

Julius Caesar essay/paragraph questions

Choose two of the following questions to answer in an extended paragraph or short essay of two to four paragraphs. (Longer and more developed essays will earn extra points to substitute for errors in the objective section of the test.) You may answer extra questions in paragraph form or short answer form for extra credit.

The essays as assigned are worth 20 points toward the test score. Extra credit answers will be worth less, but each extra answer (depending on quality and accuracy) **may** earn you as much as 5 extra points.

1. In many ways, *Julius Caesar* is a play about the effects of persuasion or argumentation. Examine several examples in the play where a character effectively persuades others to change their point of view. Determine which uses of persuasion are ethical and which are not. Cite examples directly from the play.
2. Is Antony an effective leader of the people or is he a manipulator who incites mob hysteria? If you feel he could be both, examine both sides of the question, but determine the strongest viewpoint, using evidence and lines from the play to support your answer.
3. Death of Caesar—justice or murder? Is the death of Caesar justified, or is it murder? Again, examine both sides of the question as you determine your viewpoint.
4. Examine the many examples of omens and superstition throughout the play. To what extent do these omens serve to move the play toward its outcome?
5. Is Brutus a hero or a villain? Remember that of all the conspirators, he was the most beloved of Caesar. When he joins the conspiracy, is he committing the worst kind of treachery toward his friend and ruler, or does he have solid ethical reasons for his decision. As the play moves toward the end, how does Brutus fulfill the classical definition of a tragic hero.
6. Although *Julius Caesar* is a challenging play for English 10 students, its study is worthwhile. Examine the benefits to students from reading and learning such a hard play, and indicate what you personally have learned from this unit.