

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was born around 100 B.C.E. His family had noble roots, but they were not particularly rich or influential people at the time of Caesar's birth. Julius Caesar's aunt, Julia, was the wife of Gaius Marius. Gaius Marius was the leader of the Popular faction.

After Julius Caesar's father died, Julius was betrothed to marry a woman named Cossutia. History is unclear whether the two were only betrothed or whether they actually married. Caesar broke off the betrothal/marriage and married Cornelia when he was only 18. Cornelia was the daughter of a prominent member of the Popular faction. They had one child, named Julia, who was the only legitimate child of Julius Caesar.

At the time, there was an Optimate dictator named Sulla. He ordered Caesar to divorce Cornelia, but Caesar refused. Sulla decreed that Caesar would be executed for his refusal, so Caesar went into hiding. Eventually, Caesar's influential friends and relatives got him a pardon.

Caesar served in the military and was even awarded a civic crown for saving the life of a citizen in battle. After Sulla died, Caesar returned to Rome and became a lawyer/orator. He was known as a very good speaker.

In 63 B.C.E., Caesar was elected Pontifex Maximus. Originally, the Pontifex Maximus was the high priest of the Ancient Roman College of Pontiffs. This position was the most important position in the religion of Ancient Rome. While this office began as a religious office, it gradually became a political one. Caesar was competing with two other men to become Pontifex Maximus. The other two men were Catulus and Isauricus. It is said that all three men used bribery as a means to gain votes. Both of the other candidates were older and had greater experience and better standing in the community, but Caesar won the title. It is possible that the two older men split the vote, which allowed Caesar to win.

He was crucial in the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire. He formed an unofficial triumvirate with two men named Crassus and Pompey. Caesar even married his daughter, Julia, to Pompey. This triumvirate dominated Roman politics but was often opposed in the Roman Senate.

Caesar conquered Gaul to extend the Roman Empire. Caesar was absent from Rome for nine years while conquering Gaul for Rome. Caesar also led the first Roman invasion of Britain. Caesar assumed control of the government and began to reform Roman society. Caesar centralized most of the bureaucracy of the Republic.

Eventually, the triumvirate was disbanded. Crassus was killed in battle, and Julia died in childbirth. Without Crassus and Julia, the bond between Pompey and Caesar was weakened. The two men became rivals and disputed the leadership of the Roman state. This led to a civil war, in which Caesar was victorious.

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## Julius Caesar (Cont'd)

Caesar started reforming Roman society and government. He centralized much of the bureaucracy of the Republic. Caesar became a successful leader. Many honors and awards were given to him. At the same time, the Senate was becoming dissatisfied with Caesar. According to Cassius Dio, a noted Roman historian and public servant, a delegation from the Senate was once sent to inform Caesar of new honors they had awarded him. It was customary to show respect by rising when addressed by these delegations, but Caesar received the delegation while sitting. The Senate was offended by this action and this gave them an excuse to plot Caesar's assassination.

A man named Brutus, who was a close friend of Caesar's, actually began to plot against Caesar. He plotted with Cassius to assassinate Caesar. On the Ides of March (which is March 15) in 44 B.C.E., senators called Caesar to the forum by telling him a petition was to be read that would ask him to hand his power to the Senate. This petition was a fake and was intended only to get Caesar to come to the forum.

When Caesar arrived to read the false petition, he was attacked and stabbed by several men, including his friend Brutus. The assassination plot succeeded and Caesar died on the Ides of March. You may have heard the expression: "Beware the Ides of March." This expression comes from the story of Caesar's assassination on that fateful day.

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## Julius Caesar Questions

### Multiple Choice:

1. Julius married:

- a. Cossutia
- b. Cornelia
- c. Julia
- d. Connie

2. Caesar also led the first Roman invasion of:

- a. Egypt
- b. Algeria
- c. Britain
- d. Greece

3. Caesar died on the:

- a. March of Dimes
- b. Idea of March
- c. March of Ivy
- d. Ides of March

4. Originally, the Pontifex Maximus was the high priest of:

- a. Ancient Roman College of Pontiffs.
- b. The Roman Catholic Church
- c. The Anglican Church
- d. The Church of Venus and Mars

### True or False:

\_\_\_ 5. Julia was the only legitimate child of Julius Caesar.

\_\_\_ 6. A man named Boris plotted against Julius Caesar.

\_\_\_ 7. In 63 B.C.E., Caesar was elected Pontifex Maximus.

\_\_\_ 8. Julius centralized much of the bureaucracy of the Republic.

\_\_\_ 9. Caesar was beheaded as a traitor.

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## Julius Caesar Answers

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- d. Connie

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- a. March of Dimes
- b. Idea of March
- c. March of Ivy
- d. **Ides of March**

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