

## **Julius Caesar** **Final Exam**

The following essay options are examples of “free response” questions you might get on either the AP Language OR most likely the AP Literature and Composition exam. Typically you would have about 40 minutes to respond to one of the following prompts, but for the purpose of this take home “exam”, there are no time limits. Consider this to be an opportunity to familiarize yourself with AP English prompts and rubrics. *Note to students: On the English Literature and Composition Exam, students are given an open free response question and a list of possible works from which to choose in answering the question. For the purposes of applied practice in class, the question given here was written with Julius Caesar in mind. However, the question could be applied to numerous literary works. It is important for you to understand that, on the actual exam, a student’s choice would not be restricted to a given work.*

Choose ONE of the following prompts and develop a well organized essay. Your final essay will be submitted to *turnitin.com* AND turned in as a hard copy essay. It must be double spaced.

1. A tragic hero is a literary character who makes an error of judgment or has a fatal flaw that, combined with fate and external forces, brings on a tragedy. The tragic hero has the potential for greatness, but ultimately they are doomed to fail, trapped in a situation where they cannot win. Even though they eventually fall, they still win a moral victory, thus allowing their spirit to live on. The following chart illustrates some of the common steps/characteristics of their character and subsequent fall:

TRAGIC HEROES ARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BORN INTO NOBILITY</li><li>• RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN FATE</li><li>• ENDOWED WITH A TRAGIC FLAW (a defect in character that makes them susceptible to a fall, like “hubris”)</li><li>• DOOMED TO MAKE A SERIOUS ERROR IN JUDGMENT</li></ul>
TRAGIC HEROES EVENTUALLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• FALL FROM GREAT HEIGHTS OR HIGH ESTEEM</li><li>• REALIZE THEY HAVE MADE AN IRREVERSIBLE MISTAKE</li><li>• FACE AND ACCEPT DEATH WITH HONOR</li><li>• MEET A “TRAGIC” DEATH</li></ul>
FOR ALL TRAGIC HEROES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• THE AUDIENCE IS AFFECTED BY PITY and/or FEAR</li></ul>

In academic circles, the character of Brutus and whether he’s a tragic hero or not is still a source of much heated debate. The issue revolves around this: *does assassinating a leader for the good of the people constitute bravery worthy of a tragic hero or can the end never justify the means, thus making Brutus a villain rather than a hero?*

In sum, is Brutus a tragic hero or is he a villain? Adopt a position and explain your answer, taking care to use supporting details from the text in your response.

2. Though the play is titled The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, it really is not very much focused on the character of Caesar. Brutus, Cassius, and Antony get much more attention from the author in the way of lines and our insight into their character than Caesar ever does. With all of this in mind, who in your estimation would be a better choice for the namesake of this play? Should it be Cassius? Brutus? Antony? Perhaps somebody else? Or should it, indeed, be named after Caesar? Choose one and support your argument with details from the plot, text, etc. Do not merely summarize the plot.
3. Just as Brutus attempted to use the idea that the end justifies the means to rationalize his decision to kill Caesar, some people today use the same argument to justify acts of war, violent protest, or terrorism. In a well organized essay, defend, challenge, or qualify the validity of this argument. Use examples from your reading, observation, and/or experience to support your position.

**SEE THE RUBRIC ON THE REVERSE SIDE FOR SCORING GUIDELINES:**

## AP English Holistic Scoring Rubric

<p>Top Scores</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9-8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">93-100</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are well-written papers which respond fully to the question asked.</li> <li>• The best papers show a full understanding of the issues and support their points with appropriate textual evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Writers of these essays demonstrate stylistic maturity by an effective command of sentence structure, diction, and organization.</li> <li>• The writing need not be without flaws, but it should reveal the writer's ability to choose from and control a wide range of elements of effective writing.</li> </ul>
<p>Upper Scores</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7-6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">92-83</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These essays also respond correctly to the questions asked but do so less fully or less effectively than the essays in the top range.</li> <li>• Their discussion may be less thorough and less specific.</li> <li>• These essays are well-written in an appropriate style but reveal less maturity than the top papers.</li> <li>• They do make use of textual evidence to support their points.</li> <li>• Some lapses in diction or syntax may appear, but the writing demonstrates sufficient control over the elements of composition to present the writer's ideas clearly.</li> </ul>
<p>Middle Score</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">82-77</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These essays respond to the question, but the comments may be simplistic or imprecise; they may be overly generalized, vague, or inadequately supported.</li> <li>• These essays are adequately written, but may demonstrate inconsistent control over the elements of composition.</li> <li>• Organization is attempted, but it may not be fully realized or particularly effective.</li> </ul>
<p>Lower Scores</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">76-70</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These essays attempt to deal with the question, but do so either inaccurately or without support or specific evidence.</li> <li>• They may show some misunderstanding or omit pertinent analysis.</li> <li>• The writing can convey the writer's ideas, but it reveals weak control over diction, syntax, organization.</li> <li>• These essays may contain excessive and distracting spelling and grammatical errors.</li> <li>• Statements are seldom supported with specific or persuasive evidence, or inappropriately lengthy quotations may replace discussion and analysis.</li> </ul>
<p>Lowest Scores</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2-1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">69-60</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These essays fail to respond adequately to the question.</li> <li>• They may reveal misunderstanding or may distort the interpretation.</li> <li>• They compound the problems of the Lower Score papers.</li> <li>• Often poorly written on several counts, these essays may contain many distracting errors in grammar and mechanics.</li> <li>• Generally these essays are unacceptably brief or poorly written.</li> <li>• Although some attempts to answer the question may be indicated, the writer's view has little clarity and only slight, if any, evidence in its support.</li> </ul>

COMMENTS: