

Julius Caesar

100-44 BC



¹ Photo by [Get Directly Down](#)

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in 100 BC. We do not know much about his childhood. His family was nobility, but not one of the few that ran the country. His family was on the losing side of a civil war. A civil war is where two groups from the same country fight over control of the country. Julius Caesar was forced to join the army to escape execution.

Julius Caesar was a good soldier. He won many battles for Rome. After the death of Sulla, the winner of the civil war, he returned to Rome and became a military tribune, the first step in a political career. Eventually Julius Caesar was named governor of Spain.

After being governor of Spain, Julius Caesar came back to Rome and was elected consul, one of the two leaders of Rome, with help from two friends, Crassus and Pompey. To help his friends Caesar wanted to give land to soldiers. The soldiers like this idea. The people who owned the land did not. Caesar said there would be riots if the law did not pass. Caesar used the mobs to get his law passed.

Caesar then used his popularity to become governor of Northern Italy. After fighting many years, he had many soldiers

join his army. He took his soldiers to the defense of friends of Rome. Many people liked Caesar because he won battles. Caesar wanted to come home with his army and be in charge.

The senators in Rome told him he could not bring his army into Italy. They said if he crossed the Rubicon river he was starting a war. Caesar said, "The die is cast," and he crossed the river.

Caesar defeated all of the armies in his way, including the armies of his friend Pompey. He became the only ruler in Rome. He started changing things. He changed the calendar. We named our calendar after him, the Julian calendar. He tried to put more people in the Senate, but many of the current Senators did not like this.

Many of Caesar's enemies joined together to kill him. He was killed on March 15, 44 BC.

Why did Caesar join the army?

What laws did Caesar try to pass? Who did not like his laws?

What do you think “the die is cast” means? Why did he say that?

Look at a calendar. What month is named after Julius Caesar?

Many years later a man named William Shakespeare wrote a play about Caesar. The most famous speech is Caesar's funeral speech by Marc Antony:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bi1PvXCbr8>

Do you think Marc Antony really believes they are honorable men?

Does he like Caesar or dislike him?

How does the crowd react to Marc Antony? Do they agree with him?



Look at the statue of Caesar. Spend time observing it and notice as many details as you can.

Some things to think about:
What is he trying to tell you about who he is?

Why did he choose to wear armor for his statue?

What is he doing with his arm? Is he welcoming the crowd or is he waving them away?

Why is he holding a sword? Is it a warning or is to protect?

When you make a big decision that can't be changed we call it "crossing the Rubicon." Look at this map of Italy (http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/mapitaly.jpg). Where is the Rubicon? Why is crossing the Rubicon a big deal? Why do you think the Senate did not want Caesar to bring the army with him? At the bottom of this page draw another big decision that someone might make.

Information sources:

http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/julius_caesar.html

http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/shakespeare/60secondshakespeare/themes_juliuscaesar.shtml