

## Ancient Rome and Byzantium

### Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar is one of the most famous figures in Roman history. Very few leaders have been able to **accomplish**<sup>1</sup> as much as Caesar did during his lifetime. He had many talents. He proved to be a great speaker, writer, politician, and military leader. Under Caesar, the Roman Republic expanded across a large part of Europe.

Caesar was born into a wealthy family. At seventeen, he married a young lady named Cornelia. He traveled to Greece, the **intellectual**<sup>2</sup> center of the world at that time. There he studied philosophy and oratory, the art of giving speeches. Then he returned to Rome. Soon after that, tragedy struck. Cornelia died after giving birth to a daughter named Julia.

Caesar first became famous as a military commander. Later, he worked his way up to being one of three rulers of Rome. His successes on the battlefield made him very popular with the Roman people.

Caesar won battles all over and eventually became the sole **dictator**<sup>3</sup> of the Roman Republic. The Republic even spread as far as Egypt. There, Caesar met and fell in love with Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt.

Some people were scared of Caesar. They felt he had too much power. They were afraid that Roman citizens wanted to turn Caesar into a king. This threatened Roman democracy.

A group of Roman senators plotted against Caesar. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 44 B.C.E., these senators attacked and killed him. According to some **accounts**<sup>4</sup>, Caesar was stabbed 23 times. One of his attackers was his friend Brutus.

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<sup>1</sup> **accomplish** - get done

<sup>2</sup> **intellectual** - educational, having to do with learning

<sup>3</sup> **dictator** - a ruler, often cruel, who has complete control over his or her people

<sup>4</sup> **accounts** – reports of an event or versions of a story

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Under Caesar, the Roman Republic
  - a. shrank.
  - b. grew a little.
  - c. fell to the Greeks.
  - d. greatly expanded.
  
2. Which of these answers is NOT information about Caesar provided in the passage?
  - a. places he traveled
  - b. things he studied
  - c. military achievements
  - d. sports he played
  
3. Which phrase best describes Caesar?
  - a. dull and uneducated
  - b. weak and cowardly
  - c. rich and peaceful
  - d. successful and powerful
  
4. Read the following sentences: “They were afraid that Roman citizens wanted to turn Caesar into a king. This **threatened** Roman democracy.”

The word **threatened** means

  - a. inspired or influenced
  - b. made stronger
  - c. was likely to cause harm
  - d. wrote down on paper
  
5. The passage “Julius Caesar” is mostly about
  - a. a famous Roman leader.
  - b. a famous type of food.
  - c. military strategy in Ancient Rome.
  - d. Caesar’s romance with Cleopatra.

6. What were some of Julius Caesar’s talents?

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7. Explain whether the Roman people would have been happy about Caesar being killed.

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Brutus was one of the people who killed Julius Caesar, \_\_\_\_\_ he was Julius Caesar’s friend.

- a. because
- b. even though
- c. instead
- d. at last

9. Read the following sentence.

**Some citizens in Rome wanted to turn Caesar into a king.**

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

- 1. Who? some citizens
- 2. Some citizens wanted to do what? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Where? \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Vocabulary Word:** accomplish: if you accomplish something, you succeed in doing it.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Teacher Guide and Answers**

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 660

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** Julius Caesar is one of the most famous figures in Roman history. He used his speaking, political, and military skill to rise to power and eventually become the dictator of the Roman Republic, before being killed by a group of Roman senators.

1. Under Caesar, the Roman Republic
  - a. shrank.
  - b. grew a little.
  - c. fell to the Greeks.
  - d. **greatly expanded.**
  
2. Which of these answers is NOT information about Caesar provided in the passage?
  - a. places he traveled
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  - a. **a famous Roman leader.**
  - b. a famous type of food.
  - c. military strategy in Ancient Rome.
  - d. Caesar’s romance with Cleopatra.

6. What were some of Julius Caesar's talents?

**Suggested answer:** Julius Caesar had many talents, and was a great speaker, writer, politician, and military leader.

7. Explain whether the Roman people would have been happy about Caesar being killed.

**Suggested answer:** Answers will vary but should generally reflect that the people would not have been happy because Caesar was very popular. Students may also infer that some people would have been happy about the fact that Roman democracy would continue.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Brutus was one of the people who killed Julius Caesar, \_\_\_\_\_ he was Julius Caesar's friend.

- a. because
- b. even though**
- c. instead
- d. at last

9. Read the following sentence.

**Some citizens in Rome wanted to turn Caesar into a king.**

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

- 1. Who? some citizens
- 2. Some citizens wanted to do what? **to turn Caesar into a king**
- 3. Where? **Rome**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** accomplish: if you accomplish something, you succeed in doing it.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.