

# JULIUS CAESAR

## 2017 STUDY GUIDE

Study guide written by Gina Braswell & Dr. Amanda Giguere. This program is made possible with funding from the CU Boulder Outreach Committee, the Boulder Arts Commission, White Wave Foods, Haynes and Boone LLC, the Dorothy and Anthony Riddle Foundation, and several anonymous donors.

### About this study guide

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival will send actors to your school soon as part of a Shakespeare and Violence Prevention project. This study guide is a resource for you, whether you are an administrator, counselor, teacher, or student. Our program is most successful when schools have prepared in advance, so we encourage you to use this study guide to connect the material to your curriculum. Shakespeare offers a wonderful opportunity to explore meaningful questions, and we encourage you and your students to engage deeply with those questions.

### What is this project?

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival partners with CU Boulder's Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) and the Department of Theatre & Dance to create a touring program that increases awareness of Shakespeare and violence prevention.

Our actors will visit your school to perform an abridged three-actor version of *Julius Caesar* that explores the cycle of violence, using research from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. In this 50-minute performance, we draw parallels between Shakespeare's world and our own. We recommend the performance for grades 6 through 12.

Theatre is about teamwork, empathy, and change. When your students watch the play, they will observe mistreatment, cruelty, humiliation, and reconciliation. They'll see examples of unhealthy and destructive relationships, as well as characters who become "upstanders"—people who make the choice to help. This play is intended to open up the dialogue about the cycle of violence and mistreatment—and to remind us all that change is always possible.

The post-show classroom workshops use theatre activities to increase your students' ability to work as a team and be upstanders. We employ empathy-building and team-building activities, key elements in creating a positive school environment.

Our short visit to your school aims to inspire your students with live, professional theatre, but the work does not end when our actors depart. We encourage you to continue this conversation after our visit in order to create positive change in your own school setting.



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**Center for the Study and  
Prevention of Violence**

[www.colorado.edu/cspv](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv)  
(303) 492-1032

# The Colorado Shakespeare Festival is coming to my school.

## WHAT DO I DO?

### Teacher Check List

#### How do I prepare my students for the play?

- ☐ Watch the [CSF Upstander video](#) with your class
- ☐ Review characters and plot and the “look-for” section—also available in a [Prezi](#) (page 3-4)
- ☐ Review additional resources (pages 4-8)
- ☐ Discuss appropriate theatre etiquette

#### How do I prepare for post-show workshops?

- ☐ Be ready to participate and co-facilitate with our teaching artist. The more involved you are, the more your students learn!
- ☐ Talk with class about the upcoming actor-led theatre workshop. Set expectations about trying new things and respecting one another.
- ☐ Have desks/chairs pushed to the side

#### What should I do after the actors leave?

- ☐ Take this survey to let us know what you thought: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/69KFZ8V>
- ☐ Have a follow-up discussion with your students
- ☐ Find ways to integrate the performance and workshop in your units throughout the year by tying your lesson plans back to the visit from the CSF actors

### **Gender-Swapping**

Shakespeare wrote his plays for male actors, and his plays have more male roles than female roles. To balance the scales a bit, we cast a woman to play Brutus, and shifted the pronouns. By hiring women to play roles originally written for men, we hope to carve out new possibilities within these 400 year-old plays, and to allow the plays to reflect our own time, in which women may hold positions of power just as men do.

### **Bilingual Shakespeare**

In this production, one character (Poncio) speaks almost entirely in Spanish. Whether or not you speak Spanish, how does this choice impact the way you listen to the play? We hope it encourages you to lean in and hear these words afresh. Shakespeare belongs to all of us, and we hope that when you see a Spanish-speaking character, or a woman playing a role written for a man, this helps you see Shakespeare’s ability to cross boundaries and connect people of all kinds.

### **Why this play?**

Julius Caesar’s death was a formative event in Western history. Rife with power struggles and jealousy, the play highlights a planned violent attack. How many opportunities were there to prevent the violence? What signs were ignored? How did one act of violence quickly lead to more violence? This play is especially relevant in this age of planned attacks across the globe.

## Ready to get started?

# Meet the Characters

**Julius Caesar:** A great and honored general of Rome who has just led Rome to victory in war against Pompey.

**Marc Antony:** Caesar's closest companion who ultimately rouses the mob against the conspirators who plot to kill Caesar.

**Cassius:** A Roman who is jealous of Caesar and his power. He is the mastermind behind the plot to assassinate Caesar.

**Casca:** A cynical Roman who is convinced by Cassius to strike down Caesar.

**Brutus:** A noble and honorable Roman who is pulled into the conspiracy by Cassius.

**Poncio:** husband and confidant to Brutus (a Spanish-speaking character in the CSF production).

# Plot Synopsis

After Caesar returns to Rome in triumph from winning a war with Pompey, a Soothsayer (fortuneteller) warns Caesar to "beware the Ides of March." Caesar ignores the Soothsayer.

In a stormy night of unnatural events, Cassius convinces Brutus and Casca that Caesar is too powerful and will become king. Cassius manipulates the others to join him in his plot to assassinate Caesar. Brutus confides in Poncio.

Will Brutus, Cassius and Casca escape the consequences of their actions? Will justice be brought about for the death of Caesar?

The conspirators kill Caesar. Shortly after the attack, Brutus permits Marc Antony to deliver a funeral speech. Antony uses this speech to rouse a mob of citizens against the conspirators.

This page is available in a Prezi for your class:

[http://prezi.com/3anww4e\\_7bah/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy&rc=ex0share](http://prezi.com/3anww4e_7bah/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share)

# When you see the play, LOOK FOR...

- ▶ Warning signs
- ▶ A power imbalance
- ▶ Someone confiding in another person
- ▶ A planned attack
- ▶ Manipulation through peer pressure
- ▶ An opportunity to speak up and prevent harm
- ▶ Moments of empathy

# After the play, WHEN DID YOU SEE...

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NOTE: This production only has three actors to play all of the roles! Pay attention to how an actor switches characters. Can you find connections between the characters played by one actor?

## What is Bullying Behavior?

Before you see the play, review the definition of bullying:

1. There is an intention to harm (they MEAN to do it)
2. It is repeated over time (and often escalates)
3. There is a power imbalance (when one person has more power than another)

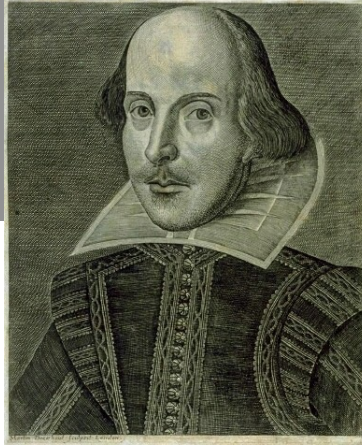
As a class, discuss what this means. How is bullying different from other kinds of conflicts? Could some bullying be prevented if we paused to think before acting? What do you do when you see bullying behavior?

## Violence in Numbers

- ◆ 5% of students in this country miss school each day because of bullying. That translates to 160,000 students missing school each day.
- ◆ 57% of the time, bullying stops in 10 seconds or less when a bystander becomes an upstander
- ◆ In 81% of planned violent attacks, someone other than the perpetrator knew it was going to happen. 59% of the time, more than one person knew.

# William Shakespeare

(1564 - 1616)



William Shakespeare grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. Shakespeare eventually moved to London and made his living as an actor, poet, and playwright. He was a partial owner in a theatre company, known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

**Why do you think people still relate to Shakespeare's stories?**

Shakespeare's company performed at the outdoor Globe Theatre and the indoor Blackfriar's Theatre. His plays were very popular in his time. Shakespeare wrote between 37-39 plays, and probably co-wrote even more. His plays are still performed all over the world today.

## Discussion Questions for the Class

- Research shows that in 81% of planned violence, someone other than the perpetrator knew it was going to happen. Which characters in the play knew about the planned attack on Caesar before it happened? Who tried to step in to prevent it, and why/why not?
- What were the warning signs or omens that things were not right in Rome prior to the assassination of Caesar? If you were a citizen of Rome, what might have tipped you off that something dangerous was about to happen?
- Read the full play, and imagine you will cut the play down to 45 minutes. Discuss what you would leave out and what you would need to keep. What do you see as the heart of the play?
- *Julius Caesar* is a play without clear heroes, and the audience is left with no character to root for—just people making mistakes, choosing violence, and getting stuck deeper in violence with every step. What is the value of watching a play in which characters make mistakes? Do you learn more from a play in which characters behave badly, or in which characters behave well?
- What is empathy? Why is it important? How might empathy have changed the outcomes in the play?
- “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” What does this mean to you? Can you think of examples of this idea in *Julius Caesar*?
- In the play, we see many examples of persuasive speeches. How is language used to change people's minds? Have you ever been persuaded by someone with a powerful command of language to do something you wouldn't normally do?
- Discuss the terms “herd intoxication” and “mob mentality.” Where do we see examples of this in the play? Do people behave differently in a group than when they are alone?
- Actors use teamwork to trust one another when they are onstage. How is teamwork useful in school?
- How do the characters change from the beginning of the play to the end? What causes these changes?

# Introductory Mini-Lesson Plan

## Secondary Students

**Rationale:** This is a mini-lesson that you can use with your students to prepare them to view and discuss Colorado Shakespeare Festival's touring production of *Julius Caesar*. This lesson will provide your students with basic information about the plot of the play, introduce them to some of the key ideas of this production, and prepare them to take part in a Shakespeare & Violence Prevention workshop with one of CSF's actors after the show.

**Objective:** Students will be able to discuss and defend their opinions about key themes and ideas related to *Julius Caesar* and use personal experience to relate the classic story to creating positive change in their own school climate.

### Standards Specifically Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6-8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### Learning Experience Sequence:

*Introduction:* Use relevant information from the study guide to introduce the plot points and themes of *Julius Caesar* to your students. If you wish to use it, we have composed a Prezi with a basic summary of the plot and some of the key ideas we will explore in our production: [http://prezi.com/3anww4e\\_7bah/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy&rc=ex0share](http://prezi.com/3anww4e_7bah/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share)

*Anticipation Guide:* Either put students in a small group of 3-4 people or allow them to form their own groups. Hand out the following anticipation guide, which asks students to defend their opinion about certain key ideas related to *Julius Caesar*. Explain to students that there are no right or wrong answers and they should fully discuss each statement with their group before writing down their answer. Remind them that it is okay if their answers do not match the others in their group. After each group has had enough time to discuss and complete their work, lead a class discussion about answers that differed in groups. After the class has wrestled with these ideas, ask students to remember their answers as they watch the play. After the play, continue the discussion and ask if any opinions have changed.

### Want to go further?

*Comparing Texts:* Either put students in a small group of 3 or 4 people or allow them to form their own groups. Hand out the text comparison worksheet, which asks the students to compare and contrast the original text of *Julius Caesar* and our edited version of the text. Explain to students that they should fully discuss the impact of editing the script, then ask the group to create their own edited version of the speech. Ask the students to remember their responses as they watch and discuss the play.



**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity 1: Anticipation Guide

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Explain your answer with an example
A group of people can easily change the opinion of an individual.			
A planned act of violence always has warning signs.			
If someone confides in you, you must keep that information confidential.			
Violent words or actions always lead to more violence.			
Words are more powerful than actions.			
A crowd is more powerful than an individual.			
Power is always a dangerous thing.			
A good leader puts the needs of the people ahead of his/her personal needs.			
When you know that something dangerous is going to happen, you have a duty to try to prevent it.			

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity 2: Comparing Texts

*Julius Caesar* was written in 1599– over 400 years ago. We still perform Shakespeare plays today because he understood how people behave and interact with each other. Most theatre companies, however, make changes to the text he wrote to update references that don't make sense 400 years later or to make the plays shorter for a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

Read the texts below and identify what changes were made to the speech for this performance. Mark the changes with a pen/pencil (circle any word changes, draw a line through lines we cut). With a group, discuss why you think we made these changes. Why do they matter? What lines do you think are most important? Do you think it's appropriate to change the script Shakespeare wrote, or should it stay exactly the same as he wrote it? If you were staging this play, what would you do with this speech?

### ORIGINAL VERSION

#### Cassius:

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.  
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.  
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?  
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;  
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,  
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar.  
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,  
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,  
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!  
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!  
When went there by an age, since the great flood,  
But it was famed with more than with one man?  
When could they say till now, that talk'd of Rome,  
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?  
Now is it Rome indeed and room enough,  
When there is in it but one only man.  
O, you and I have heard our fathers say,  
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd  
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome  
As easily as a king.

### ABRIDGED VERSION (FOR SCHOOL TOUR)

#### Cassius:

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a *Colossus*, and we petty men  
*Walk* under his huge *legs* and *peep* about  
To find ourselves dishonourable *graves*.  
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.  
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?  
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as *fair* a name;  
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
Weigh them, it is as heavy;  
Upon what *meat* doth this our Caesar *feed*,  
That he is *grown* so great?

*You'll notice that some words are italicized in the speech above. Those are words that have lengthened spellings or capitalizations in the First Folio (the first complete collection of Shakespeare's plays, published in 1623). Some think Folio spellings can give us a clue about how to deliver the lines. Our director decided to italicize those words to remind actors to give them an extra kick. Try reading this speech aloud with an emphasis on the italicized words. Is the meaning clearer?*

## How is Cassius manipulating Brutus in the speech?





## Tips from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

- ### How to help a victim of bullying
- ▶ Refuse to join in if the bully tries to get you to taunt and torment someone.
  - ▶ Get a teacher, parent, or other responsible adult to come help. This isn't snitching. You are saying that you don't think bullying is acceptable and don't want anyone to get hurt.
  - ▶ Try to get the child being bullied to tell his/her parents or a trusted teacher. Tell the victim that you will go with them.
  - ▶ Tell a trusted adult yourself if the victim is unwilling to report the bullying. Do not let the bully know so that he or she does not become aggressive toward you.

### School Climate Surveys

One of the most important components of a safe school is a climate where youth feel secure and supported in their learning environment. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence has developed online student, staff, and parent school climate surveys that are free to any Colorado school. These assessment tools are anonymous and available free online, through a secure website. Using core questions on school climate, bullying, violence, alcohol, tobacco and drug use and protective factors, schools can gain a better understanding of their specific violence prevention and safety needs and develop a strategic plan to meet those needs. For more information, contact [SafeSchools@colorado.edu](mailto:SafeSchools@colorado.edu)



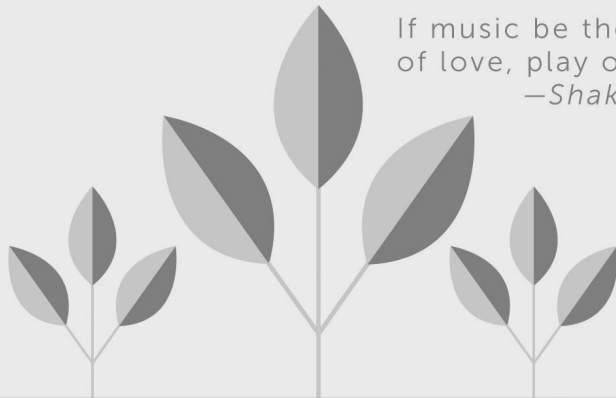
**How to report:**  
**1 (877) 542-7233**  
**[safe2tell.org](http://safe2tell.org)**  
**or download the mobile app!**

**Safe2Tell** is an anonymous tip-line for reporting bullying and other inappropriate behavior. You can use your voice to make the life of someone else better. Sometimes if you don't speak up for someone, no one else will. You can make a difference.

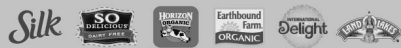
When you make a call or go online to report bullying, no one will ever be able to know that you are giving the tip. No names are asked, and phone calls to Safe2Tell cannot be traced. It is completely anonymous.

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If music be the food  
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—Shakespeare



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