SHAKESPEARE UNLOCKED

JULIUS CAESAR TEACHERS’ PACK

Shakespeare Unlocked brings Shakespeare’s most popular plays to life for young people by showing how actors and directors work to interpret and take ownership of Shakespeare’s text.

There are 12 short films for each play: three scenes filmed in colour, in the theatre and eight workshops, filmed in black and white, with actors and directors exploring those scenes. There is also a short film about this theatre production.

These films and the teachers’ pack build on the approach developed in the RSC’s Stand up for Shakespeare manifesto. We know that children and young people can experience Shakespeare in ways that excite, engage and inspire them. We believe that young people get the most out of Shakespeare when they, like actors, experience and explore the plays actively. We want young people to: Do it on their feet, See it live and Start it earlier.

The Teachers’ Pack is aimed at the teaching of Key Stage 4 and 5 English and Theatre Studies. It includes:

- An introduction to each of the three scenes
- Suggestions for ideas to consider with your students before and after watching each scene and workshop film.
- Activities to further students’ understanding of the play. These require a cleared space to work in.

The scene text which is needed for several activities is on the BBC Shakespeare Unlocked web pages. bbc.co.uk/shakespeare

Curriculum targets
The activities in this pack support students’ understanding of:

- Character and motivation
- Themes and ideas
- The author’s craft
- Plays in performance
- Speaking and listening
These three scenes represent key moments in the play: Cassius’s first attempt to persuade the troubled Brutus that something must be done about Caesar; the assassination of Caesar; and the two famous funeral orations by Brutus and Mark Antony immediately after the murder. Together the three scenes trace the rise and fall of Caesar and set up the downfall of Brutus and the conspirators. Each scene illustrates how individual character traits drive political decisions which affect us all.
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| Act 1 Scene 2          | **CASSIUS ENLISTS BRUTUS**  
Cassius confronts Brutus about his friend’s uncharacteristic coldness. When Cassius is reassured on this count he reveals his own fear of Caesar’s growing power, probes Brutus’s feelings on the matter, and tries to persuade him that something must be done about Caesar.                                                                                       | 4         | 7’20          |
|                        | **CASSIUS AND BRUTUS**  
Paterson Joseph, playing Brutus, and Cyril Nri as Cassius explore in detail what each character is trying to achieve in this early confrontation.                                                                                                                                                                                      | 6         | 4’09          |
|                        | **PERSUADING BRUTUS**  
A classic rehearsal exercise is used to investigate and break down the tactics Cassius uses to persuade Brutus to join the plot to assassinate Caesar.                                                                                                                                                                                               | 9         | 5’00          |
|                        | **MARKING THE WORDS**  
Using a rehearsal game, the actors discover key points in Cassius's speech about Caesar and the future of Rome. They relate these to Cassius's strategy for winning Brutus over to the conspirators.                                                                                                                                  | 11        | 3’51          |
| Act 3 Scene 1          | **THE MURDER SCENE**  
The conspirators isolate Caesar on the way to the Senate and, as they have planned, Metellus Cimber presents his petition. Caesar’s egocentric refusal sets off the brutal assassination.                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 13        | 6’41          |
|                        | **LEADER OR DICTATOR?**  
The actors investigate how to play the character of Julius Caesar and explore the dramatic purpose of the action just before the murder.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 15        | 6’16          |
|                        | **KILLING CAESAR**  
The actors use the clues in the text to build their unique interpretation of Caesar’s murder.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 17        | 4’44          |
| Act 3 Scene 2          | **THE ORATIONS SCENE**  
Brutus explains to the crowd why the conspirators killed Caesar and then insists they stay to hear Mark Antony. Antony gives an emotional eulogy over the dead body of his friend.                                                                                                                                                                    | 20        | 6’46          |
|                        | **RHETORIC & POLITICS**  
The two funeral speeches are compared, each set against the structures of rhetoric. Why is Antony’s the more effective when Brutus had previously won them over?                                                                                                                                                                         | 24        | 6’39          |
|                        | **BRUTUS REASONS WITH THE CROWD**  
The individual and collective character of the citizens is developed through a practical exercise as they respond to Brutus’s funeral speech.                                                                                                                                                                                  | 26        | 4’05          |
|                        | **ANTONY MOVES THE CROWD**  
The citizens explore their responses to Antony’s speech. The actors then explain why the citizens turn away from Brutus to support Antony. This entirely alters the course of the play.                                                                                                                                                              | 28        | 5’11          |
|                        | **ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**  
Gregory Doran, the production’s director, discusses some of the influences on this African production and actors consider the play’s contemporary relevance.                                                                                                                                                                         | 30        | 4’30          |
WHAT HAPPENS?

Soon after the crowd disperses a procession enters, including Caesar, Mark Antony, Brutus, and Cassius, along with several others. Brutus intends to leave the party and go home. Cassius also leaves the procession and accosts Brutus, asking why he has been so distant lately. Brutus explains that he has private worries. Reassured, Cassius gradually reveals his deep distrust of Caesar and his growing power. Eventually Brutus acknowledges that he too is worried about the direction Rome is taking. They agree to talk more later.

This important scene helps us to understand the personalities and motives of the two central characters in the play. It lays the foundations for an important question the play poses: is assassination ever justifiable?

IDEAS TO USE WITH THIS SCENE:

Before watching the scene
• Meeting the characters
  What words would students use to describe Brutus and Cassius as they reveal themselves in this scene? How are they different? What do they have in common?
  Ask students to explain why Cassius fears Caesar’s growing power. Why do they think Brutus is more reluctant to share his thoughts and fears?

After watching the scene
• Meeting the characters
  Have students’ views of the two characters changed or developed after watching the scene? Ask them to lengthen/alter the list of words they would use for each character.
• Creating the world of the play
  Ask students where this production of the play is set. Ask them to discuss:
  – Where this scene is set?
  – The kind of atmosphere that setting creates?
  – What clues the set and actions give us about what is happening in Rome right now?
ACTIVITY (50 MINUTES):
THE FUTURE OF ROME

In Act 1 Scene 2 Cassius paints a grim picture of Rome’s future under Caesar’s rule. He describes how different it will be from the free and equal society he has hoped for. Brutus also has his fears. This activity asks students to imagine and represent the possibilities for Rome as these two characters see them.

Structure of the activity:

Divide the group into two. One half will represent Cassius, the other half Brutus. Give them print-outs of their text.

Ask for three to five volunteers from each group to read aloud the lines of their character. Tell the other members of the groups that they are detectives. Using highlighter pens, together they underline or highlight any word or phrase which either character speaks that tells us what Rome might become under Caesar and what it might be if Caesar were not its leader. That is, they are to highlight what the two men fear and what they hope for.

Further divide the class into smaller groups of about five. Give the groups 20 minutes to draw two pictures, one of Rome as Brutus and Cassius fear it will become and one of Rome as they hope it will be.

Now bring the smaller groups back into the two larger character groups. Give them 10 minutes in a cleared space to create tableaux (or still pictures) of the dreaded and the hoped-for Rome they have been exploring.

The groups see each other’s work and can put questions to individual characters (for example, to Caesar or to a citizen) while they are in the tableau. Ask the actors to respond in role.

Discuss with the group how they feel about the two contrasting societies they have created. Do they see any connections between their images and the world we live in? Which society would they like to live in?

You will need:

- Highlighters or coloured pens
- Paper
- Copies of Act 1 Scene 2 (from line 90 to line 177)
- A cleared classroom or hall

“Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius, That you would have me seek into myself For that which is not in me?”
CASSIUS AND BRUTUS

With the support of Associate Director Gbolahan Obisesan, Paterson Joseph, playing Brutus, and Cyril Nri as Cassius, explore in detail what each character is trying to achieve in this early confrontation.

Before watching the workshop

• Honour and pride
  Ask students to write a definition for themselves of ‘honour’. Invite students to share these. Ask:
  – Is personal honour important today?
  – In what settings or situations is it important?
  – Is honour a matter of personal pride or is it related to responsibility to other people and institutions (such as religion or law and order)?

• Using tactics
  In pairs, ask students to tell their partner about a time when they wanted very badly to persuade someone else to do something. When they have told their story, the pair should analyse all the tactics that were used in the attempt to persuade, for example, trying to make someone feel guilty or responsible or sorry for them.

After watching the workshop

• Honour and pride
  Ask students to recall what Paterson Joseph says in the workshop about Brutus’s idea of honour. Ask:
  – How does this definition compare with the ones the class discussed earlier?
  – How does the actor relate honour to Brutus’s personal pride?
  – Where else in the play has the theme of pride already emerged?

“You needed to be ambitious, but not seen to be ambitious for yourself. It had to be for the republic.”
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):

USING TACTICS

In the workshop we see the actors applying a very important acting technique to the encounter between Cassius and Brutus. This approach helps the dialogue to take on a specific and detailed purpose rather than a general gloss. The sequence below asks students to try out what they have seen the actors do and then to extend that exercise, choosing their own verbs to use so that the purpose of the text is clear and memorable.

Structure of the activity.

Students work in pairs, experimenting with the tactics the actors used in the first part of the workshop.

As a warm-up, ask them to label themselves A and B. Then give them the following instructions:

– A shakes B’s hand to congratulate
– B shakes A’s hand to sympathise
– A shakes B’s hand to dishonour
– B shakes A’s hand to welcome

Give out the reproduced text (see below). Ask them to read the short scene to one another, one playing Brutus and the other Cassius.

Now ask them to use the tactics marked. Each time they should name the tactic before saying the line, just as the actors did.

Ask them to play the scene again, but this time when they say the tactic they should also accompany the line with a gesture which represents what they are trying to do to the other character.

Next, ask students to work together to choose tactics for the next two speeches. Empty brackets are provided to indicate where each character is using a new tactic. Each tactic should be expressed as a strong verb, like the ones they have borrowed from the actors.

The students play these two speeches with their chosen tactics, using a gesture on the line to help them achieve their purpose.

Invite students to show their work to the rest of the class.

Discuss why actors would use this approach.

How did it change students’ understanding of the scene?

You will need:

• Reproduced copies of the scene for each member of the group (see page 8)
• A cleared space or hall

"Cassius has shared the dream of the republic with Caesar and has witnessed him running ahead of the pack and taking power for himself and he feels very strongly that something needs to be done about that."
ACT I SCENE 2: PLAYING TACTICS

CASSIUS
(CHARM) Will you go see the order of the course?

BRUTUS
(BLOCK) Not I.

CASSIUS
(WARM) I pray you, do.

BRUTUS
(AVOID) I am not gamesome.
(RUN) I’ll leave you.

CASSIUS
(ACCUSE) I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was won’t have.
(PIN) You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend (EMBRACE) that loves you.

BRUTUS
(Cassius)
Be not deceived. If I have veiled my look
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. (Vexed I am
of late with passions of some difference.
(But let not therefore my good friends be grieved.

CASSIUS
(Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion.
(Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS
(No, Cassius, for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection, by some other things.

“What was curious about that is how much pride I could get, and actually it’s still there when I play it.”
IDEAS TO USE WITH:

PERSUADING BRUTUS

A classic rehearsal exercise is used to investigate the tactics Cassius uses to involve Brutus in the plot to assassinate Caesar.

Before watching the footage

• Cat and mouse
  The structure and dynamic of the scene might be likened to a game of Cat and Mouse.
  Explore this idea with students by asking them, in this scene:
  – Who is the cat and who is the mouse?
  – Why is Brutus trying to get away from Cassius?
  – What help from outside circumstances does Cassius get in his pursuit of Brutus?

• Who is in charge
  In pairs, ask students to discuss who is in charge in this scene. How do they know? Why does one character have more power at this point in the play?

After watching the footage

• Discovering performance choices
  This film illustrates ways in which actors and directors work together to create staging choices for a particular production. Discuss:
  – What is the nature of Cassius’s and Brutus’s relationship in the text?
  – How do the actors make this evident in their performances?
  – What discovery did they make in rehearsal which helps the audience to understand their relationship?
  – How would they describe the role of the director in this rehearsal? How is he helping the actors?

“He starts setting up a plan of action to rid Rome of this tyrant.”
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):

STAGING CIRCLE

This ‘Staging Circle’ activity is adapted from the exercise the actors use in the filmed workshop. It will extend students’ earlier work on tactics and is excellent for helping young people to understand the detailing of Shakespeare’s text, making the scene specific and exciting.

Ideas for classroom activities

Set out a circle of approximately 20 chairs and ask for volunteers to start the scene playing Brutus and Cassius. The two actors should sit on opposite sides of the circle, facing one another.

Explain that at any point in the reading of the scene either character may move to a different place in the circle. Sometimes that move may be only one chair toward or away from the other person and other times the actor may move quickly away as far as possible. Clarify that characters may move both on their own lines and on the other character’s lines.

As an extension to this activity, encourage the actors to speak their thoughts aloud before they move.

To involve larger numbers of students, consider asking the audience to suggest moves to the actors. They should shout ‘freeze’ and the name of the character. They then tell the character where to move and offer a reason why that move is appropriate.

Ask students what they discovered about the scene from this activity.

Why would actors use it during a rehearsal period?

"Cassius was trying to get close enough to Brutus, trying to align himself towards this issue: how Julius Caesar should be dealt with."
IDEAS TO USE WITH:

MARKING THE WORDS

Through another rehearsal exercise, the actors discover special features of Cassius's speech about Caesar and the future of Rome. They relate these characteristics to Cassius’s strategy for winning Brutus over to the conspirators.

Before watching the workshop

- **Word power**
  
  Either working in pairs or as a class, ask students to compose three sentences which are attempts to persuade someone to do something they may not want to do.

  Some examples are:
  
  - ‘We are going to look like idiots if we don’t do something now.’
  - ‘We need to shape up and show we’ve got some guts.’
  - ‘We should be princes and we’re acting like animals.’

  They should highlight the powerful words in the sentences they have composed and ask individuals or pairs to speak the sentences so that the words have a strong impact. When they have had time to prepare, ask students to take turns addressing their sentences to the whole group.

  Discuss what makes some words or phrases particularly powerful. Is it just the meanings or is it also the sounds of the words and the way we use those sounds when we speak them?

After watching the workshop

- **Shakespeare’s language**
  
  Students now apply their insights from the previous exercise to Cassius’s and Brutus’s longer speeches towards the end of the scene.

  Ask them to:
  
  - Highlight all the words they would use as ammunition if they – as Cassius – wanted to provoke Brutus into action against Caesar in the speech beginning, ‘Why, man, he doth besstride the narrow world’.
  - Highlight all the words Brutus especially uses to defend himself against the attack in the following speech, beginning, ‘That you do love me’.
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):

SWORD AND SHIELD

The final two long speeches in this part of Act 1 Scene 2 take us into the heat of the battle. Having diminished Caesar, Cassius turns his sights on the senators’ own behaviour, arguing that they are ‘masters of their fates’ and have not yet taken responsibility.

As Paterson Joseph explains in the film, Cassius is trying to ‘goad’ Brutus into action. Brutus has his reasons for delaying commitment.

The activity below invites students to explore this conflict of purpose and to discover for themselves the power of the spoken word in Shakespeare.

Structure of the activity:

Divide the class into an equal number of groups of between four and eight students each. Allocate one of the two characters, Brutus or Cassius, to each of the teams. Be sure that the teams are paired: that there is a Brutus team for every Cassius team.

Students should work together to choose five key words from the text: five words for Cassius that will help him goad Brutus. And for Brutus five words that will enable him to make Cassius back off. These key words could be chosen from the highlighted words they selected in the activity ‘Word Power’. Tell the groups that when they have chosen their five key words they should secretly agree a gesture to use with each of the words.

When the team members have all annotated their scripts with the highlighted words and the five key words, the teams line up with their scripts. One Brutus team lines up against a wall at one end of the space. A Cassius team stands in a row at the other end of the space.

The Cassius team reads the speech together. When they come to a key word, they take three steps toward Brutus and perform their gesture. Those playing Brutus cross their arms in front of their faces when they acknowledge a word has made an impact.

Reverse the process, with the students playing Brutus advancing on those playing Cassius to make them back off for the moment.

Give all the paired teams the opportunity to do the exercise, encouraging the students to use expressive language and authentic responses from the teams receiving the words.

With students, review the two characters’ purposes, the importance of words in achieving these and how it felt to be on the receiving end of the word attacks.

“Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings.”
WHAT HAPPENS?

The assassination is preceded by a petition from Metellus Cimber who begs Caesar to repeal the banishment order against his brother. When Brutus and Cassius join in the appeal, Caesar repeats his refusal, likening himself in his constancy to the Northern Star. This is the spark that sets off the assassination and immediately afterward Casca cries, ‘Speak hands for me!’ and the conspirators attack.

Afterward there is some indecision about what should happen next. Brutus steps into this breech, telling the conspirators to bathe their hands in Caesar’s blood, go to the market place and, waving their bloody daggers, cry, ‘Peace, freedom, and liberty!’
IDEAS TO USE WITH THIS SCENE:

Before watching the scene

• Preparing for the assassination
  Ask students to reread the section of Act 2 Scene 1 in which the conspirators meet with Brutus to plan the assassination.
  In small groups, ask students to create a three-column chart:
  – Label the first column ‘Before the assassination’. Under this heading, ask them to list all the information they can find in the extract related to the conspirators’ plans for setting up the murder.
  – In the second column, labelled ‘The assassination’, they list how the conspirators plan to commit the act itself.
  – In the third column, called ‘After the assassination’, they list everything the conspirators say about how they will tell the Roman people what they have done and justify their acts in order to take the Empire forward.
  Discuss their findings. How well prepared do students think the conspirators are?

After watching the scene

• Production choices
  Explore with students the production choices made in the film.
  – How does Caesar’s behaviour in the scene anger the conspirators?
  – Are the actors’ choices justified by the text?
  – What do the costumes tell us about the characters and the situation?
  – How does the act of the assassination in the film compare with Brutus’ recommendation in the scene to ‘kill him boldly, but not wrathfully’?
ACTIVITY (50 MINUTES):
LAYING PLANS

The section of Act 3 Scene 1 which portrays the assassination can be seen in three parts: the set-up, the act itself and the aftermath.

It is extraordinary that so many highly-placed men with political responsibilities have given so little strategic thought to what happens after the murder.

This exercise asks students to extend their analysis of the conspirators’ behaviour and suggest how they might have acted differently, in ways that might have changed the outcome of the story.

Structure of the activity:
With students, discuss the conspirators’ behaviour after the murder:
– How well organised are they?
– Who is taking the lead?
– What do they think of Brutus’s and Cassius’s suggestions?
– How would they respond if they were Roman citizens to this behaviour?

Encourage students to write one paragraph that the conspirators might speak or write to the people after the assassination.

You could ask students to stage a tableau (freeze-frame) or a brief scene to represent how the conspirators see the post-murder announcement being delivered and received by the Roman crowd.

“Historically, Caesar was killed, so Shakespeare had to show Caesar in an unsavoury light. He had to show him as a kind of tyrant.”
The actors investigate the dramatic purpose of the action just before the murder. With the director they clarify the conspirators’ reasons for having Metellus Cimber present his petition.

**Before watching the workshop**

- **Before the murder: clues in the text**
  In the text leading up to the assassination, ask students to hunt for clues to dramatic purpose and effect. First read the scene from line 1 to 76, just before the murder.
  
  Questions to ask include—
  - What exactly happens during these lines. For example, the party moves through the street to the Senate; Artemidorus accosts Caesar who refuses to read his letter; Popillius joins Caesar; Cassius fears Popillius is giving the plot away and so on;
  - What words would describe the mood among the conspirators?
  - How does the text support these words? Ask students to notice the speed of the verse, with many short, sharp speeches coming from a number of characters.

- **Before the murder: character perspectives**
  Students choose a character involved in this scene, including Artemidoris and the Soothsayer.
  
  – Ask them to write this character’s diary entry for the night before (or early morning in the case of the conspirators).
  – Invite a selection of these to be read to the whole group.

**After watching the workshop**

- **Before the murder: theatre choices**
  Explore possible interpretative choices for the scene from 31 (‘Are we all ready?’) to 76 (the assassination). Ask:
  - Where in this production is this scene set?
  - Why might the director and designer have made that choice?
  - What kind of atmosphere does this setting create?
  - Where else might the scene take place in a different production?
  - What reason do the actors in the film give for Metellus accosting Caesar with his petition?
  - Why, according to the actors, do Brutus and Cassius add their pleas?
  - What other reasons could the conspirators have for the petition sequence in a different production (e.g. to test Caesar one last time or to corner him)?
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):
LIGHTING THE FIRE

The actors in the filmed workshop tell us that the conspirators deliberately provoke Caesar, who is at first quite reasonable, into an egotistical response to Metellus’s petition. They do this in order to feel justified in murdering him.

‘What we need is to fire him up,’ says Paterson Joseph. The activity below asks students to understand what exactly about Caesar’s behaviour so incites the conspirators that they feel it is necessary to kill him.

In this scene, we see first-hand the potential in Caesar for tyranny. The question remains, however: is Caesar’s character so flawed that assassination is the only way forward?

Structure of the activity:

Cast the scene and read lines 33 to 76. Discuss how Caesar’s lines depict him as a special man and above common humanity.

Consider each conspirator in turn and how they would react to the statements Caesar makes. Encourage students to highlight the words would most inflame their character.

Extend the activity by asking students to add ‘subtext’ to the words and phrases they have highlighted. Explore what each character is thinking but not saying at that moment. Capture these thoughts in the margins of the text or between the lines. The actor playing Caesar should do this as well as the conspirators, for the moments when the conspirators are irritating him.

Stage a performance in which the conspirators and Caesar can voice their subtext. Discuss whether Caesar’s behaviour warrants assassination. Is he a leader or a dictator?

"I thought that you could really see the reasonable nature of Caesar. What I felt was that if Metellus had something else to add, perhaps Caesar could have changed his mind."
JULIUS CAESAR

IDEAS TO USE WITH:
KILLING CAESAR

The actors use the clues in the text to build their unique interpretation of Caesar’s murder.

Before watching the workshop

• **Clues in the text: the assassination**
  Ask students to find all the clues Shakespeare offers as to how the assassination actually takes place. They should consider any information they can find in Act 2 Scene 1 as well as in Act 3 Scene 1.

  Also ask:
  – Is it a well-thought-out plan?
  – How have they imagined the assassination would take place?
  – Why do they think Caesar says?

After watching the workshop

• **Before the murder: theatre choices**
  Ask students about the production choices they have seen in the filmed workshop.

  Questions might include:
  – Where does Casca stab Caesar in this production?
  – What do you think of the way Brutus kills Caesar?
  – How do you feel about the conspirators and their cause after the assassination?
  – Associate Director Gbolahan Obisesan says of the murder, ‘As an idea it sounded brilliant. The way it’s carried out, it’s savage.’ Do they agree?
ACTIVITY (40 MINUTES):

STAGING THE ASSASSINATION

This activity highlights the idea of interpretative choice by asking students to create alternative stagings of the assassination. In doing so they will appreciate that Shakespeare’s plays offer a range of interpretative choices and these can make very different impacts on the audience.

Structure of the activity:

Watch the performance film again. Ask students for words to describe the way Caesar is murdered in this production. Put these on a whiteboard or post them on a wall.

Divide the class into smaller groups of seven and assign the following roles to each group: Cinna, Casca, Metellus Cimber, Brutus, Cassius, Decius Brutus and Caesar.

Tell students that they are going to create alternative stagings of the assassination for different productions. They are to imagine that the circumstances of the situation are changed and as a result the way Caesar is killed is different from the production they have just watched.

Offer a choice of the alternative stagings to each of the groups (see worksheet overleaf).

Tell students that they should plan a staging of the murder which represents their given circumstances. They should begin with a still image which comes to life, but in slow motion. No one is allowed to touch anyone else and all the action must take place very slowly until it finishes with a final image. There should be sound. Casca should say, ‘Speak hands, for me,’ and Caesar should say, ‘Et tu, Brute. Then fall, Caesar.’ All other sound should be non-verbal.

Students should view one another’s performances and guess their titles. Ask them how they think each would impact on the audience.

"As an idea it sounded brilliant. The way it’s carried out, it’s savage."
STAGING THE ASSASSINATION

Some choices
Create a staging of the killing of Caesar using the circumstances described in your group's version. Be sure that each character has a reason for behaving as s/he does during the assassination. Remember:

– Begin your scene with a tableau
– Make the tableau come to life
– Finish with a tableau
– Casca should strike first and should say his line, ‘Speak, hands, for me.’
– Caesar should say, ‘Et tu, Brute. Then fall, Caesar.’
– The other conspirators can make sounds
– All the action must be in slow motion and no one may touch anyone else.

The reluctant assassination
Most or all of the conspirators have secretly been harbouring doubts about murdering Caesar. Your worries may be because:

– You have been close friends with Caesar
– Your faith or religion is against taking another life
– You are not convinced the assassination will solve anything. Another Caesar will come forward
– Another reason?

The fearful assassination
The murder is taking place in a very public place and there are serious worries that someone or a group of people will come in at any moment and interrupt the process, thus spoiling the whole plan. You could be arrested as common criminals before you have time to explain to the Roman people your reasons for killing Caesar.

The efficient assassination
The conspirators want to kill Caesar as quickly, bloodlessly and efficiently as possible. They are angry, but their anger is kept under control. They want to get this over with, with as little pain to Caesar as possible, and then begin to manage political change in Rome.

“In our production, his only hope would be Brutus, who is like a son to him.”
Act 3 Scene 2: **THE ORATIONS SCENE**

THE STORY SO FAR....

After the assassination, the conspirators improvise their next steps. A messenger arrives from Mark Antony to say that his master will support Brutus if Brutus will overlook Antony’s past allegiance to Caesar. Brutus warmly agrees. When Antony himself arrives he shakes the conspirators’ bloody hands. When he sees Caesar’s body, however, he is grief-stricken and asks that it be carried to the market-place where he would like to say a few words about his old friend. Brutus agrees despite Cassius’s whispered reservations, believing that the crowd will think the better of him for his fairness.

When the conspirators leave, Antony apologises to Caesar for his performance with the assassins and foresees a war-torn time ahead. Octavius’s servant enters to say his master is on his way to Rome but Antony tells him to keep Octavius away until Antony has spoken to the people and can better assess what will happen next.

WHAT HAPPENS?

The Roman crowd is unruly, eager to take charge and seek revenge for the death of their leader. Brutus calms them and gives a brief explanation for Caesar’s murder, saying that he loved Caesar but he ‘loved Rome more.’ His words seem to win over the crowd, one even crying that he should be Caesar.

At this point Caesar’s body is carried in. Brutus urges the crowd to stay and hear the words of the mourning Mark Antony. Antony then gives a very different speech from Brutus’s; a long, impassioned ironic play on the idea of honour.
IDEAS TO USE WITH THIS SCENE:

Before watching the scene

- **Mark Antony**
  What do we learn about Mark Antony from the text at this point? Ask:
  - What arrangement does Antony make with the conspirators through his servant?
  - What does Antony do when he arrives?
  - Which of his words and actions are genuine and which are calculated to protect his future?
  - Why does Brutus agree to let Antony speak in the market-place? Do you think this is a good decision?
  - What does Antony predict will happen next?
  - Do you find Antony a sympathetic figure in this scene?

- **Two speeches**
  Have students do an initial comparison of the speeches of Brutus and Mark Antony.
  Ask:
  - What do they notice about how they appear on the page?
  - Why might Shakespeare have chosen to have Brutus speak in prose and Antony in verse?
  - How do the ways Brutus and Antony use the word ‘honour’ in their speeches compare? Why is the word so important in this situation?

After watching the scene

- **Theatre choices**
  Explore with the students the design and staging choices for this scene. Some questions might be:
  - What colours dominate the scene in the market-place? Why would the director and designer have chosen these colours?
  - Compare Brutus’s costume with Mark Antony’s. If you were a member of the crowd what would the differences suggest to you?
  - Compare how Brutus and Antony speak to the crowd. How are their styles of delivery similar? How are they different?
  - Where is Caesar’s body positioned? How might it be affecting the citizens, placed where it is?

- **Chair Thermometer**
  Use a chair thermometer to measure students’ responses to the two speeches after they have seen them performed in the film.
  - Begin by positioning two chairs at far ends of the space, one labelled ‘Antony’ and the other ‘Brutus’.
  - Ask students to position themselves somewhere on an imaginary line between the two chairs according to where their sympathies lie. Those who feel that Antony is right should stand near that chair and the same for Brutus. Those who are undecided or in two minds might stand near the middle of the space.
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES PLUS RESEARCH TIME):
CREATING THE CROWD

In the orations scene, the future of Rome hangs on the responses of ordinary Romans, the plebeians.

While the individuals in a mob will share many features by very reason of the name, each member of the group will be unique. Actors and directors work hard to create this dual sense of generality and specificity. One approach they use is the creation of personal histories, as the exercise below describes. Students will gain a stronger sense of the significance of the common people in Shakespeare’s play through this activity, as well as insights into the political and social issues at stake.

Structure of the activity:
The first three steps of the activity can stand alone as a complete exercise. The latter section uses students’ research and writing as a basis for performance.

– Ask students to research into the lives of Romans under the rule of Julius Caesar.

– Set the scene by reminding students that the action happens on the Ides of March. On that day the common people celebrated the festival of Anna Perenna, a mythical figure who was believed to have given cakes to the plebeians. It was a lively festival, including singing, dancing, picnicking and some drunkenness.

– Using the worksheet on page 24 and 25, ask students to create a personal history for one of the citizens. The history should include the character’s reasons for going to the Forum.

Performance
Clear a space in the room to create the marketplace. One end of it is a ‘Speakers’ Corner’. The students, as their researched plebeian characters, enter the marketplace and set about their daily business. Encourage them to improvise in character until Brutus enters the marketplace and makes his way to Speaker’s Corner. At that point, the citizens should all speak together: ‘We will be satisfied! Let us be satisfied!’

Ask one or two students to be messengers bringing the news of Caesar’s assassination. The messengers should enter and give the news that Caesar has been murdered and his killers are making their way now to the Forum. The rumour is that Brutus is among the assassins. Encourage students to react to this news in character.

When Brutus enters the marketplace and the citizens have spoken their line, have him begin his speech and ask the crowd audience react to Brutus words according to their individual circumstances.

Discuss performances with students asking them to explain their reactions in context of their researched character histories.

You will need:
• A cleared classroom or hall
• Access to internet material, books and articles on Roman life under Julius Caesar.
THE ROMAN CITIZENS
CREATING A CHARACTER

To create your character, do some research into the lives of ordinary Romans under the rule of Julius Caesar. Then answer the questions below.

You are a member of the Roman middle or working class in the year 44BC. Today is the Ides of March, a festival day on which you may meet up with your friends, have a special picnic, perhaps dance and sing. Or perhaps your character has different plans.

Structure of the activity:
What is your name? How old are you?
What do you do for a living?
List five words that describe your personality.
What are your family circumstances? Are you married? Children?
What kinds of problems do you face in your life?
What do you hope for in the future?
How has life under Julius Caesar’s rule been for you, your friends and your family?
Why have you come to the Forum on the Ides of March? To celebrate?
To sell something? To meet someone? Because you’ve heard rumours?

“We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.”
# JULIUS CAESAR

## THE ROMAN CITIZENS

### CREATING A CHARACTER

#### PREPARATION FOR CREATING A CHARACTER
Research into the lives of ordinary Romans under the rule of Julius Caesar.

#### SCENE SETTING
You are a member of the Roman middle or working class in the year 44BC. Today is the Ides of March, a festival day on which you may meet up with your friends, have a special picnic, perhaps dance and sing. Or does your character have different plans?

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<th>WHAT ARE YOUR FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES?</th>
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<th>WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS DO YOU FACE IN YOUR LIFE?</th>
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<th>HOW HAS LIFE UNDER JULIUS CAESAR'S RULE BEEN FOR YOU, YOUR FRIENDS AND YOUR FAMILY?</th>
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<th>WHY HAVE YOU COME TO THE FORUM ON THE IDES OF MARCH?</th>
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<td>(To celebrate? To sell something? To meet someone? Because you've heard rumours?)</td>
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IDEAS TO USE WITH:
RHETORIC AND POLITICS

In this section, the two funeral speeches are compared; each set against the structures of rhetoric. Why is Antony’s speech the more effective when Brutus is such an honourable man?

Before watching the workshop

• Highlighting the arguments
  Explore Brutus’ and Antony’s arguments for and against the assassination of Caesar. Look specifically at the following sections:
  – Brutus’ speech lines 13-40 (leaving out the comments of the crowd)
  – Antony’s speech lines 65-100
  – Antony’s speech lines 10-150 (leaving out the comments of the crowd)
  – Antony’s speech lines 160-188
  – Antony’s speech lines 200-220
  The speeches can be read aloud with students summarising the key arguments as they listen.

After watching the workshop

• Exploring the actors’ analysis
  Review with students what the actors and director have said about the speeches in this workshop:
  – What is rhetoric?
  – What do the three elements of rhetoric represent (ethos, logos and pathos)?
  – Which of the three elements does Brutus rely most heavily upon?
  – Which does Antony use to such great effect?
  – Do you think that Brutus is patronising to the crowd, or is he trying to be honest with them?
  – Would more logos, or explanation, have been helpful to Brutus?
  – Why does Shakespeare have Brutus speak in prose and Antony in verse?
  – Do you accept the explanation given by Paterson Joseph (playing Brutus) or do you have another one?

“I felt that this was a man who was justifying murder but he wasn’t justifying it in order to manipulate the crowd, he was justifying it in order to show them why he had done it.”
ACTIVITY (50 MINUTES):
CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT

In the filmed workshop the director explores with the actors the three elements of rhetoric:
• Ethos – establishing the credentials of the speaker
• Logos – giving a clear and reasoned argument
• Pathos – making any emotional appeal.

Structure of the activity:

In the sequence below, students are asked to use this framework to analyse the two oration speeches and understand why Antony succeeds in winning over the Roman crowd.

Ask students to go through Brutus’s speech and at least one section of Antony’s speech and highlight the three elements of rhetoric in different colours. Discuss where the emphasis lies in each speech. Why is Antony more successful with the citizens than Brutus? What do we learn about the mob from this analysis? Would Antony be a better leader for Rome than Brutus?

Students can work individually and choose a topic for a speech. The topic should be controversial, something that they believe and would like others to believe as well. Ask students to write two to three paragraphs of persuasion incorporating all three elements of rhetoric into their speech.

Students give their speeches and ask the class to analyse their responses.
Which elements were particularly effective? Why?

"Brutus says, 'look, why did I kill this man? I killed him to make you free. Not because I didn't like him but because I loved you much more than I liked him."
The individual and collective character of the mob is developed through a practical exercise as they respond to Brutus’s funeral speech.

**Before watching the workshop**

- **Who are the citizens?**
  - Act 1 Scene 1 gives us insights into the lives and attitudes of Roman citizens, the plebians and the few lines before Brutus gives his post-murder oration give us a few more clues. Ask students to:
    - Re-read Act 1 Scene 1 and the beginning of the orations scene.
    - Make a list of information we get about the crowd from those lines.
    - What are they like? What do they do? What are their attitudes towards Caesar?
    - From this information ask them to describe in three sentences or fewer what they think is at stake for the citizens as they listen to Brutus.

- **Exploring the actors’ analysis**
  - In this workshop the actors playing the citizens describe some of the responses their characters have to Brutus. Ask students to question these views further:
    - What kind of mood are the citizens in the film in when Brutus first addresses them?
    - What are the key points Brutus makes that get the crowd’s attention?
    - Why do you think truth is, in this context, political suicide?
    - Why might some of the citizens be alienated by Brutus’s invitation to Antony to speak?

"Be patient till the last Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear."
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):
MOVING THE MOB

In the filmed workshop the actors try out a simple rehearsal exercise. By doing the same exercise, using characters they have created, students will come to a more detailed understanding of the nature of the citizens, Brutus’s character and the art of persuasion.

Structure of the activity:

Students create the character of an ordinary Roman citizen. (Using the worksheet on page 25 to guide them.)

A student plays Brutus and reads aloud his oration (lines 12-39).

The citizens stand at one end of the room with their backs to Brutus. Remind them that they are going to respond in role, as their character would do.

Ask them to listen carefully to Brutus’s speech. When they hear something which catches their attention they turn toward Brutus. When they feel they really want to hear what he has to say they should turn fully and listen. If, however, something he says alienates their character or they lose interest, they should again turn their back on him.

Afterwards, ask students what exactly caught their character’s attention and why.

“Honour’ for me was the first words that really made me want to listen.”

You will need:

- A cleared classroom or hall
- Copies of Act 3 Scene 2
JULIUS CAESAR

IDEAS TO USE WITH:
ANTONY MOVES THE CROWD

The rehearsal exercise is replayed to help the citizens explore their responses to Antony’s speech. The actors then explain why they turn away from Brutus to support Antony, a choice which entirely alters the course of the action.

Before watching the workshop

• Reviewing Antony’s speech
  Review with students Antony’s long oration. Ask:
  – What are the key arguments that Antony makes in his long speech?
  – Which do they think are the most persuasive?
  – What is at stake for Antony and for Rome at this point?
  – How do the kinds of questions Brutus and Antony ask in their speeches compare?
  – What character reason is there for Antony to be talking to the crowd for four times as long as Brutus?
  – If Brutus and Antony were each allowed one slogan to put on a banner which would wave above them as they spoke, what would these slogans be?

After watching the workshop

• Manipulative or empowering?
  In the workshops, the actors explain their characters’ perspectives on Antony’s speech. Explore students’ understanding of what the actors have said. Ask:
  – What outcome do the actors think Antony wants from his oration?
  – In his performance, does Antony have more of a common touch than Brutus? What makes them think so?
  – Do Antony’s questions feel empowering or manipulative? Do they give the plebians more credit than Brutus’s questions or is he using them like puppets?

• Choose your words wisely
  In the previous workshop, Paterson Joseph mentions Antony’s choice of very visceral language compared with Brutus’s more abstract words. To highlight this contrast, try the following sequence:
  – Read or have a volunteer read Brutus’s oration (two or three students could read it chorally).
  – Divide the remaining group in half and ask both groups to listen to the speech with eyes closed.
  – Ask one of the smaller groups to echo any word which refers to an abstract idea, such as love or honour and the other group to echo any word which paints a picture or represents something sensory – something or someone you can hear, see, touch, taste or smell.
  – Which group echoed more words?
  – Now apply the same exercise to Antony’s speeches. How has the balance changed? What might be the consequence of the two characters’ different language choices?
ACTIVITY (30 MINUTES):
MOVING THE MOB 2

The exercise the actors use in the film to explore the mob reaction to Antony’s speech is a slightly more complex version of the one they applied to Brutus’s oration. The adaptation below asks students to listen carefully for the nuances of Antony’s speech and to be more specific in their responses than they were to Brutus’s oration.

Structure of the activity:
Allocate sections of Antony’s speech to students. Remind them to make the most of his key arguments and his powerful, visceral words.

The rest of the group stand about 15 feet from Antony, but a little distance from a wall. Remind them to respond in character, as a Roman citizen. (If they haven’t already created a character, have them do so before the exercise, using the worksheet on page 25 to guide them).

Tell the citizens that they have three choices as they listen to Antony:
– If they like what they hear they can move toward him.
– If they are interested and prepared to hear more they stand still.
– If they don’t want to hear any more they move away from him.

The number of steps they take and the speed it takes them should reflect the strength of their feeling at that point, positive or negative.

Ask the class which were the most engaging parts of the speech. At what points where individuals won over to Antony’s side and what do they think will happen next?

You will need:
– A cleared classroom or hall
– Copies of Act 3 Scene 2
Before watching the clip

- **Directing Julius Caesar**
  Ask students to imagine they’ve decided to direct Julius Caesar. Ask them to respond to the following:
  - Why would they choose that play? What characters, ideas or aspects of the story interest them?
  - In which historical period would they set their production? Where in the world would they choose to set it? Ask them to explain the thinking behind their choices.
  - Most Shakespeare productions today aim to reinterpret the play for our time. From what they have seen of the production, how does it reinterpret Julius Caesar for our time? What is it about our world and our society that relates to the characters and action in the text?

After watching the clip

- **Directing Julius Caesar**
  Gregory Doran, the production’s director, and the actors share their thoughts on the play in this clip. Ask students to explore these ideas:
  - Why might Doran have called *Julius Caesar* a ‘fantastical political thriller.’ Do they agree?
  - Nelson Mandela chose ‘Cowards die many times before their death;/The valiant only taste of death but once’ as favourite lines. Caesar says these lines. To whom in the play do students think they most appropriately apply?
  - John Kane, (pronounced ‘kah-nay’), a famous South African actor, has referred to *Julius Caesar*, as ‘Shakespeare’s African play.’ Why might he think so?
  - How did the black togas worn during for the assassination come to be chosen for the production?
  - What example of a hand prop is given in the clip which shows how powerfully a prop can speak for a character?
  - What do the actors say is happening in the world today which makes *Julius Caesar* a play for our time?

“Then follow me, and give me audience, friends. Cassius, go you into the other street, and part the numbers. Those that will hear me speak, let ’em stay here; those that will follow Cassius, go with him; and public reasons shall be rendered of Caesar’s death.”