

B.A. Part I  
Subsidiary English  
Paper - II

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In a most colourful manner, Shakespeare draws the character of Brutus. He is the central figure of the drama "Julius Caesar". From beginning to the end, he dominates the plot of the play. Caesar is such a man of action who does nothing in the play while Brutus is such a man of thought who does everything in the drama.

→ Brutus is the sincerest and the noblest character in the play. He is tender and true, gentle and generous, sweet and innocent, loving and affectionate. Whatever be his political misdeeds, they are simply the result of his very innocence.

→ A loving husband, a courteous friend and a kind master! -  
Brutus is a loving husband. He is deeply attached to his wife Portia. His love for her is mingled with respect. He is deeply shocked to get the news of his wife's death. Portia claims to be an equal partner-in-life with her husband. She tells him she is not there merely to "keep with him at his meals, comfort his bed, and talk to him sometimes."



She asserts her right to know all that concerns her husband in his private, personal as well as political life. As long as Brutus does not unfold his secrets to her, she does not get peace, and feels awfully restless. She claims to be soul-mate of Brutus.

Brutus is also a courteous friend. Among the other Kingsmen, it is Brutus who gets much respect and belief in the heart of Caesar. Not only King and Kingsmen, but ordinary Romans too give him proper respect and obey his orders. It is due to his love for Romans and his family history in the sacrifice <sup>for</sup> of Romans. He traced his descent from Brutus who had driven out the tyrant Tarquins from Rome centuries ago.

Brutus is also a kind master. He calls his servant, finds him asleep and so does not want to disturb him. He does not want to be a strict disciplinarian to his night watchman at the cost of his convenience. He goes to the extent of apologizing to his servant, Lucius, who he thinks has misplaced his book when he finds it in his own pocket.

→ Love of music and study :- Brutus is a bookish person. He likes to study. In the beginning we find that he passes his time in study chambers. He also likes music. Cassius also puts a letter to his study table because he knows his study habits.



**His patriotism :-** The prominent point in the character of Brutus is his passion for patriotism. He is genuinely in love with liberty. He loves Rome above everything else. He himself tells us that he killed Caesar not because he loved Caesar less but because he loved Rome more.

For his master passion, which is patriotism, Brutus sacrifices everything - his friends, his wife, his philosophy, and even the peace of his mind.

→ **His Republicanism :-** Brutus is a republican first and everything else next. He is a staunch believer in Republicanism. He hates to hear the very name of 'King' in Rome. Tyranny, in any shape or form, he can not endure. Fearing tyranny might establish, he does not hesitate to rebel against the king, Caesar. He murders his personal friend Caesar so that Republicanism might establish.

→ **His humanitarianism :-** Most appealing is the humanitarian and sympathetic side of the character of Brutus. He kills Caesar, but weeps for having done so. He does not kill Antony for he does not want to shed innocent blood. He wants no blood-bath. His sympathy is with the common people of Rome for whose well-being he does everything.

### → A Political Theorist :-

His idealism makes Brutus a political theorist - pure and simple. It makes him unfit, rather unfit, to be a practical political leader of opposition. He is incapable of judging men, motives and matters concerning politics. He has no craft, no cunning, no 'hide and seek' in nature. He therefore commits more than many mistakes. Being what he is, he could not suit means to ends. He wishes if it were possible to destroy Caesarism without killing Caesar. What a wish!

Here he is politically wrong. But he is humanly right. So Brutus is more of a philosopher and less of a politician.

### → Less Impressive Orator than Antony :-

Both Brutus and Antony are the two leading and dominant characters of the play Julius Caesar and are the leaders of their respective parties in peace as well as in war. In spite of it Brutus is less impressive orator than Antony. After the killing of Caesar, both Brutus and Antony, get opportunity to address the mob. Brutus misunderstands the mind of the Roman mob. He thinks that the mob thinks and he fails. Where as Antony is the master of mass-psychology. He knows well that he must appeal to the emotions, passions and self-interests of the mob. So, he



succeeds. The speech of Brutus is in prose and that of Antony is in verse. Thus, Brutus, as an orator, dwindles into insignificance when compared with Antony.

### → Brutus and Cassius : A Comparison

Brutus and Cassius both are in favour of Republicans and fight against Caesar and Caesarism. Both want to do away with dictatorial rule or rule of one man in Rome. In spite of it there is much difference between them.

- Brutus is an airy idealist. He dwells in the realm of ideas and dreams. Where as Cassius is a staunch realist. He grips well the realities of life.
- Brutus is moved by pure patriotism while Cassius's patriotism is based on personal motives.
- Brutus murders Caesar not because he loves Caesar less but because he loves Rome more. He has no personal grudge against Caesar. Whereas Cassius is jealous of Caesar, of his greatness and of his growing power. He kills him because he bears a personal grudge against Caesar.
- Brutus wants to moralize politics. He tries to mingle politics and morality. He hesitates to adopt questionable means for the achievement of his ends. Cassius, on the other hand, realizes the fact that there can be

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

no compromise between politics and morality. Brutus makes mistake in not killing Antony along with Caesar. He makes a still greater mistake by allowing him to give a funeral speech. Cassius here gave the sound advice in doing just the otherwise. In these matters, Brutus was wrong and Cassius right. If Cassius would have been the leader of the conspiracy, the Republicans would not have been defeated.

Thus, Brutus is the most important character in Julius Caesar. He is a good, noble and magnanimous soul. He can not think of the baser things of life. Even his enemy, Antony praises him for his patriotism. Antony, his worst enemy, says that Brutus was the most selfless patriot among all the conspirators. Regarding Brutus, the great critic Morton Luce says, "Caesar may live in our wonder and astonishment but Brutus in our hearts - his is the crowning position at the close."