

I am cutting this scene so my 4th grade students will be successful at performing the famous assassination scene in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

ACT 3, SCENE 1. ROME. BEFORE THE CAPITAL.

A crowd of people; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer. Flourish. Enter CAESAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, and others

I cut these characters because: 1) their lines did not advance the story I am trying to tell, 2) the lines were duplicates of other characters' lines, or 3) the character had no lines in my final version.

CAESAR

[To the Soothsayer] The ides of March are come.

Soothsayer

Ay, Caesar; but not gone.

I highlighted famous lines I wanted to keep in yellow.

ARTEMIDORUS

Hail, Caesar! read this schedule.

DECIUS BRUTUS

Trebonius doth desire you to o'erread,
At your best leisure, this his humble suit.

I cut these lines to get the action of the scene going right away!

ARTEMIDORUS

O Caesar, read mine first; for mine's a suit
That touches Caesar nearer: read it, great Caesar.

CAESAR

What touches us ourself shall be last served.

ARTEMIDORUS

Delay not, Caesar; read it instantly.

CAESAR

What, is the fellow mad?

PUBLIUS

Sirrah, give place.

CASSIUS

What, urge you your petitions in the street?
Come to the Capitol.

CAESAR goes up to the Senate-House

As I cut the scene, I had to imagine how I would direct the scene - which characters cross the stage with Caesar and which characters stay behind to talk about Caesar's Death.

POPILIUS

I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

CASSIUS

What enterprise, Popilius?

POPILIUS

Fare you well. Advances to CAESAR



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BRUTUS

What said Popilius Lena?

CASSIUS

He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.
I fear our purpose is discovered.

BRUTUS

Look, how he makes to Caesar; mark him.

CASSIUS

~~Casca, be sudden, for we fear prevention.~~
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,
Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,
For I will slay myself.

BRUTUS

Cassius, be constant:
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

CASSIUS

~~Trebonius knows his time; for, look you, Brutus.~~
~~He draws Mark Antony out of the way.~~

Exeunt ANTONY and TREBONIUS

This line was cut because it refers to a subplot from a conversation in an earlier scene that Casca will be the first to stab Caesar.

DECIUS BRUTUS

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go,
And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.

BRUTUS

He is address'd: press near and second him.

CINNA

Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.

CAESAR

Are we all ready? What is now amiss
That Caesar and his senate must redress?

METELLUS CIMBER

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
An humble heart,-- *Kneeling*

CAESAR

I must prevent thee, Cimber.
~~These couchings and these lowly courtesies~~
~~Might fire the blood of ordinary men;~~
~~And turn pre-ordinance and first decree~~
~~Into the law of children. Be not fond,~~
~~To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood~~
~~That will be thaw'd from the true quality~~
~~With that which melteth fools; I mean, sweet words,~~
~~Low-crooked court'sies and base spaniel-fawning.~~
Thy brother by decree is banished:
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.

I cut Anthony and Trebonius from the scene because they are part of another subplot which is the power struggle between Brutus and Anthony and is not part of the assassination story I am wanting to tell.

I cut this speech down to these three lines of blank verse that are the heart of Caesar's response to Metellus Cimber kneeling in front of him.

Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied.

METELLUS CIMBER

Is there no voice more worthy than my own
To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear
For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

BRUTUS

I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar;
Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may
Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

CAESAR

What, Brutus!

CASSIUS

Pardon, Caesar; Caesar, pardon:
As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,
To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CAESAR

I could be well moved, if I were as you:
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me:
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,
They are all fire and every one doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place:
So in the world: 'tis furnish'd well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaken of motion: and that I am he,
Let me a little show it, even in this;
That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,
And constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA

O Caesar,--

CAESAR

Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DECIUS BRUTUS

Great Caesar,--

CAESAR

Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

CASCA

Speak, hands for me!

I want to add tension to the scene so having Brutus jump in immediately to distract Caesar helps the audience know that the assassins are nervous.

These 3 lines of blank verse are the heart of Caesar's thoughts and are famous. I justify the cut at "stars" (mid thought) because I will have Cinna interrupt Caesar speech. Once again I want the nervousness of the assassins to be clear to the audience.

CASCA first, then the other Conspirators and BRUTUS stab CAESAR

These highlighted lines are all famous lines in the play.

CAESAR

Et tu, Brute! Then fall, Caesar. Dies

CINNA

Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

CASSIUS

Some to the common pulpits, and cry out
'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'

BRUTUS

People and senators, be not affrighted;
Fly not; stand stiff: ambition's debt is paid.

CASCA

Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

DECIUS BRUTUS

And Cassius too.

BRUTUS

Where's Publius?

CINNA

Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

METELLUS CIMBER

Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar's
Should chance--

BRUTUS

Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer;
There is no harm intended to your person,
Nor to no Roman else: so tell them, Publius.

CASSIUS

And leave us, Publius; lest that the people,
Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.

BRUTUS

Do so: and let no man abide this deed,
But we the doers.

Re-enter TREBONIUS

CASSIUS

Where is Antony?

TREBONIUS

Fled to his house amazed:
Men, wives and children stare, cry out and run
As it were doomsday.

BRUTUS

Fates, we will know your pleasures:
That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.

CASSIUS

Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

BRUTUS

Grant that, and then is death a benefit:
So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:

This is an example of an unusual cut that allows me to keep the famous lines. I can justify cutting in the middle of a blank verse line because Brutus' line becomes a shared-line with Decius Brutus' line

*Decius Brutus: "And Cassius too."
Brutus: "Stoop, Romans, stoop."*

Together they maintain the iambic pentameter (if Brutus takes a small pause before he says "Stoop, Romans, stoop...").

Additionally, I removed this subplot where the assassins' worries about how the public will react to Caesar's death. These lines set-up the famous eulogies in the second half of this scene. Once again I want my cutting to tell only the story of the assassination.

Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!'

CASSIUS

Stoop, then, and wash. How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

BRUTUS

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along
No worthier than the dust!

CASSIUS

So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be call'd
The men that gave their country liberty.

DECIUS BRUTUS

What, shall we forth?

CASSIUS

Ay, every man away:
Brutus shall lead; and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

Cutting the rest of the scene makes sense to the story I am telling because Cassius' line marks the end of the assignation plot. The entrance of the servant introduces the next section of the scene - the public orations.

Enter a Servant

BRUTUS

Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

Servant

Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel:
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down;
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say:
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest;
Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving:
Say I love Brutus, and I honour him;
Say I fear'd Caesar, honour'd him and loved him.



