

# William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

## Performance Adaptation Project

### *Assignment Sheet*

**Assignment:** Groups of students will rewrite and perform the story of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* using one of the themes listed below.

1. Pretend each character in the play is a current political figure. Which character would be which politician? Why? How would they behave/speak as a result? What is the motivation for their actions?
2. Pretend each character in the play is an animal. Which character would be which animal? Why? How would they behave/speak as a result? What is the motivation for their actions?
3. Pretend each character in the play is a stereotypical teenager. Which characters would belong to which social "groups"? Why? How would they behave/speak as a result? What is the motivation for their actions?
4. Develop your own scenario and define the characters. Your ideas **MUST** be submitted in writing and be approved in advance.

**Objective:** To develop greater understanding of *Julius Caesar* by converting dialogue into modern language and by performing it for the class.

#### **Requirements:**

- Each group will rewrite the play by selecting the most important details from the original and applying those details to one of the situations described above. Characters should be renamed based on the chosen theme.
- Each group must turn in **one typed script** which includes a title page listing the cast and a list of credits indicating who provided each effect. [For example: sets created by John Jones and Jane Smith; music arranged by Sarah Jones; etc.]. The cast list should include the Shakespearean equivalent of the character indicated in parenthesis. [For example: President Bush (Caesar) — John Jones]. Each group member should be assigned a part. All lines should be written in modern English. Any archaic words should be changed to words commonly used today. All inverted word order should be changed to modern usage. You are not rewriting every line!! You may condense or eliminate scenes that the group believes are not necessary. You may use a narrator to condense less important scenes that you do not want to eliminate altogether. You must also include a description of how you will incorporate the effects and how characters will move on "stage" (e.g. stage directions). Each group member should also have his/her own copy of the script which will be used for the performance. I suggest that each cast member highlight his/her own lines.

As you write your script, consider the following: What is the motivation of each character? Were the characters and their actions justified? What is each character's tragic flaw and how did they bring their problems upon themselves? (These questions will be addressed in your self evaluation, so please be prepared to answer them!)

- In addition to the script, each group member must be in costume and each group must create sets and props to aid in the performance. Each group must also provide music/sound effects which should be used to highlight important action in the play. All responsibilities associated with effects should be divided equally amongst the group members.
- Each group **must perform** its version of *Julius Caesar*. Each performance should last at least 20 minutes, but not longer than 30 minutes. Students are not required to memorize their parts, but should be comfortable reading them so that understanding is conveyed through vocal quality as well as by the words themselves.
- After each performance, we will discuss/critique the performance and its relationship to *Julius Caesar*.
- On the day following each performance, each group member must turn in a self evaluation and a group evaluation.

**Grades will be based on the following:** quality and understanding demonstrated by the script and by the performance; quality of the effects and understanding the effects added to the performance; the quality of the performance itself; quality and honesty of self and group evaluations. Not all group members will necessarily be given the same grade.