THE TRAGEDY OF JULIUS CAESAR
ACT I STUDY QUESTIONS

Scene 1
1. Describe the tone in which Flavius and Murellus speak to the commoners. What can be inferred about the relationship between the two groups?

2. What important background information is gained from the cobbler?

3. Describe the characteristics of Murellus’ speech that begins “Wherefore we rejoice...” and ends “...we rejoice...” and ends “...light on this ingratitude.”

4. Paraphrase Murellus’ speech that begins “Knew you not Pompey?...” and ends “...light on this ingratitude.” Describe his mood.

5. Beginning with Flavius’ words “...Go you down that way” and ends with “...And keep us all in servile fearfulness”, what facts about Caesar are apparent in this speech?

Scene 2
6. Characterize the relationship of Caesar and Antony.

7. How does Shakespeare’s use of the soothsayer make a dramatic foreshadowing?

8. What do you learn about Caesar’s character based on his behavior towards the soothsayer?

9. Looking at Brutus’ first speech, describe his demeanor. What do his words and attitude demonstrate about his character?

10. What conclusions can you draw so far from Cassius’ behavior toward Brutus?

11. What conflict emerges during Brutus’ dialogue with Cassius?

12. What type of verse form is apparent in Brutus’ and Cassius’ dialogue that begins with “Therefore, good Brutus, be prepar’d to hear...” and ends with “...The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores.”?

13. Summarize the swimming anecdote about Caesar that Cassius relates. What point is Cassius making?

14. Cassius describes an epileptic seizure that Caesar had and compares Caesar to “a sick girl.” What conclusion does he want Brutus to draw about Caesar? It is a valid conclusion? Why?
15. In Cassius’ speech, “Men at some time are masters of their fate; The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings. Summarize the philosophy of life that Cassius is describing. Do you agree or disagree?

16. Cassius discusses Caesar’s name at length and tells Brutus, “Yours is as fair a name.” What do names symbolize in Cassius’ speech?

17. On what grounds does Cassius object to Caesar?

18. How does Brutus respond to Cassius’ implication that Caesar must be prevented from becoming king of Rome?

19. What might the appearance of the members of Caesar’s party foreshadow?

20. Explain what kind of men Caesar wants and does not want around him.

21. Summarize the reasons Caesar does not trust Cassius.

22. Caesar comments, “I rather tell thee what is to be fear’d Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar. Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf, And tell me truly what thou think’st of him.

23. Compare the form of Caesar’s speech to that of Casca’s speeches.

24. Identify the verbal irony in Casca’s statement, “It was mere foolery. I did not mark it.”

25. Interpret the reasons for Caesar’s refusal of the crown.

26. Casca does not know what Cassius means when he says, “And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.” Explain this remark.

27. What does the punishment of Murellus and Flavius indicate about Caesar’s rule?

28. Explain the metaphor Cassius uses to describe Casca.


30. What is the main conflict as this scene ends?

Scene 3
31. Identify the two uses of personification in Casca’s opening speech in Scene 3.
32. Describe Casca’s physical attitude during his speech that begins, “... A common slave---you know him well by sight---“and ends “... Unto the climate that they point upon.” What is his tone of voice?

33. Compare and contrast the characters of Casca and Cicero as they discuss the strange events right before they part company.

34. Why doesn’t Cassius want to name Caesar directly? Why does he speak of him in veiled terms?

35. What does Cassius’ speech about suicide indicate about his character?

36. Cassius uses several animal metaphors to describe Caesar and the Romans. What is the general meaning and effect of these metaphors?

37. Give examples of the negative word choices that Cassius uses to describe the Romans. How does his language help communicate his true motivation?

38. Cassius says to Casca, “There’s a bargain made.” What is the bargain?

39. Why do Cassius, Cinna, and Casca want Brutus to go along with their conspiracy against Caesar?

40. Summarize Act I.