Essay Questions

Your essay must be chosen from the following list. Look through and decide which one you think you will do best on.

Plot

1. Scenes iii. and iv. in Act II are very short. Why did Shakespeare include them? What is their function in the play?

Characterization

2. Do you agree with Caesar when he says that Cassius thinks too much? Defend your answer.

3. Why does Brutus not want the conspirators to swear an oath of allegiance? What does this say about him?

4. How does Caesar's response to Calpurnia's fears add credence to Brutus's and Cassius's fears about Caesar?

5. What is the significance of Caesar's “north star” speech at the Capitol? How does this speech make you feel about Caesar? The conspirators?

6. In every disagreement between the two, Brutus never gives in to Cassius; he must always have his way. What does this say about Brutus? Why does Cassius always yield?

7. Compare and contrast Brutus and Caesar. Are they similar or are they very different?

8. Compare and contrast Brutus's and Cassius's reasons for joining the conspiracy.

Theme

9. Brutus is cast as a very idealistic leader in the play while Cassius is cast as being highly pragmatic. Of the two, which do you think is the better leader? Defend your answer.

10. At the end of the play, Antony refers to Brutus as “the noblest Roman of them all.” Do you agree with his assessment? Was Brutus noble? Defend your answer.

11. The play is entitled Julius Caesar even though Caesar is dead by Act III. Choose a more appropriate title. Defend your answer.