whether or not they were justified in killing him.
2. Was Caesar ambitious? Using Mark Antony's funeral speech and Caesar's own words, analyze what kind of king Caesar would have been had he lived.
3. Compare the rhetoric of Brutus and Mark Antony in Act III, scene ii. Analyze their speeches to decide if they use pathos, ethos, logos, or a combination. Finally, decide why Mark Antony's speech was more effective.
4. Brutus killed Caesar, as he claims, "Not because I loved Caesar less, but because I loved Rome more." Imagine, however, that Brutus had killed Caesar because he truly loved him less - or hated him. How would the play be different if Brutus' motive was hatred? Select at least 5 quotes from Brutus and describe how they would change if Brutus hated Caesar.
5. Shakespeare based his play on historical events. (For example, Calpurnia's dream is based on a supposedly factual account.) Research the history of the events surrounding

Caesar's assassination and aftermath, then write a documented paper comparing Shakespeare's play to the history.

6. Imagine that you have to vote in an election to choose the best leader of Rome. The candidates are Brutus, Cassius, Octavius, and Antony. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each man. Then, make a judgment about which man would make the best leader.
7. Should this play be called Julius Caesar or Marcus Brutus? Write a paper analyzing why Brutus is or is not the true center of the play.
8. Analyze Calpurnia's dream from Act II, scene ii. What was its true meaning? Compare the dream to the events of Act III to demonstrate how accurate it was. Finally, whose interpretation of the dream was more accurate – Calpurnia's or Casca's?
9. Research the role of an upper class woman in Roman society. Then compare and contrast your findings with Shakespeare's portrayal of Portia and Calpurnia. Did Shakespeare accurately portray the role of an upper class woman in Roman society?
10. In Act II, Brutus proclaims, "Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods/ Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds." However the imagery used to describe Caesar's body in Act III is very bloody and quite disturbing. Using quotes from the play, analyze the imagery used to describe Caesar's body to explain Mark Antony's reaction to the crime. How would the play be different if Caesar's death was cleaner and less bloody?

Due Date

You will be given today, and Friday to work on this assignment in class. It will be due by Wednesday, May 3rd via Turnitin.com by midnight. You can always access the play online or checkout a textbook.