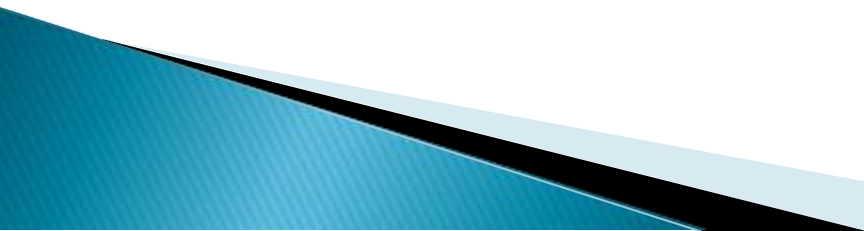


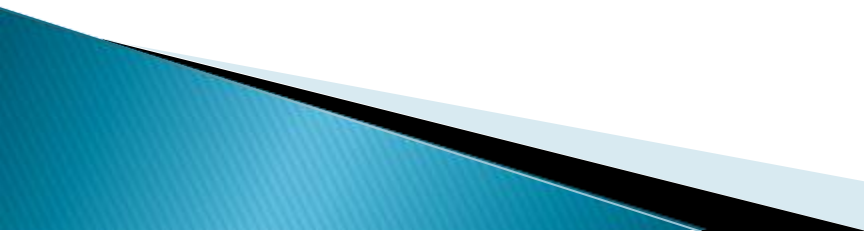
A brief history of Julius Caesar



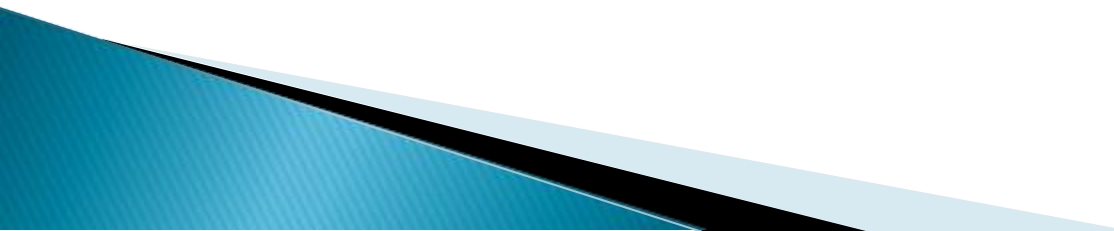
Background

- ▶ For centuries, Romans debated—and fought civil wars—trying to decide whether a monarchy, republic, or dictatorship was the best form of government
 - ▶ Rome was a monarchy until 509 BC, then it became a Republic
 - ▶ By 100 BC Rome was a democracy ruled by a Senate
 - ▶ In 60 BC a triumvirate was formed: Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey
- 

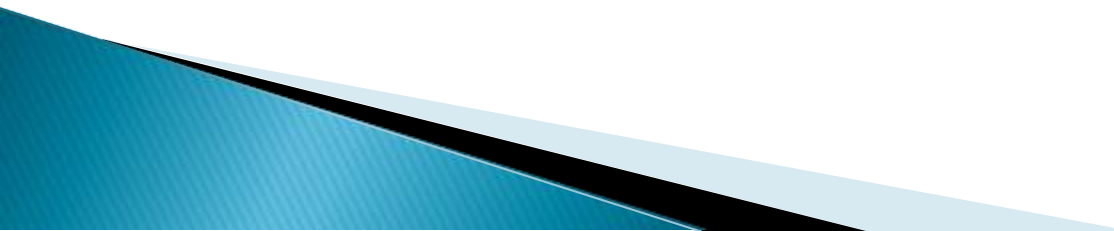
Caesar's conquests

- ▶ 58 BC—Caesar was made governor of Gaul
 - ▶ At the age of 44, he began a 10-year conquest to capture all of Gaul
 - ▶ Crassus killed in battle
 - ▶ Trouble between Caesar and Pompey
 - ▶ Pompey jealous; Senate ordered Caesar to return to Rome
 - ▶ Caesar defeated Pompey (crossing the Rubicon) and made himself ruler of Rome
 - ▶ Pompey fled to Greece, then Egypt and was murdered
- 

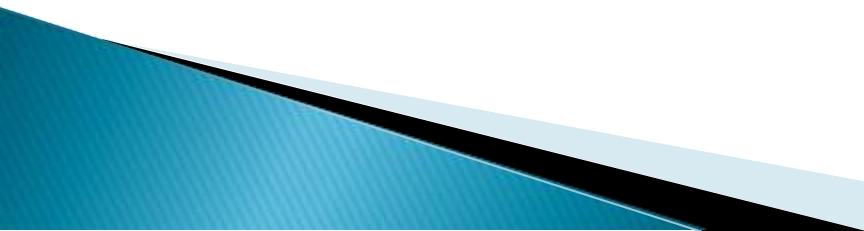
The good guy

- ▶ Introduced a new calendar
 - ▶ Extended the Roman republic
 - ▶ Built roads
 - ▶ Gifted military leader
 - ▶ July
- 

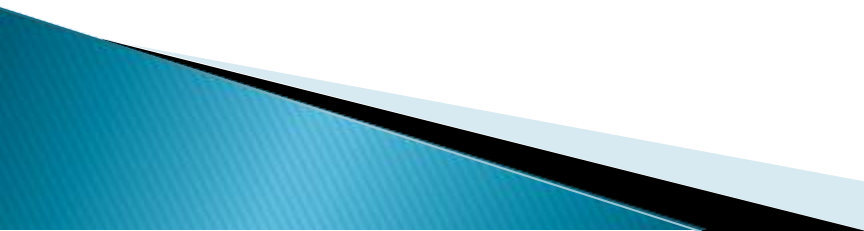
Caesar, absolute ruler

- ▶ Three years later, Caesar defeated Pompey's two sons
 - ▶ Caesar was dictator for life but he wanted to be king
 - ▶ Undisputed leader of the entire Roman world
 - ▶ This is where Shakespeare begins the play
- 

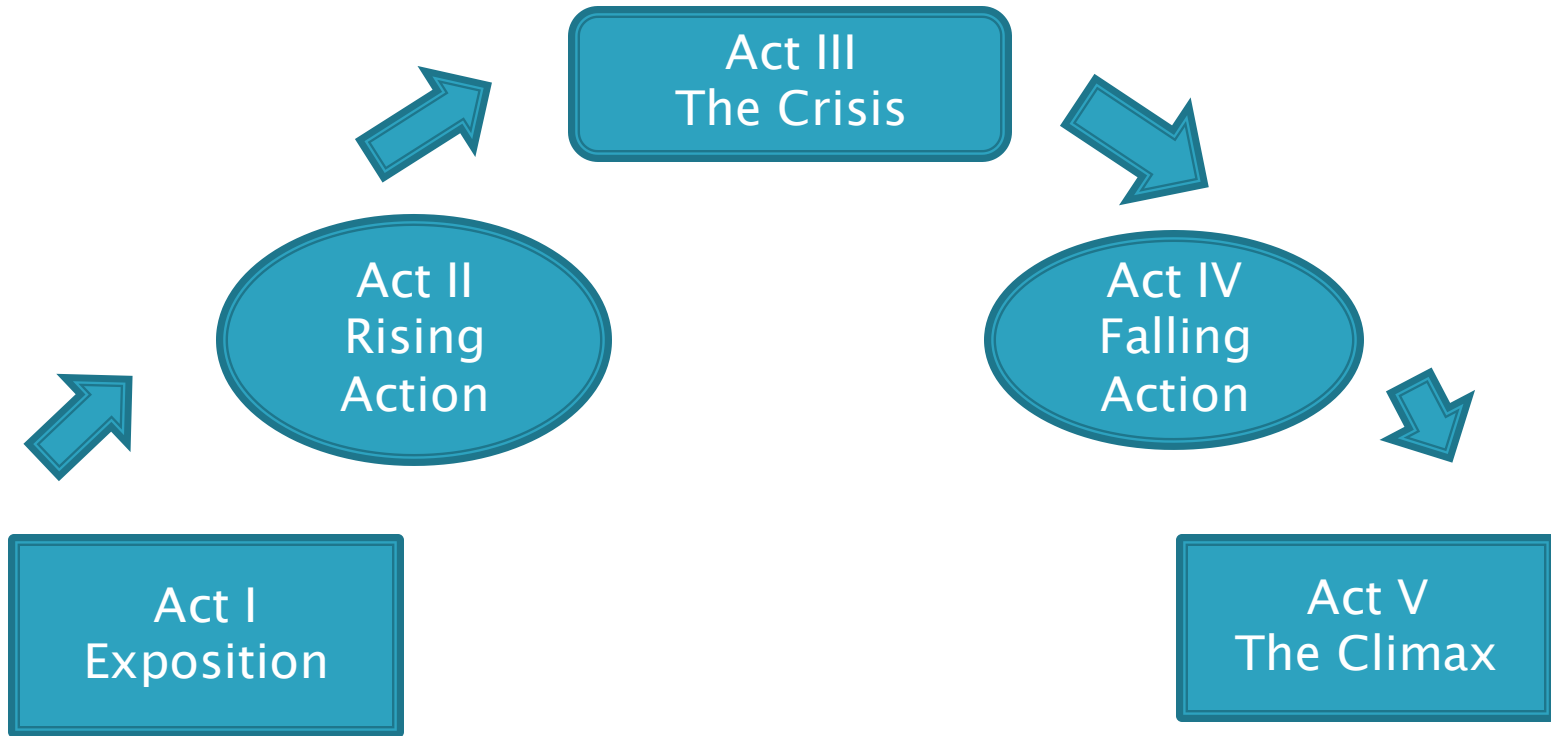
Tragedy

- ▶ Shakespeare wrote comedies, histories, and tragedies
 - ▶ Tragic hero is debatable—could be Caesar or Brutus
 - ▶ Political play—political issues are the root of the tragic conflict in the play
 - ▶ Beware the ides of March! Caesar's death ultimately led to the end of the 450-year Roman republic
- 

Why Shakespeare wrote it

- ▶ Connection to politics of his modern world: good government must be based on morality
 - ▶ Brief overview of his world: War of the Roses (civil war); Tudors/King Henry VIII—lots of fighting; Queen Elizabeth I (golden age)
 - ▶ Wrote this at the end of her reign because she had not named a successor and English people were worried about returning to political strife
- 

Shakespeare's Tragedy



Reminders about tragedies

- ▶ Plays that tell of a reversal of fortune experienced by a character usually of noble birth
- ▶ Hero displays a tragic flaw, a characteristic that brings about his downfall
- ▶ Shakespeare emphasizes the hero's internal conflict
- ▶ Five acts
- ▶ Written in blank verse—unrhymed iambic pentameter
 - “upper class” characters speak in iambic pentameter; “lower class” characters speak in prose

Elements of a Shakespearean tragedy

▶ Element 1: The tragic hero

- A “great” man—not a peasant, usually nobility
- Contributes to his own destruction by a character flaw
- Generally considered a “good” character

▶ Element 2: The tragic flaw

- The quality within the tragic hero which leads to his downfall
- The flaw often takes the form of obsession

▶ Element 3: The tragic story

- The tragic story leads up to the death of the hero
- The calamities of a tragedy do not simply happen; they proceed mainly from actions of men.
- Tragic heroes are responsible for the calamity of their falls.
- The hero recognizes his own responsibility too late.

Continued...

- ▶ **Element 4: The abnormal, supernatural, fate/fortune/chance**
 - Ghosts and witches
 - Chance influences some of the action
- ▶ **Element 5: Tragic conflicts**
 - External—the hero and another character
 - Internal—the hero is torn by an inward struggle
- ▶ **Element 6: Tragic structure**
 - Exposition, rising action, falling action, resolution