

Writing Assessment #2

**Making a Claim:
Brutus' Decision**

Brainstorm/Research

For this essay, I want you to choose a side before you begin your research.

Brutus was right

or

Brutus was wrong

For your side, complete a full chart of evidence. For the counterclaim, choose at least two pieces for your chart.

Brainstorm/Research T-chart

<p>Reasons that Brutus is correct to kill Caesar</p>	<p>Reasons that Brutus is wrong to kill Caesar</p>
<p>• Caesar demonstrates his ambitious power when he has Flavius and Murellus put to death (1.2.280-281).</p>	<p>• Brutus has no reason to hate or fear Caesar currently- he only fears what “might” happen and that Caesar might be dangerous if he were king (2.1.11-17).</p>

<p><u>Brutus DID the right thing...</u></p>		<p><u>Brutus DID NOT do the right thing...</u></p>	
<p>Think of the abuse of power</p> <p><u>Act 1, Scene 2</u> Lines 12-24 Lines 79-83 Lines 90-161</p>	<p>Lines 249-254 Lines 280-281</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Act 2, Scene 1</u> Lines 10-34 • <u>Act 3.1</u> Lines 99-117 • <u>Act 3.2</u> Brutus' funeral speech 	<p>Think of friendship and manipulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Act 1, Scene 2</u> Line 83-89 Lines 220-230 Lines 303-317 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Act 2, Scene 1</u> Lines 10-11 • <u>Act 3.2</u> Antony's funeral speech (start at line 72)

Organize Evidence

Using the reasons you came up with in your brainstorm, organize evidence to match your reasons. Here are some other possible reasons you may use. Remember, you need at least two pieces of evidence per reason.

Brutus was right when he decided to kill Caesar because:

- Caesar was dangerous for Rome
- Caesar's ambition caused harm to others
- Brutus could not allow a king in Rome

Brutus was wrong when he decided to kill Caesar because:

- Caesar was not truly ambitious
- Caesar was only kind to Brutus and never a threat
- Brutus was mainly convinced by people who were jealous of Caesar's power

Thesis Building

Brutus was right when he decided to kill Caesar because:

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THESIS FRAME:

- While __**(mention the other side)**__, in fact... **(write your claim statement)**
- Brutus __**(mention the other side)**__, but... **(write your claim statement)**

Write Your Introduction

Elements:

1. A hook- A way to engage your audience in the argument (Why is this important?)
2. The context of the argument: background, situation, people involved (What or who does this affect?)
3. Narrowing to your specific argument (What specifically will you be addressing? What will your argument be about (without making the claim)?)
4. Thesis (What are you claiming?)

Hooks

Common Hook Methods:

1. Ask a question
2. Use a few well-chosen words
3. Present a bold, challenging statement (shocker)
4. Use a teaser lead
5. Incorporate a quote

Introduction Building

- **Be sure to introduce the title of the play and the author**
 - The Tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare
- **Introduce the reader to the issue at hand**
 - Brutus killed Caesar
- **State your claim (thesis)**

Sample Introduction

Many think of tragedy as simply a series of bad events, but true tragedy is built when a character makes a mistaken decision. William Shakespeare's play, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, shows just this kind of mistaken decision making. From a number of characters from the title character, Caesar, to his betrayer, Brutus, the characters all have motivations that are not in their best interest or in the interest of their country. **Among these characters, Mark Antony initially seems to be the most heroic, especially because he is the apparent "winner" in the end of the play. However, while the character of Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* might seem heroic at first, his words and actions show that he does not care for his country or its people and that he only cares for revenge against those he holds responsible for Caesar's death.**

— Thesis

Write a Counter-Claim Paragraph

Elements:

1. **Antithesis** transition: “Some might claim” or “While opponents of this might say”
2. Antithesis Main Idea- What is one reason others may feel this way?
3. Antithesis Evidence- What is a piece of evidence that supports this claim? – quote from the text + Explanation
4. **Refutation**- How does this evidence not work or how is it in error?
5. A second Counter Claim Reason + Evidence and Explanation
6. Refute second counterclaim
7. *Transition back to your argument- counter-conclusion.*

Counter Claim Building

- This should be examining the other side of the issue.
 - If you said Brutus was right to kill Caesar, what might be a good reason he was wrong to kill Caesar?
- Sample sentence starters
 - Others may argue Brutus was _____ to kill Caesar because...
 - Some may point to _____ in the play to prove Brutus was _____ to kill Caesar.
 - Opponents may claim Brutus was correct/wrong in killing Caesar because...
- Remember that it really ended up Brutus vs. Antony, so make sure you discuss what this person said against your claim. Make sure you are citing your source!

Sample Counter Claim

Some might claim that Mark Antony's interests lie in the betterment of Rome, and he somehow prevents greater damage by inciting the people against Brutus and the conspirators. These readers would point to the moments in the play where Brutus might seem weak in his reasons for defeating Caesar. For example, when Brutus states "... and for my part, / I know no personal cause to spurn at him, / But for the general," it might reveal that he was demonstrating a flaw in his logic by assuming that Caesar is bad for the people of Rome (2.1.10-13). Or, readers might point to Mark Antony's arguments against Brutus in the funeral speech pointing out Caesar's lack of ambition for the crime for which Brutus claims to have killed him (3.2.84-92). Certainly, a reader arguing for Antony would point to the claim Antony makes that Brutus and the conspirators are selfish and ungrateful in the murder of Caesar (3.2.173-183). While these things at first make Antony's vengeance seem noble, it is in fact mostly Antony, and not the evidence of the story, who proclaims Brutus' action villainous and traitorous. In fact, Brutus' actions were primarily in the interest of Rome and its people.

Write a Support Paragraph

Elements:

1. **Main Idea**- in this case ,a statement about your thesis that makes that thesis seem true (this is your first reason from your claim)
2. **Clarify**- explain any difficult concepts or complex ideas presented in your main idea
3. **Evidence**- present the evidence you found that supports your reason.
4. **Explain**- explain in detail how this piece of evidence proves the reason
5. **Evidence**- present 2nd piece of evidence
6. **Explain**- explain how 2nd piece proves the reason is correct
7. **Redirect**- this connects your main idea to your thesis- How does what you said in this paragraph make your thesis more true?

Support Building

- Each support paragraph should focus on a REASON Brutus was correct or not correct in his decision to kill Caesar.
- Each reason should be supported by either a direct quote or a paraphrasing of specific events within in the play.
- It is important to note that the textual evidence is used as proof of the reason, NOT as the main focus of the paragraphs (the main focus should be your explanation **HOW** the evidence supports the reason and proves the claim).

Sample Evidence (Body) Paragraph

In contrast to Brutus, Mark Antony's decisions in the play are not made for the good of Rome. His primary focus is on violent and destructive vengeance. This vendetta is revealed most clearly when he curses Rome, "A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;/ Domestic fury and fierce civil strife/ Shall cumber all the parts of Italy (3.1.262-264)." In this statement Antony reveals that he intends to see Italy torn apart by civil war which demonstrates his disrespect for the society. This point is emphasized later in the play when he has riled up the people of Rome and says to himself, "Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,/ Take thou what course thou wilt!(3.2.256-257)." Once again he shows that he is against the good of Rome, particularly when he uses the word "mischief" to describe what he has created in the people. Clearly, Mark Antony shows no concern for Rome or patriotic duty, but instead focuses on his own personal vendetta against the murderers of his friend, Julius Caesar.

Building a Conclusion

- **The conclusion should...**
 - **State the thesis in a new way (If you wrote two versions of your thesis statement, you have this done already).**
 - **Review the key reasons that Brutus is correct/incorrect when he betrays and kills Caesar.**
 - **Provide a “so what” statement based on the importance of this conclusion- for the play or the world in general.**

Sample Conclusion

Based on the evidence of his own words and actions in the play, Mark Antony demonstrates that he is not in fact a hero in Julius Caesar but instead a vindictive and destructive character out for his own well-being and not that of his country. Mark Antony's heartless manipulation of the people of Rome and his focus only on the defeat of those who oppose him and those who betrayed Caesar, reveal the negative nature of his character. In this way, Shakespeare truly reveals that while a man may attain victory over those who oppose him, he is not always honorable for doing so.