

Watch these different performances of Marc Antony's speech.



Damian Lewis from Band of Brothers and Homeland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q89MLuLSJgk>

Youtube:

Damian Lewis as Antony in Julius Caesar. Watch those changes!



College students doing the big funeral speech:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkuCaCHEjyQ>

Youtube:

Mark Antony's Funeral Speech (dj jiminez)



William Shatner (Captain James T Kirk from Star Trek)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mnDDk464M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mnDDk464M)

Youtube:

William Shatner Clip Julius Caesar Funeral Speech

Yes, it's black and white and wobbly but worth looking at for the way he interacts with the audience. A very 'politician being man of the people' performance



Marlon Brando (considered a big deal actor)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X9C55TkUP8>

Youtube: **Mark Antony's Speech** (Pochido)

Yes, it's in black and white again. Total opposite to the Shatner one.

Charlton Heston (Planet of the Apes)

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

Yes, he's old and it's a bit cheesy. In Shakespearan era clothing. Worth watching especially from 5:30 for the way Caesar's body is used to manipulate the plebians.

Youtube: Charlton Heston Mark Antony speech "Julius Caesar" (1970)



1) Copy the screen grabs from the other page and use them in your inquiry portfolio.

Underneath each picture, sum up in your own words how the character of Antony comes across in each performance (how he starts, how and when we see him change, how he ends up)



In this performance Antony is portrayed by Damian Lewis. At first he comes across civil, he addresses the people he is talking to and continues with his speech. At this point he is continuing as Brutus and the Assassins would expect him to. But it is when he first says, "But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man." It is here he accents these words, raising his volume as he says it to add emphasis. This is when he is slowly manipulating the audience and creating the

foreshadowing required for later on in his speech. He says these words in a sarcastic way at first and as he moves forward in his speech, it becomes more and more angry with each utterance. At a certain point in the speech, not only the way he says, 'Brutus is an honourable man,' sounds sarcastic. Many of the rhetorical devices and questions sound this way too and it is here the character of Antony being portrayed comes across as quite sardonic. At about 1:55 through he starts to become angry and that is quite clear. At the end of the clip he ends up becoming much more quiet and emotional.



In this performance Antony is portrayed by a College Student. At first he starts by pleading for the people he is addressing to listen to him. He comes across as just an ordinary person who is hurt, just trying to get the people to hear him out and to listen to him.

This particular portrayal of Antony dramatises him and the speech adding emphasis to each of the words he is saying. However unlike the prior interpretation he does not put most of his emphasis on, "And brutus was an honourable man," rather he uses more gestures and accents on the rhetorical devices. He comes across as quite sympathetic for the audience as well as hurt himself.



In this performance Mark Antony is portrayed by William Shatner. At first he starts off going through his paces as he speeds up, slows down and adds emphasis to key components of the speech. However it is worth noting, this portrayal did not use emphasis or accents as well as the first. At this point he comes across as a politician who was just speaking to the audience about the death of Caesar. However he changes up when he pauses from his 'emotions.' He comes across to the audience as someone who has been hurt by the death of Caesar as much as the next man. He ends up however posing with a smile on his face as the crowds sweep through Rome on the rush to spill blood. Here he comes across as evil and cunning.



In this performance MA is portrayed by Marlon Brando. At first he comes across very serious, like a lecturer to a class of 70-80 students. Often times he seems less like he is raising his voice for people to hear him better and more like he is yelling it at the audience. He comes across as not so much angry but more overpowering than anything else. However nearing the end, he does start to come across as very angry as he practically shouts every word to the people listening. Then at the very end, the clip finishes with him



In this performance MA is portrayed by Charlton Heston. He comes across as a very strong speaker and one that is speaking for Caesar on behalf of the people. He asserts himself in such a manner that rallies the people around him. At first he starts off addressing the crowd and comes across as assured and meaningful. Later on the crowd sees him as the sole gateway to the truth, this is because of how he came across assured earlier when he was speaking. Towards the end he came across bold and more and more as the savior of Rome.

## 2) Which performance do you prefer and why?

The performance I preferred the most was the first. I preferred it because it had much better accents and emphasis even without the crowd present. Unlike many of the other performances, the first actually made me feel like I was there in Roman times watching this all play out and because of that I naturally preferred it. However there was a very close second, which was the last one. This was because I really enjoyed the way he

interacted with the audience which was present and how he moved around changing his positioning etc.

### **3) Which bits of different performances are the most effective and why?**

One of the most important and effective parts of different performances is the accents they put on different words and sentences which are adding emphasis. For instance the way Damian Lewis says, 'Brutus is an honourable man,' really draws the audiences attention to it as it has a sarcastic inflection to it along with the fact it just stands out and is relatively pleasant to listen to.

Another important part of different performances is the audience/crowd interaction. While the first portrayal didn't have an audience, the ones that did had an advantage. This was because MA could interact with the audience and change the way he says things, for instance inflections and accents depending on the crowd. He could also move around and interact with them, this is best exemplified in the last portrayal, where not only MA but the crowd moves around lunging up steps etc. Having this interaction just made the whole thing more believable and accurate. As such it is a really important and effective part of the different performances.

### **4) Write down the 3 most important lines or short quotes that Antony delivers. What techniques can we see and why do they make things more powerful or interesting? What are the most important/powerful/symbolic words? Why?**

"Sure, Brutus is an honourable man," this is one of the most important lines MA continuously delivers throughout his speech. The continuous repetition of it slowly makes it sound sarcastic through refrains and its constant recurrence during the speech. Because of it becoming more and more crucial and sarcastic throughout the speech, it insinuates how Brutus and the other assassins are not as 'honourable' as they had previously seemed.

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears," is one of the more interesting but also important and powerful lines within MA's speech. It gains its power as it is how he addresses the people watching him right from the very start. By Antony saying this, it is targeting the roman people as his friends and is also pleading to be listened to. At the same time, he isn't speaking like the common people of rome, like Brutus did. Rather he still uses Iambic Pentameter as he knows they can understand it. In a way it is respectful, by not trying to be like them (what Brutus did) he is acknowledging his position and authority but not being offensive about it by dumbing it down. This is why it is one of the more interesting, important and powerful lines in the speech MA performs.

"Oh masters, if I was disposed to stir," this again is a very important and powerful line in the speech. This is because by saying that he is talking to everyone. This means he is putting himself under and well below servants, slaves, middleclass, nobles, etc. In short terms it is him saying he is a slave to the Roman Empire and the People that reside within it. This makes him much more persuasive and seem much more humble hence why it is one of the most important and powerful quotes from Antony's speech.

### **5) What is Shakespeare telling us about through these quotes: eg about friendship, politicians, power, the public?**

Shakespeare is telling us in these quotes numerous things about politicians, power regarding the public. They show us how when politicians are in power, they often say things to sympathise with the people they are trying to manipulate. For instance often time politicians when talking in interviews will loosen their tie/suit to become more casual, like the people.

It also shows how the public easily fall for these blatant acts of manipulation. This is because people sympathise with what they want to hear and by politicians saying these things such as in the second and third quotes above, people see the politicians as one of them and forget about their motives for power. Shakespeare shows that manipulation can seem very genuine when it often is not so and that, is very important to understand.



6) One of the most recent performances of Julius Caesar has caused HUGE controversy and shows my Shakespeare is still relevant.

Watch this YouTube report on a Donald Trump-like Caesar performed in New York: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qfzqBr1qh0>

You may also want to read:

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/jun/12/donald-trump-shakespeare-play-julius-caesar-new-york>

and, for a totally different viewpoint:



7) Next, read the pdf file 'Trumpian Julius Caesar Dropped by Sponsors' on the Google Classroom task.

- Write down what the for/against arguments are for staging it in this way?
- Complete the 'You Decide' activity on page 2

I do think it is wrong for the production company to portray Julius Caesar as trump. I can see the humour in it, I really can. I can also see the reasons for it, being that in many ways the play is very applicable to situations now, it is humourous and that there are definitely some similarities between trump, caesar, the assassins and other leaders not too disimilar. However regardless of whether you dislike Trump or not, republican or democrat, left wing or right wing, it is absolutely not appropriate to link a public figure, especially the president to being assassinated. I agree with the article titled, "Trumpian Julius Caesar dropped by sponsors." Shakespeares play was not about advocating political violence, but rather about drawing parallels between Roman times to the budding elizabethan empire at the time and to quote the article, 'act as a warning parable to those who try to fight for democracy through undemocratic means.' By linking Julius Caesars assassination to Trump, it only enrages people from both left and right beliefs and but impose threatening thoughts upon democracy and the president himself.

Yes, yes history does in fact repeat itself. The reason being is that there are numerous examples throughout history of events happening hundreds of years before happening



again. One of these very real examples is genocide during the holocaust. Since then there have been another ten instances of genocide around the world even though knowledge about what happened during the holocaust is very wide spread and well understood.

- 8) Find a photograph of an actor you think would be the ideal choice to play Marc Antony on stage.
- Briefly explain why you think they are suitable.
  - What kind of costume would you give them and why (eg historically Roman, Shakespearan, formal army uniform, battle fatigues, gang clothes, other).
  - Where/When would you set it and why?
  - What kind of ideas would your choice of costume and setting give to the audience?



I think that Ian Glen would be a great and suitable choice of actors to portray Marc Antony onstage for the Shakespearean play Julius Caesar. This is because based upon his work in Game of Thrones, I think he would be able to present the speech well and accurately using a wide range of effective delivery techniques similar to those found in the text of Julius Caesar. I also think he would be suitable as he is neither too young or too old and if he was put into costume would really look the part.

The costume I would choose to put him in would be historically roman. This is because I reckon he would look the part in them and I would prefer my adaptation of the play, if I was the director to be as historically accurate as possible. For this play I would rather set it back in Roman times like shakespeare did, mainly because I think it works best where it was originally set and based upon and also because I don't see a particularly modern adaptation being to my liking. Another advantage of my choice in costume would be that it would make many of the plays more complex and historical aspects make more sense being in the proper clothing as the language 'thou and thy' would not be best used in a more modern costume design such as formal army uniforms, gang clothes etc. As well as this, it would be more historically accurate and absorbing for the audience without being more modern and probably corny.

- 9) Write some DEVELOPED director's notes about how you would want them to deliver your chosen lines.
- How should they use their voice, emotion, body language, position on the stage?
  - who he/she is looking at/talking to at key points and why?
  - What language or techniques are most important to them in these lines and why?

The way the actors or in this case Ian Glen should portray the lines that have been chosen vary with each. For, "Sure, Brutus is an honourable man," It should be said nonchalantly at the start but slowly get more and more sarcastic with every utterance. Along with the added and progressing sarcasm, whenever this line is stated, the tone of voice should change and become more serious and so should the volume, but very subtly based upon the lines before and after it.

For, "Oh masters, if I was disposed to stir," it should have a very humbling emotional tone. The same for, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears," except that should be said loudly and strongly to address the audience but it has to maintain the emotion.

Throughout this he should interact with the audience, look around, move while he is speaking and make eye contact with members of the audience. When he states, 'And Brutus is an honourable man,' he should sweep his gaze around the audience. At different points, like when showing Caesars body he should move down to it and use gestures to gather people in. He should use gestures throughout anyway for emphasis.

The most important techniques for Ian Glen to nail while portraying Marc Antony is his tone, pitch and the way he includes the audience by making eye contact and working around including the crowd. The way he uses gestures to emphasise points and vital components of the speech is very important for him to do well.

**10) Explain how you would want your actor to engage the audience and get them to take the part of the Roman Plebians. How will your actor 'work the crowd' and how do you hope the audience will respond?**

I would want Ian Glen to be able to interact with the audience through gestures, body language, movement and eye contact. All of these would definitely help him work the crowd. The gestures used would emphasise and in combination with body language would draw the attention of the audience to specific parts and hopefully make them feel like they are apart of and act apart of the roman plebians of the time. By moving around at specific points I hope it'd make the audience feel more involved than just the direct few positioned around Marc Antony. If he moved around it would include a much vaster number of the audience making them more likely to feel involved and act as such. By making eye contact in combination with the other techniques would single out various different individuals and make them feel directly spoken to and valued by the speaker. It would make them think, 'Hey he looked at me, what do I think about all of this? I can't believe this guy playing MA looked at me in the middle of this very important speech. I think I'll listen more carefully now and because he looked at me and made me feel included, I am most likely going to sympathise with him.'

While all of this is happening, Ian Glen should engage the audience a step further by posing some lines as rhetorical questions. This is important for the audience to interact as it jogs their brains into thinking about the point that MA is trying to get across. It means they would make their own mind up. In combination with everything else, I would hope this makes the audience respond as if they were the roman plebians and makes them much more interactive with Ian Glen who would be the speaker.



Left: Caesar (top) and Marc Antony (bottom) in HBO's Rome TV series.

Right: Marc Antony works the crowd in a British stage version from June 2017.