

Julius Caesar

Act 4

by William Shakespeare

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: apparition, chastisement, choler, covert, covetous, infirmities, itching palm, proscription, tenor, waspish

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Play:

Section 1 · Act 1 · Caesar's triumph in the streets of Rome

Section 2 · Act 2 · Brutus alone in his orchard at night

Section 3 · Act 3 · Caesar arrives at the Capitol

Section 4 · Act 4 · New rulers divide power in Rome

Section 5 · Act 5 · The armies meet on the plains of Philippi

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com
(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. An **apparition** drifted silently across the moonlit room.

- A. a thin wisp of smoke
- B. a stray beam of light
- C. a ghost or phantom

2. The captain's **chastisement** silenced the whole crew.

- A. a harsh scolding or punishment
- B. a long set of orders
- C. a surprising announcement

3. His **choler** flared when he was interrupted again.

- A. nervous worry
- B. anger or hot temper
- C. stubborn pride

4. They held a **covert** meeting after dark.

- A. secret or hidden
- B. long and formal
- C. tense and serious

5. Even as a child he was **covetous** about his toys.

- A. proud and stubborn
- B. shy and quiet
- C. greedy and grasping

6. Even strong leaders have **infirmities** they would rather conceal.

- A. guilty secrets
- B. weaknesses or faults of character
- C. physical illnesses

7. The customs officer was known for his **itching palm**.

- A. a craving for money
- B. a quick, fiery temper
- C. a nervous fidgeting habit

8. Under the new ruler's **proscription**, hundreds lost their lives.

- A. a surprise military attack
- B. a sweeping new tax law
- C. a list condemning people to death

9. I missed the start, but the **tenor** of the discussion was clear.

- A. the general sense or drift
- B. the exact wording
- C. the final decision

10. He turned **waspish** whenever the meeting ran late.

- A. restless and bored
- B. irritable and snappish
- C. gloomy and silent

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

jades — worn-out, broken-down horses; figuratively, false-spirited creatures

durst — dared (archaic past tense of 'dare')

tide — a favorable moment or opportunity that must be seized (figurative)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	A
5	C
6	B
7	A
8	C
9	A
10	B

Vocabulary in Context

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 *“How covert matters may be best disclosed
And open perils surest answered.”*

As it is used in the passage, ‘covert’ most nearly describes matters that are...

- A. secret and hidden from view
- B. tangled and hard to resolve
- C. urgent and full of danger

6 *“When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous
To lock such rascal counters from his friends ...”*

It can reasonably be inferred that, in these lines, Brutus is...

- A. admitting he has grown greedy
- B. vowing he would never be greedy
- C. pleading for Cassius’s pity

2 *“Are much condemned to have an itching palm,
To sell and mart your offices for gold ...”*

The passage most strongly suggests that Brutus believes Cassius has...

- A. insulted Brutus in public
- B. neglected his military duties
- C. taken bribes for personal gain

7 *“A friend should bear his friend’s infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.”*

Which statement is best supported by Cassius’s words in the passage?

- A. A friend should overlook faults
- B. A friend must share his wealth
- C. A friend should hide his illness

3 *“The name of Cassius honors this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.”*

The lines about Cassius’s name primarily function to suggest that...

- A. he has earned true honor
- B. his guilt will soon be exposed
- C. his good name hides his guilt

8 *“Myself have letters of the selfsame tenor.”*

According to the passage, Messala’s letters and Brutus’s letters share the same...

- A. messenger and origin
- B. message and content
- C. date and signature

4 *“Must I give way and room to your rash choler?”*

Which choice best describes Brutus’s attitude toward Cassius’s choler?

- A. scornful and unafraid
- B. calm and forgiving
- C. nervous and wary

9 *“That by proscription and bills of outlawry,
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus
Have put to death an hundred senators.”*

It can reasonably be inferred that the proscription was...

- A. a truce among the rulers
- B. an order marking many for death
- C. a trial of the senators

5 *“I’ll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.”*

In the passage, Cassius is characterized as...

- A. irritable and quick to anger
- B. cold and unfeeling
- C. cowardly under pressure

10 *“I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.”*

The author most likely includes the apparition in order to...

- A. reveal Brutus’s guilt
- B. explain his lack of sleep
- C. foreshadow his defeat to come

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	A	
2	C	
3	C	
4	A	
5	A	Character comprehension.
6	B	Event comprehension.
7	A	Here 'infirmities' means faults or weaknesses of character, not bodily illness.
8	B	Here 'tenor' means the general content or drift, not the musical voice.
9	B	Event comprehension.
10	C	Event comprehension. The Ghost names Philippi, where Brutus will be defeated.

Teacher Context: Act 4

Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus form a ruling alliance and mark their enemies for death. In the camp near Sardis, Brutus and Cassius quarrel bitterly, then reconcile, and Brutus reveals news of Portia's death. Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus before the armies move toward Philippi.