The Tragedy of Julius Caesar
Test Review
Section I: Name the character (10 points)

A. Has a dream that Caesar’s statue is flowing with blood
   Calpurnia

B. Convinces Caesar to go to the capital
   Decius

C. Warns Caesar to beware of the ides of March
   The Soothsayer

D. approaches Caesar with a letter and Caesar turns away
   Artemedorus

E. Defeats Pompey in a civil war
   Caesar

F. Caesar’s adoptive son; goes to battle with Antony against Brutus
   Octavius

G. loyal friend of Caesar who reads his will to the citizens of Rome
   Antony

H. Concerned about Brutus and wants him to share his thoughts
   Portia

I. Wants to kill Marc Antony too
   Cassius

J. Caesar says to him “Et tu, Brute”
   Brutus
Section II: Short answer (3 points each)

1. Explain the setting and circumstances of Act I Scene 1. What transpires?
The Roman plebeians are celebrating Caesar’s victory over Pompey and his return to Rome.

2. How do Flavius and Marullus view the workers they meet in the street?
   They view them as being 2nd class, uncultured, fickle and not fully capable of critical thinking.

3. How do Flavius and Marullus show their disapproval of Caesar’s power?
   • They remove decorations from Caesar’s statue

4. Why do Flavius and Marullus make plans to remove the decorations from the statues?
   • They want to diminish Caesar’s power
   • “These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing
     Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,
     Who else would soar above the view of men
     And keep us all in servile fearfulness.”

5. Caesar reveals that his tragic flaw may be hubris and arrogance when he ignores and disregards several specific warnings about his fate. Describe two of these.
   • When he dismisses the soothsayer’s warning to “beware the Ides of March”
   • When he chooses to ignore Calpurnia’s dream involving blood spouting like a fountain from a statue of Caesar and Romans bathing in it in celebratory fashion
   • When he ignores the priests warnings after discovering no heart in the sacrificial animal
6. What does Cassius know about Caesar that few other Romans know?

7. Describe the story he tells Brutus about the incident on the Tiber River. What is the significance of this?

7. For what specific reason does Cassius resent Caesar?

8. What does Caesar ask Antony to do during the ceremonial race on the Feast of the Luperchal? What was his motivation and what does this reveal about Caesar?

9. What critical error does Brutus, ignoring Cassius’ warning, make which ultimately results in the plebeians turning against the conspirators? What does this reveal about what might be described as Brutus’ tragic flaw?
10. How does Decius persuade Caesar to go to the capital despite all of the portents?

11. Who is Artemidorus and what role does he play?

12. Describe Antony’s rhetorical tactics during his funeral oration. How, specifically, does he turn the plebeians against the conspirators?

13. What were Brutus’ specific reasons for joining the conspiracy and killing Caesar? What does he believe?

14. What did Caesar’s will say and what did it seem to reveal to the plebeians about Caesar? What is the impact of this?

15. Describe the circumstances of Cassius’ death? Why does he ask his servant to take his life?
It must be by his death: and for my part, I know no personal cause to spurn at him, But for the general. He would be crown'd: How that might change his nature, there's the question. It is the bright day that brings forth the adder; And that craves wary walking. Crown him?—that;— And then, I grant, we put a sting in him, That at his will he may do danger with. The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar, I have not known when his affections sway'd More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof, That lowliness is young ambition's ladder, Whereunto the climber-upward turns his face; But when he once attains the upmost round. He then unto the ladder turns his back, Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees By which he did ascend. So Caesar may. Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel Will bear no colour for the thing he is, Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented, Would run to these and these extremities: And therefore think him as a serpent's egg Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous, And kill him in the shell.

Notes:
1. In the soliloquy, Brutus is pacing in his orchard and, under the influence of Cassius’ powers of persuasion, comes to the conclusion that Caesar’s rise to power Must be stopped
2. Though he loves Caesar and never has seen his reason swayed, Brutus is aware That absolute power corrupts absolutely And that Caesar as King and Emperor may Become like an “adder” a poisonous snake Threatening the newly established Roman Republic
3. Brutus concludes that, to protect Rome and Its people, Caesar must be killed before being Crowned—ie as an unhatched serpent’s egg.
• **Quote #2**

• **BRUTUS**
What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Caesar for their king.

• **CASSIUS**
Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

• **BRUTUS**
I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.

• Though Brutus says loves Caesar, he says he also fears that his friend will be crowned king, which goes against the ideals of the Roman Republic.

• Though Brutus, Cassius, and the fellow conspirators want to eliminate Caesar's threat, it's obvious that the commoners, or plebeians, adore Caesar.

• When Caesar returns from defeating Pompey in the first act, he's met with a huge celebration and is treated like a rock star.
• **Quote #3**
  
  Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
  Like a Colossus, and we petty men
  Walk under his huge legs and peep about
  To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

• **Speaker:** Cassius

  Cassius tries to convince Brutus that Caesar needs to be taken down, he conjures up a vivid image of the Roman leader as a "Colossus" – a giant statue

  Cassius knows another side of Caesar and is aware that not only is he not immortal, he is actually physical frail in certain ways. Moments before this, Cassius tells Brutus the story of how Caesar almost drowned as a young boy and how he once became so ill that he acted like a "sick girl."

  The play presents competing images of Caesar. Is he really an all-powerful figure, or is he made out to be a bigger threat than he really is?
Let me have men about me that are fat, Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights: Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look; He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

• **Speaker:** Caesar
• Caesar makes light of his desire to be surrounded by fat and complacent yes-men, yet he realizes this is necessary to the safety of his power.
• Caesar rightly fears Cassius (he is aware of what Cassius knows about him and that he might have reasons to resent him)
• Quote #5

**SOOTHSAYER**
Beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR**
He is a dreamer; let us leave him. Pass.

• Caesar is warned by the soothsayer to watch his back on March 15, but Caesar doesn't take the ominous warning seriously.

• Caesar was stabbed 33 times on March 15, so it's pretty clear to the audience that Caesar should heed this warning.

• And even though Caesar says a few moments later that he's wary of "lean and hungry" looking men like Cassius, it seems like his arrogance (hamartia) prevents him from taking the soothsayer's advice to heart.

• Caesar ignores warning signs – later, he ignores his own wife, who envisions his death in a prophetic dream.
Quote #6
Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

• As Cassius complains about Caesar's power, he claims that it's Rome's own fault for being servile to one man.
• Men, according to Cassius, are "masters of their fates," which means it's up to them to take down Caesar.
• This seems like a fine idea, but there's a lot of evidence in the play (like prophesies and omens that come true) that men don't have much control over their destinies
• **Quote #7**

Such men as he be never at heart's ease
While they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar. (1.2.13)

• *Caesar is referring to Cassius and the ways in which Cassius both envies and resents men “greater” than him (such as himself. This is what makes Cassius a danger to Caesar*

• *Caesar is utterly unashamed of his arrogance. He doesn't see his condescension as arrogance; instead it's a quality he has earned by proving himself a powerful man.*