

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act I, by William Shakespeare
Reading: Use Text Aids to Read Shakespearean Drama

Shakespeare's plays contain language and references with which most modern readers are not familiar. When reading Shakespearean drama, **use text aids** to help you understand what is going on in the play.

- Review the *dramatis personae*—the cast of characters—at the beginning of the play.
- Read any background information provided about the play.
- As you read the play, consult the marginal notes, called **glosses**, beside the text. These notes define words and explain references. After you consult the glosses, reread the passage to make sure you understand what it means.

DIRECTIONS: Use the text aids for Act I to help you answer the following questions.

1. In Act I, Scene i, lines 31-33, the cobbler states his reason for being in the street: "But indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph." What sort of triumph is Caesar having?

Caesar is celebrating

2. In lines 65-66 of Act I, Scene i, Flavius tells Marullus to remove decorations from the statues. Marullus questions him in lines 67-68, saying it is the feast of Lupercal. What and when is the feast of Lupercal?

Lupercal is a celebration of

3. At the opening of Act I, Scene ii, Antony is dressed "for the course," or for a race. Why is a race being held? Why does Caesar tell Antony to touch Calpurnia during the race?

4. What date is the ides of March? The Ides of March is

5. In lines 55-62 of Act I, Scene ii, Cassius flatters Brutus to persuade him to oppose Caesar. Use the text aids for these lines to express what Cassius says in your own words.

Cassius tells Brutus

6. In lines 28-32 of Act I, Scene iii, Casca interprets the strange natural events that have been occurring in Rome since Caesar returned. Use the text aids to express what he says in your own words.

Casca says that

How does Cassius respond?