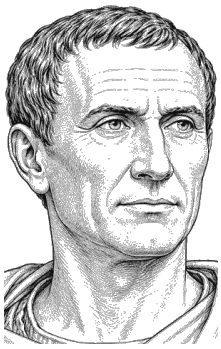
Name: _____

Date: _____

JULIUS CAESAR

By 59 BCE, the Roman Republic was rich and powerful, but years of corruption, slave revolts, and civil wars had left it deeply divided. Many Romans believed only a strong leader could restore order. The ambitious Julius Caesar seemed an obvious choice.



Caesar Becomes Consul

Gaius Julius Caesar was a patrician and popular general when he was first elected consul. Marcus Bibulus was Caesar's co-consul, but Caesar paid no attention to the Senate.

Caesar ordered the redistribution of land to the poor, which made him popular with the Roman people but angered many wealthy landowning senators. Bibulus attempted to veto Caesar's law, but Caesar's mob attacked him. The terrified Bibulus retired to his home, leaving Caesar in complete control.

The First Triumvirate

The Senate tried to block Caesar's decisions, so he partnered with two generals named Crassus and Pompey. Historians often refer to this alliance as the First Triumvirate. A triumvirate is a partnership of three equal rulers. Though neither Crassus nor Pompey served as consul, the three men were popular enough to ignore the Senate.

Caesar Goes to Gaul

Under Roman law, an official could not be arrested while in power. Knowing the Senate could jail him after his consulship, Caesar arranged to be appointed governor of a Roman province in Gaul. The Senate agreed because it would send Caesar far away to land that is now southern France.

Caesar used his personal fortune to build his army's loyalty in Gaul. For the next nine years, he led troops across western Europe, killing or enslaving millions and conquering lands for the Roman Republic.

Crossing the Rubicon

In 49 BCE, the Senate ordered Caesar to disband his army and return to Rome as a private citizen. Fearing arrest, Caesar ignored the order and marched toward Rome. At the Rubicon River, he faced a choice. If he crossed the river with his army, Pompey and the Senate would declare war. If he turned back, his career would be over. When people say they are "crossing the Rubicon," they refer to a significant decision that cannot be undone.

Civil War

As Caesar's army approached Rome, many frightened senators fled. Pompey announced that "Rome cannot be defended" and retreated south with his army. The remaining senators named Caesar dictator. In ancient Rome, a dictator was a ruler with complete control. Caesar and his army pursued Pompey throughout the Mediterranean until Pompey fled to Egypt.

Caesar and Cleopatra

When Caesar arrived in Egypt, he met Ptolemy XIII, the ten-year-old king. Hoping to gain favor, Ptolemy presented Caesar with Pompey's decapitated head. Caesar then met and fell in love with Cleopatra, Ptolemy's older sister. He spent a year with Cleopatra before returning to Rome as a conquering hero.

Dictator for Life

The Senate elected, then re-elected Caesar consul, breaking the Roman tradition that consuls served only one year. While in power, Caesar settled 80,000 soldiers in colonies, constructed buildings and monuments throughout the city, and reformed the calendar. In 44BCE, Caesar arranged to have the Senate name him dictator for life. Previous dictators had served only during emergencies and for no more than six months.

The Ides of March

Many senators became enraged because Caesar broke with Roman tradition and behaved as if he were a king. On March 15, 44 BCE, a mob of sixty senators stabbed the dictator to death in the Roman Forum. Ironically, Caesar fell to his death at the foot of a statue of Pompey, the general whom Caesar defeated.

The End of the Republic

With Caesar dead, Rome fell into a period of civil wars. Although the Republic continued to exist in name, the fighting led to the return of one-man rule in Rome.

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Name: _____

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Fill in the Blanks

By ____ BCE, the Roman R__p__b__ic was rich and powerful, but c__r__u__t__on, slave r__v__l__s, and civil wars had left it deeply d__v__d__d. Julius Caesar, a p__t__i__i__n and popular g__n__r__l, was elected c__n__ul. He ordered the r__d__s__r__b__t__on of land to the poor and i__n__r__d the Senate. Caesar then partnered with C__a__s__s and P__m__ey in the First T__i__m__i__a__e. Knowing the S__na__e could jail him after his consulship, Caesar became g__v__r__or of a Roman p__o__in__e in Gaul. For n__ne years, he led troops across western Europe, k__l__i__g or enslaving m__l__i__ns and c__n__u__r__ng lands for the Roman Republic.

In 49 BCE, the Senate ordered Caesar to d__s__a__d his army. Fearing a__re__t, he marched toward Rome and crossed the R__b__c__n River. Pompey fled to E__y_t. Son after, King P__o__e__y XIII presented Caesar with Pompey's d__c__p__t__t__d head. Caesar met C__e__p__t__a before returning to Rome. In 44 BCE, the Senate named Caesar d__c__a__or for l__fe. Sixty s__n__t__rs who believed C__es__r was acting like a king, so they s__a__b__d him to death.

Answer in Complete Sentence

*1. Why did many Roman people need a strong leader in 59BCE? Provide at least two reasons from the text.

_____

_____

_____

*2. What does "crossing the Rubicon" mean? Describe an instance where you or someone you know has "crossed the Rubicon."

_____

_____

_____

3. What is a dictator?

_____

_____

_____

*4. Was Julius Caesar a good or bad leader for Rome? Use two facts from the article to support your statement.

_____

_____

_____

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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