

Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Julius Caesar

SAMPLE



Shakespeare in Three Steps

by Rebekah Shafer

*An enjoyable and simple approach to
some of the greatest literature ever written—
the plays of William Shakespeare!*

Now you can help your students become familiar with Shakespeare's imaginative stories, memorable characters, and brilliant lines in **three simple steps: read the story, hear the script, and watch the play.**

Shakespeare in Three Steps provides everything you need:

- **A well-written story version of the play** presented in the living style of storytellers E. Nesbit and Charles and Mary Lamb—narratives designed to provide a wonderful introduction to Shakespeare's plays;
- **The complete script of the play** with helpful notes to explain unusual terms or add to your understanding of Shakespeare's stories, characters, and lines;
- **An outlined plan for walking through the script**, divided into manageable portions with quick recaps, scene introductions, and summaries that will guide you each step of the way;
- **Script highlights**, featuring well-known or just ponder-worthy lines, that will gently introduce the Bard's genius and cultivate an appreciation for his wonderful way with words;
- **Parental advisories** to give you a heads-up on scenes that may contain material inappropriate for children;
- **Helpful lists** of the characters in the scenes and the number of lines each one speaks, so you can assign parts knowledgeably for reading sessions or acting roles;
- **Candid reviews** of several video recordings of the play to save you time previewing and help you select a suitable presentation for your students to watch and enjoy.

“To become intimate with Shakespeare in this way is a great enrichment of mind and instruction of conscience”—Charlotte Mason

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Shakespeare in Three Steps
Julius Caesar

by Rebekah Shafer

Recommended for Grades 9–12
Tragedy

Summary: Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is a dramatic interpretation of the historical events that led to the murder of Roman dictator Julius Caesar by conspirators in 44 B.C. and the deadly political power struggle that followed.

Shakespeare in Three Steps: Julius Caesar
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ISBN 978-1-61634-583-9 printed
ISBN 978-1-61634-584-6 electronic download

Published by
Simply Charlotte Mason, LLC
930 New Hope Road #11-892
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045
simplycharlottesmason.com

Printed by PrintLogic, Inc.
Monroe, Georgia, USA

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Shakespeare in Three Steps

Understand and enjoy Shakespeare's plays by following these three steps:

Step 1: Read the story.

Read aloud the story version of the play to get familiar with the main characters and plot.

Step 2: Hear the script.

Listen to each scene on the audio dramatization and follow along in the script, or assign students to read aloud the various characters' lines themselves.

Step 3: Watch the play.

Enjoy a live or recorded presentation of the play.

Step 1: Read the story.

Julius Caesar is a character-heavy look at how a belief can affect friendships, alliances, and an entire nation. Some of Shakespeare's lines in this play have been taken directly from the biography of Julius Caesar in *Plutarch's Lives*, Sir Thomas North translation (1579).

Read aloud the story version of *Julius Caesar* below to become familiar with the main characters and plot. We've included a Character List on page 17 to help students keep track of the numerous characters, but you can always allow your students to create their own. Students might also personalize the list by adding character descriptions, color-coding the various characters according to the students' devised categories, drawing caricatures of the characters, rating the characters on a devised scale, and more. Since this story version is longer, feel free to divide it into two readings.

Julius Caesar

Retold by Katie Thacker

Julius Caesar was a celebrated Roman general with an ever-growing list of accomplishments. The people were proud of the glory that he had brought to their city with victory after victory.

After one of Caesar's most stunning victories—taking down the sons of his archrival Pompey—he arrived in Rome to a full military triumph. The streets were filled with people roaring his name, clamoring to get a glimpse of the legendary commander, and bringing him gifts. In their elation, the people shouted proclamations that Caesar should become the king of Rome.

Caesar traveled down the streets, his position of leadership secure among his adoring citizens. As the commotion continued to stir, a soothsayer approached Caesar to give him a dark warning—"Beware the ides of March." Caesar was slightly startled but quickly dismissed the fortune teller as an old fool and went on his way back to the celebration.

Although the crowds in the streets were frenzied in their devotion to Caesar, others did not share their enthusiasm. Gaius Cassius—patrician as well as friend and colleague of Caesar's—was already developing a plot to halt Caesar's rise to power. Rome had been without a monarchy for over 500 years, and Cassius believed it must stay that way. He was present in the triumph procession, but he snuck away to confer with another general, Marcus Brutus. Cassius implored Brutus to tell him his feelings on the matter: "Brutus, I do observe you now of late. . . . You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand over your friend that loves you."

Brutus, one of Caesar's dear friends and trusted confidants, had also started to fear that Caesar's power and popularity were increasing too rapidly, and he admitted his hesitations to Cassius. As the two stood together away from the triumph, they

Notes

This play is a great opportunity for anyone studying psychology to profile a few characters from the play or for anyone interested in voice acting to get a full range of practice.

A patrician was a nobleman in ancient Rome.

Notes

We recommend The Arkangel Shakespeare audio dramatizations. Check your local library or favorite online bookstore.

There are literally dozens of different characters in this play, so you should be able to find parts to suit all your students' varied reading skills.

Step 2: Hear the script.

Make a copy of the script on pages 43–146 for each student. Work your way through the script over several sittings, as outlined on the following pages. Each session will follow a sequence similar to the one below:

1. Use the notes to introduce each scene. Highlight the featured lines if desired.
2. Listen to the scene(s) on the audio dramatization and follow along in the script, or assign students to read aloud the various characters' lines themselves.
3. Invite any questions or comments, then set it aside until next time.

Act I, Scene 1

Notes

- Ask the students what they recall from the previous lesson's reading of the story of *Julius Caesar*. Explain that the play divides the story into five parts, called "acts." The acts are divided into smaller portions, called "scenes." Today they will listen to Act I, Scene 1. Read the scene summary to give the students the context for the lines they will be hearing.

Scene Summary: Caesar has won in his campaign against the sons of Pompey, a famous former general of Rome whom he also defeated, and is returning in triumph to Rome. Two tribunes (Roman officials) take it upon themselves to disrupt the cheering crowds and tear down the decorations, claiming that Pompey's death should not be celebrated, as he was once a hero.

- Distribute a copy of the script to each student.
- (Optional) Take a sneak peek at these lines from the script and enjoy Shakespeare's wording.
 - » Lines 32–55: One of the tribunes gives an impassioned speech to the plebeians, or commoners, admonishing them that they shouldn't celebrate Caesar's defeat of Pompey and his sons.

MURELLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O, you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day with patient expectation
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication of your sounds

Shakespeare wrote his plays in both prose (conversational speaking) and in poetry.

NAME: Prose lines will look like this.

*NAME
Poetry lines will look like this.*

Notes

Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

- ❑ Listen to Act I, Scene 1, on the audio dramatization (approx. 5 minutes) and follow along in the script, or assign students to read aloud the various characters' lines themselves. If you are assigning students to read aloud, the following list might be helpful; it details the characters who speak and the approximate number of lines each one has in this scene.

- Flavius, Roman tribune (27 lines)
- Murellus, Roman tribune (31 lines)
- First Plebeian (1 line)
- Second Plebeian (16 lines)

Notes

Be sure to do your research to avoid any unpleasant surprises when watching Shakespeare productions. Unfortunately, some directors feel compelled to elaborate on the text, adding suggestive gestures or inappropriate actions. Preview any video presentation and check with someone who is directly involved with any live production to find out how it aligns with the original script and how appropriate it is for children.

Step 3: Watch the play.

Now that you and your students are familiar with the story line and the script, you are ready for the best part of this study: Watch a presentation of the play! Check for any local live performances that you could attend or watch a video recording. (See video reviews below.)

Video Recording Reviews

- The 1979 BBC version, directed by Herbert Wise and starring Keith Michell, Richard Pasco, Charles Gray, and David Collings, is a classic production, true to the script and well delivered. In the entire play, only a few lines of the play are omitted. The gore of the murder and battle scenes is not sensationalized. An appropriate . . .

Additional complete reviews are found in the full book.

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

Notes

Act I, Scene 1

Setting: A street in Rome.

Enter Flavius, Murellus, and certain Plebeians.

FLAVIUS

Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home!
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a laboring day without the sign
Of your profession? [*To one of the plebeians.*] Speak, 5
what trade art thou?

FIRST PLEBEIAN: Why, sir, a carpenter.

MURELLUS

Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
[To another plebeian.]
You, sir, what trade are you?

SECOND PLEBEIAN: Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, 10
I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.

MURELLUS

But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

SECOND PLEBEIAN: A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a
safe conscience, which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

FLAVIUS

What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade? 15

SECOND PLEBEIAN: Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with
me. Yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

MURELLUS

What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?

SECOND PLEBEIAN: Why, sir, cobble you.

FLAVIUS: Thou art a cobbler, art thou? 20

SECOND PLEBEIAN: Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl. I
meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters,

"Plebeians" are commoners of ancient Rome.

Shakespeare wrote the lines of his plays in both prose (conversational speaking) and poetry.

NAME: Prose lines will look like this.

*NAME
Poetry lines will look like this.*