English - Kirk

**Study Questions – Julius Caesar Acts 1, 2, and 3**

**ACT 1**

1. What purpose is served by postponing the introduction of the main characters of the play until the second scene? What essential information as to the immediate historical background is given in the first scene? What of importance is learned about Roman plebeians?
2. Describe the various elements that serve to characterize Caesar, Brutus, and Cassius in the first act and the total impression left of each character by the end of the act.
3. Discuss the importance and the thematic effect of the storm scene. What are the ways in which Shakespeare conveys the effects of the storm without depending on lighting or scenic supports?
4. Outline in detail the steps Cassius takes to involve Brutus in the conspiracy (his speeches to Brutus, to Casca, and to the others, his instructions). What do you take to be the major motives for his own role in the plot against Caesar?

**ACT 2**

1. Analyze in detail the argument Brutus builds up to persuade himself in his opening soliloquy. What are its convincing points and what are its weaknesses?
2. What is Brutus’ position among the conspirators? What specific indications are given of this?
3. What are the purposes served (dramatic and thematic) in introducing Portia and Ligarius at the end of the first scene?
4. What further features are added to Caesar’s characterization in the second scene to what has been shown earlier? How closely do they agree with what the conspirators have suggested in the previous scene?

**ACT 3**

1. Examine the details earlier in the play that contribute to give the soothsayer’s prophecy its cumulative effect. Why is this effect established?
2. How does Caesar lose our sympathy in the first scene? Why is this necessary?
3. What are the immediate effects of the assassination? What is Brutus’ response? What implications does this have for the future of the conspiracy?
4. Examine in detail Antony’s message to the conspirators. What does it indicate about Antony’s abilities and his probable course of conduct? How is this substantiated in what Antony actually says when he comes before the conspirators?