

# Teaching Pack: *Antony and Cleopatra*

Cambridge IGCSE™ / IGCSE (9–1)

Literature in English 0475 / 0992

Cambridge O Level  
Literature in English 2010

For examination from 2025–2026



© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2025 v1

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.  
Cambridge University Press & Assessment is a department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment retains the copyright on all its publications. Registered centres are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use. However, we cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within a centre.

---

# Contents

---

Introduction .....	4
1. Text summary .....	6
2. Character summaries and quotations.....	10
3. Character summaries and quotations.....	16
4. Reflection and activities .....	20
5. Quiz .....	24
Quiz answers .....	26

## Introduction

---

This *Teaching Pack* supports teachers and learners when studying Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9-1) and O Level Literature in English set texts.

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

Teachers may use this teaching pack to engage their learners when introducing a set text, or as a revision tool.

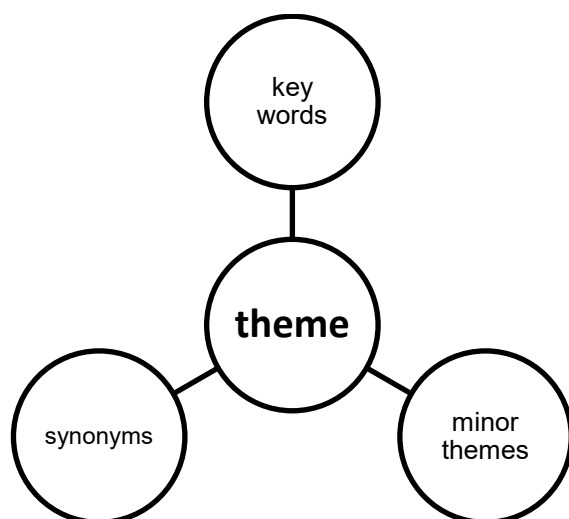
The content of these set text resources will need to be expanded on to cover what candidates are expected to know and be able to comment on in an examination.

To increase learners' understanding and appreciation of the set text we recommend learners to set up a **reading log**, which could include:

- brief synopses of chapters/acts (in no more than a couple of sentences in their own words)
- a timeline of events (useful when a narrative is arranged non-chronologically)
- a list or diagram of characters and their relationships with each other
- first impressions of main characters
- initial thoughts about the main themes or ideas in the text.

The key words we use for the themes in this *Teaching Pack* are not exhaustive.

We suggest teachers discuss synonyms and alternative key words for themes that are identified for a text. Create key major theme mind maps and then from each of those key themes map connected and subsidiary/minor themes.



## Animation videos

This *Teaching Pack* can be used with the videos which were produced using the software *Video Scribe* [www.videoscribe.co/en/](http://www.videoscribe.co/en/), but a range of other alternative animation and storyboarding tools may equally be used:

- [www.storyboardthat.com](http://www.storyboardthat.com)  
Online digital storytelling tool – free and pay for subscriptions available
- <https://wonderunit.com/storyboarder/>  
Storyboarding software – free to download, but has to be installed
- [www.powtoon.com/edu-home/](http://www.powtoon.com/edu-home/)  
Online video and animation creation – free and pay for subscriptions
- [www.animaker.com](http://www.animaker.com)  
Online animated video creator – free and pay for subscriptions
- [https://goanimate4schools.com/public\\_index](https://goanimate4schools.com/public_index)  
Online storyboard, scene and video creation tool – pay for subscription
- <http://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/>  
Downloadable and app-based tools for creating comic books
- [www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html](http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html)  
A tool for creating multimedia presentations
- <https://products.office.com/en-gb/powerpoint>  
Microsoft PowerPoint for simple presentations as well as more complex multimedia presentations.

The teaching pack and videos aim to help learners to understand and think about the key events and themes of the text, key quotations and their meanings, the significance of character behaviour, relationships and actions and how characters are depicted in the set text being studied.

## Lesson resources



Included in this pack are some resources to use with your learners. You may ask your learners to create their own worksheets similar to these, around another text, which they are studying:

**Character summaries and quotations** – learners create their own character summaries including quotations.

**Character animations** – after watching the animation, learners can work in pairs to fill in the blank worksheet.

**Reflection** – after reading the text / watching the videos, learners reflect, consider and explore.

**Quiz** – a fun quiz to test the learners' knowledge of the text before or after watching the videos.

## 1. Text summary

Some of the themes Shakespeare explores include:

- love
- honour and duty
- betrayal
- politics and power
- the contrast between reason and emotion
- the conflict between Rome and Egypt

*Antony and Cleopatra* is a tragedy set in ancient Rome and Egypt. It is a few years after the assassination of Julius Caesar by Brutus and Cassius, who intended to protect the Roman Republic, but who were then defeated by Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar, Julius Caesar's great-nephew. Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar join with Lepidus to form a triumvirate which governs the Roman Empire.

When *Antony and Cleopatra* begins, instead of diligently governing in Rome, Antony is in Egypt embarking on a scandalous love affair with Cleopatra, the exotic Queen of Egypt. Octavius Caesar calls on Antony to do his duty to the Roman state – to leave Cleopatra in Egypt and to return to help defend Rome against an increasingly powerful enemy, the pirate Pompey. Antony is torn between love and duty.

### Act 1

In Cleopatra's palace in Egypt, two of Antony's Roman soldiers complain that their general is infatuated with Cleopatra and neglecting his duties of state. Antony ignores a messenger from Rome, declaring he will stay in Egypt because of his love for Cleopatra. Cleopatra asks a fortune-teller about her future and complains that Antony is concerned about events in Rome. Antony receives four messengers in sequence and learns that his wife, Fulvia, and his brother, rebelled against Caesar, then that they were defeated, then that they are dead; also, that Rome is under an increasing threat from Pompey, as his pirates assert control on the seas. Antony acknowledges that his neglect of Rome has contributed to these disasters. He tells his loyal officer Enobarbus that he will do his duty, tear himself away from Cleopatra and return to Rome. Cleopatra tries to get Antony to stay, by pretending to be ill and accusing him of not loving her; he declares his love but insists on going to Rome.

In Rome, Caesar criticises Antony's weakness in choosing a life of revelry with Cleopatra rather than of service to the state. When he and Lepidus receive urgent news of Pompey's increasing power, Caesar blames Antony's absence and wishes he was there to contribute his extensive military experience to the triumvirate's strategy. Caesar and Lepidus make plans to wage battle against Pompey.

Back in Egypt, Cleopatra thinks of Antony and longs for him to return; a messenger brings her a pearl from Antony and promises of gifts of whole kingdoms.

**Act 2**

In Sicily, Pompey feels certain of victory over a divided triumvirate; he is in control of the seas and Antony is in Egypt. Pompey is wary of Antony, due to his military victories. Then he hears Antony is in Rome, and he fears the triumvirate will unite.

In Rome, the triumvirs meet. Caesar complains that Antony encouraged Fulvia to rebel, ignored his messengers and broke his vow to give him military support. Antony denies acting against Caesar and apologises for his neglect. Lepidus keeps the peace. Antony agrees to marry Caesar's sister, Octavia, to cement the bond between Caesar and Antony. They agree to join their forces to fight against Pompey.

Enobarbus describes the first meeting between Antony and Cleopatra, when she dramatically arrived by river on her barge, enchanting Antony; he predicts Antony will never leave her.

Meanwhile, a messenger tells Cleopatra the unwelcome news that he has married Octavia. She is so angry that she hits the messenger and threatens him with a knife. She demands to know what Octavia is like.

In Italy, Caesar asks Pompey to accept peace terms. Pompey would have agreed their terms – rule over Sicily and Sardinia, paying tax to Rome and ridding the sea of pirates – except he feels angry at Antony's ingratitude for his befriending of Antony's mother when she visited Sicily. So, Antony thanks him, Pompey accepts peace terms and invites the triumvirs to dine on his ship. Enobarbus believes Antony will soon return to Cleopatra. The triumvirate enjoy Pompey's hospitality, while Menas secretly offers to kill them, thus giving Pompey victory; but Pompey refuses, saying his honour won't let him agree to this – although he does wish Menas had killed them without telling him beforehand.

Later, Menas deserts Pompey.

The triumvirs depart.

**Act 3**

When Antony and Octavia arrive in Athens, Antony complains to her about Caesar: he has broken the treaty to fight against Pompey and publicly criticised Antony. She begs for peace, offers to act as intermediary and departs for Rome; but Antony gets ready for war, blaming Caesar. A soldier, Eros, tells Enobarbus of Caesar's victory over Pompey using Lepidus's forces, then Caesar accuses Lepidus of treason and imprisons him. Antony's fleet of ships is made ready for battle against Caesar.

In Rome, Caesar publicly censures Antony for awarding Cleopatra various kingdoms and complains that Antony is accusing him of not sharing the spoils of war, of keeping Antony's ships and of imprisoning Lepidus. Caesar told Antony that Lepidus had become too cruel, and offered to give Antony some of his winnings if Antony gave him half of his, but Maecenas says Antony will never agree. Octavia arrives, but Caesar is angry that Antony has disrespected her because her retinue is not grand enough for his sister. Caesar informs her that Antony has returned to Cleopatra and tells her to be patient.

In his camp in Actium, Antony decides to fight Caesar at sea, with Cleopatra's support. Antony's generals think this unwise, as he is stronger on land, and are concerned about Cleopatra's influence. Antony naively challenges Caesar to single combat, which he rejects. A sea battle ensues. Enobarbus grimly tells of how

Cleopatra's ships turn and flee, followed by Antony. Their retreat shames Antony's soldiers and prompts Candidius to defect to Caesar, but Enobarbus remains loyal.

Ashamed, Antony advises his troops to abandon him, to take his treasure and flee. Cleopatra begs forgiveness, and Antony forgives her. He asks Caesar to let him live in Egypt with Cleopatra, who asks for her sons to be allowed to rule. Caesar refuses Antony's request but agrees to Cleopatra's, if she turns Antony out of Egypt or kills him. On hearing Caesar's reply, Antony angrily challenges him again to single combat. Caesar's messenger Thidias visits Cleopatra to say that Caesar will protect her, if she gives up Antony; she seems amenable. Antony is furious, orders Thidias to be whipped and accuses Cleopatra of betrayal. She swears her loyalty, and Antony accepts. He is set on a final battle with Caesar to the death, but Enobarbus believes defeat is inevitable and Antony has lost his judgement.

#### Act 4

Caesar mocks Antony's challenge and confidently prepares his troops to fight.

Antony wants to regain honour in the coming fight with Caesar. He thanks his servants for their service and hints at his possible death. Enobarbus says this distresses the troops, so he cheers them up by promising victory; but soldiers hear strange music, an omen that the god Hercules is now abandoning Antony.

The next day, Eros and Cleopatra help Antony put on his armour. He regrets fighting Caesar at sea earlier. He is shocked by Enobarbus's desertion but tells Eros to send Enobarbus's possessions to him with gifts and friendly messages.

Caesar orders Antony to be captured alive and battle to begin. Enobarbus receives his treasure from Antony. He feels so guilty at his treachery that he wants to die.

Unexpectedly, Antony's troops force Agrippa, Caesar's officer, to retreat with his men. Antony and Scarus are triumphant and boast of victory. Antony thanks his men and greets Cleopatra, who promises him a suit of gold armour. They all celebrate.

Caesar's camp is contrastingly quiet that night. Some watchmen are considering their defeat that day, when they find a grief-stricken Enobarbus, who dies in anguish.

Caesar initiates the next battle, by sea. There are bad omens about Cleopatra's ships. Antony enters and says all is lost; Cleopatra has betrayed him and his fleet has surrendered. He vows to kill her in revenge. She locks herself in her monument and sends a message to Antony that she has committed suicide, hoping he will calm down; but he is distraught when he hears of her death. He vows to join her and beg her pardon. He asks Eros to fulfil his pledge and kill him, but he is horrified and kills himself instead. Antony then falls on his own sword but fails to kill himself outright. A messenger tells Antony that Cleopatra is alive, and he is taken to her, where he tragically dies in her arms. Cleopatra faints, then mourns, feeling she is nothing without him. She determines to follow the honourable Roman custom and kill herself.



**Act 5**

Caesar hears that Antony has honourably committed suicide. He then praises Antony in tribute, referring to him as his brother and equal. He offers reassurance to Cleopatra's messenger that she will be treated with honour. He tells Proculeius to go to her to prevent her suicide, because he wants to take her to Rome in his triumph.

Proculeius greets Cleopatra politely and asks for her requests. She is suspicious but asks that her son rule Egypt. Proculeius reassures her and tells her to ask Caesar. Soldiers guard her meanwhile. She draws a dagger but is disarmed. Dolabella sympathises and confirms that Caesar intends to parade her in triumph through Rome. Caesar arrives and is courteous. She lists her wealth – but she has only included half. Caesar says he is her friend, she may keep her money and he will grant her requests. When he leaves, she tells her maids how he plots her humiliation, and so she plans her dignified and honourable suicide. A guard brings a basket of figs concealing poisonous snakes. She puts on her regal robes and crown. The asp bites her when she puts them to her breast, and she dies.

Caesar returns, discovers her body, and formally laments her death. He honours her by arranging her burial next to Antony, then considers the glory due to him as the one who defeated them.

## 2. Character summaries and quotations

---

### Mark Antony

Antony has extensive military experience and is a Roman war hero. Earlier, he defeated Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar and so became co-ruler of the Roman Empire, alongside Lepidus and Octavius Caesar. He derives much of his sense of honour from his bravery and his heroic reputation makes him popular amongst both his troops and ordinary Roman citizens. This makes his defeat by Caesar (due to the retreat of Cleopatra's ships) even more demoralising for his troops and utterly shameful for himself. His infatuation with Cleopatra makes him trust her but leads to his defeat. That he trusts her twice and she lets him down twice shows both his weakness as a man of reason and the strength of his love for her.

When the play opens, Antony is being criticised for ignoring Caesar's repeated calls to return and help deal with Pompey. He is seen by Roman citizens and some soldiers as weakly acquiescing to his infatuation with a glamorous foreigner Cleopatra, instead of being the expected war hero who protects Rome. Antony realises the gravity of the situation in Rome and that his help is needed; but he is extremely torn between his emotions and love for Cleopatra and his reason and his sense of duty to the Roman state. He still sees himself very much as a brave Roman hero, but his honour is damaged by rumours of him abandoning Rome and becoming weakened by his infatuation for an erotic Egyptian queen and his indulgent life of pleasure in Egypt. Once he manages to reject Cleopatra's many and varied pleas for him to stay, he goes to Rome and shows statesmanlike qualities in applying himself to politics and achieving short-term success. He repairs relationships with fellow triumvirs and cements these links by making a strategic marriage to Octavia, Caesar's sister. His great reputation and his presence at negotiations is key to Pompey agreeing to a peace treaty. Caesar expects Antony to maintain a civilised Roman life with Octavia – but his desire for Cleopatra and thoughts of his pleasurable life living in luxury in Alexandria, mean that he soon returns to Egypt. That his thoughts have been on Cleopatra is shown by her receiving gifts from him, such as the pearl, and promises of being given kingdoms. An officer, Enobarbus, describes how Antony was enchanted by his first sight of Cleopatra as she dramatically sailed to him on her barge. Enobarbus believes Antony will never leave her.

Antony is shrewdly already aware that the triumvirate is no longer holding together, because of Caesar's offensive acts and insults towards him and he suspects that Caesar is gathering support and power for himself, but he is still surprised by how quickly he breaks the treaty with Pompey and how ruthlessly he disposes of Lepidus. This prompts Antony to prepare for a decisive war against Caesar.

Antony is well-trusted, admired and liked by his soldiers, and many of them are his friends, such as Enobarbus, Candidius and Eros. He respects his soldiers and treats them well; he makes rousing speeches and ensures they are well-fed. Increasingly angry at news of Caesar's speedy war preparations, he decides to fight Caesar at sea, with his forces joined by Cleopatra's fleet. This is a bad plan. Antony's generals advise against combat at sea; he has more experience of land battles, and his land forces are greater in number. However, he obstinately insists on a sea battle, perhaps because Cleopatra is able to take part with her 60 ships. Antony is defeated when Cleopatra's ships turn and flee, and Antony follows her.

Antony is deeply ashamed of the dishonourable defeat, as are his troops; Candidius and others defect to Caesar in disgust, and Antony even advises them to leave with his treasure. Cleopatra is forgiven by Antony. He is furious when she seems to be considering Caesar's offer of protection if she gives up Antony, but when she swears loyalty to him, he forgives her again. Antony has also shown poor judgement in twice challenging Caesar to single combat when there is no reason for Caesar to risk accepting. Antony's generals consider he has lost his reason, a view reinforced

when Antony is set on another battle with Caesar, this time on land. Enobarbus believes defeat is inevitable, and he too defects to Caesar. Antony's generosity to his soldiers and friends is shown when he sends Enobarbus his belongings, with gifts and best wishes.

After an initial unexpected victory, Antony again fights Caesar at sea, and predictably to everyone except Antony, again Cleopatra's ships retreat, leading to a final defeat for Antony, who this time furiously blames Cleopatra for her betrayal. She tries to deflect his anger by pretending to kill herself, but this backfires when Antony is so despairing at apparently losing her, as well as the dishonour of his defeat, that he tragically commits suicide, claiming by that act of bravery to regain his honour as a Roman. Cleopatra's grief at his death and her feeling that she is nothing without him suggest that her love for him is true.

After Antony's death, when he can no longer challenge Caesar's power, Caesar publicly pays excessive tribute to Antony, describing him as his brother and equal. Antony certainly had the expertise, experience and following to continue as co-ruler of the Empire, and he had accurately anticipated Caesar's ambition. His relationship with Cleopatra drew criticism from Rome, diverted his attention from his civic duties there, and impaired his military judgement. But his love for her was returned, and they certainly enjoyed a pleasurable life in luxury at her palace and shared a love so strong that each killed themselves rather than live a life without the other.

Quotation	This suggests...
<i>'a strumpet's fool'</i> Act 1, Scene 1, line 13	...that Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra has made a fool of him.
<i>'Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch Of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space.'</i> Act 1, Scene 1, lines 33–34	...how Antony is torn between his love for Cleopatra and his duty to Rome.
<i>'These strong Egyptian fetters I must break, Or lose myself in dotage.'</i> Act 1, Scene 2, lines 113–114	First, Antony speaks to Cleopatra, suggesting the strength of his love for her in that he will let Rome disappear and the Empire fall rather than leave her, because his home is with her. Then Antony speaks to Caesar's messenger, suggesting that he is bound in a relationship with Cleopatra, as if she has bound him in chains from which he must break free, to go to Rome to deal with matters of state, or else his infatuation for her will make him lose his sense of self.
<i>'If I lose mine honour I lose myself'</i> Act 3, Scene 4, lines 22–23	Caesar has been openly insulting about Antony in Rome, which has impugned his honour. Here, Antony suggests to Octavia that his sense of honour is so important to him that he will do whatever is necessary to preserve it – even wage war against her brother, Caesar.
<i>'a Roman by a Roman Valiantly vanquish'd'</i> Act 4, Scene 15, lines 57–58	Antony says this to Cleopatra, as he lies dying in her arms. To Antony, being Roman means to be honourable and civilised; after defeat by Caesar, rather than be captured, he chooses to commit suicide, an act which restores his bravery and honour; he says this of himself.

## Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt

Rome has been content to allow Queen Cleopatra to continue to rule Egypt, as long as the enormous taxes and treasures levied continue to be paid. Queen Cleopatra is a woman of extreme wealth and influence in her own country, revered not only as royalty but also by some as a god. She maintains an appropriately lavish lifestyle, in beautifully appointed palaces, living a life of sensuous pleasure, her every whim granted by armies of attendants, used to dining on delicacies. When she sets her sights on Antony, who is a veteran of war campaigns and used to the strictures of a life of civic duty, he must be as much fascinated by her unfamiliar hedonistic lifestyle as by her beauty and seductiveness.

Cleopatra often behaves inconsistently and emotionally. This is seen in Act 1 Scene 3 where she tries to prevent Antony from leaving her to attend to his duty in Rome. She pretends to be ill; she uses Antony's own words against him, she teases him, she refuses to believe him, and makes false accusations to get him to protest against them. She accuses him of play-acting when it is exactly what she does herself. He insists he must leave; but he remains enchanted by her, as evidenced in the gifts he sends back and his lavish promises of making her gifts of kingdoms – and that he leaves his new wife Octavia to return to her.

Cleopatra's tendency to obfuscate and lie to manipulate Antony's attitude towards her has a tragic outcome. She pretends to have killed herself when he is angry at his defeat due to her ships' retreat from battle. Antony is then so despairing at apparently losing her, as well as at the dishonour of his defeat, that he tragically commits suicide. Cleopatra's reaction to his death is shocking, more so because she usually looks to elevate herself and to gratify her own pleasure. She declares she is merely human and humbly likens her own grief to that of any woman, even a lowly milkmaid.

Cleopatra is manipulative and seems used to looking out for her own best interests. Part of why she found Antony attractive initially was probably his power as co-ruler of the Roman Empire, which could bolster her position as Queen of Egypt. She certainly ensured she appeared at her most alluring at her first meeting with him, arriving dramatically on her royal barge. However, their ensuing passionate relationship seems to be based on genuinely reciprocated love. She may not consistently declare her love for him, but her sadness at his departure from her, and her numbing grief at his death, suggests her love is real.

Cleopatra is astute, and towards the end of the play she may have given thought to her own future if Antony was not victorious against Caesar. We are not told why her ships retreated in the battles; all she says is that she didn't expect Antony to follow her. But their retreat twice led to Antony's defeat. She also seems to be acting in her own interests when she listens to Caesar's messenger, Thidias; she wants to know what the best deal is she can make with Caesar. It doesn't necessarily mean she will actually be disloyal to Antony, although Antony seems to suspect this. She shrewdly only declares half of her assets to Caesar in the hope of hiding the other half. She is lucky that he wants to win her trust and allows her to keep all of her assets. Her astute judgement of Caesar and questioning of his guards reveals the truth – that Caesar wants to enhance his own reputation at the expense of hers, by humiliating her in his victory parade through the streets of Rome.

To evade this humiliation, and to embrace the Roman notion of honour, like Antony, she bravely vows to commit suicide too. Her chosen method, by the bite of poisonous snakes, is bizarre and as sensational as she is, but it may be that she has limited choices, since her dagger was taken by a guard. She prepares for her death by dressing in her royal regalia to emphasise her status and to show her dignity in choosing to die, rather than allowing Caesar to capture her. Then she bravely takes the smuggled snakes and encourages them to bite her. Caesar formally laments her death and grants her the honour of being buried next to Antony, which can only enhance his reputation

for generosity. He himself points out the glory which will be given to him as the one who defeated such a renowned and celebrated couple.

Quotation	This suggests...
<i>'this enchanting queen'</i> Act 1, Scene 2, line 125 <i>'She is cunning past man's thought'</i> Act 1, Scene 2, line 141	...the attraction Antony feels towards Cleopatra, despite his being fully aware of the way she plots and acts to get her own way
a lustful <i>'gypsy'</i> Act 1, Scene 1, Line 10 a <i>'wrangling queen'</i> Act 1, Scene 1, line 49 <i>'Salt Cleopatra'</i> Act 2, Scene 1, line 21 <i>'O'erpicturing that Venus'</i> Act 2, Scene 2, line 204 an <i>'Egyptian dish'</i> Act 2, Scene 6, Line 122 <i>'a whore'</i> Act 3, Scene 6, line 67	...the Roman view of Cleopatra as a beautiful but decadent enchantress who is seen to prefer a life of pleasure-seeking and self-indulgence rather than a life which emphasises the greater good of the citizen – she is therefore seen to be a threat to the stability of civic life in Rome.
<i>'No more but e'en a woman'</i> Act 4, Scene 15, Line 73	...how she truly loved Antony; she feels humbled at his death: her status and beauty count for nothing in the face of her grief at his death.

## Octavius Caesar

Octavius Caesar is the youngest triumvir, the great-nephew of Julius Caesar and his named heir. He is ambitious and upholds the ideals of Roman law and procedure. At first he may seem to lack a little experience compared to Lepidus and Antony, but he has the confidence to make his own decisions and act on them.

At the start of the play, he is concerned at the threat to Rome posed by civil unrest at the disruption caused by Pompey and the pirates. He shrewdly acknowledges Antony's experience and bravery which has produced military victories and he feels the triumvirate are lacking both Antony's advice and his practical help in dealing conclusively with Pompey. He resents Antony for not contributing to the work of the triumvirate, and he and Lepidus are having to work harder as a consequence. Therefore, he is critical of Antony for choosing to remain in Egypt with Cleopatra rather than coming to the aid of himself and Lepidus. As a statesman himself, he finds it hard to understand that Antony could let his passion for a foreign queen override his duty to the Roman state. Therefore he scathingly denounces what he sees as Antony's foolish pursuit of pleasure and gratification, and censures Cleopatra herself. His self-importance means he is also annoyed that his messages are ignored by Antony.

When Antony does appear, Caesar is confident enough in his own strength to accuse Antony to his face of supporting his wife, Fulvia, in rebellion, of failing in his promise to send troops and of ignoring his messengers. Antony can only apologise. Caesar astutely tries to ensure Antony is more amenable in future by orchestrating a marriage between Antony and his sister, Octavia, therefore strategically cementing Antony's bonds to him. Caesar may have expected Antony to maintain a civilised Roman life with Octavia. However, once the threat from Pompey is dealt with, Antony returns to Egypt and Cleopatra, which may contribute to Caesar's decision to challenge Antony.

Antony's initial absence means Caesar makes his own plans with Lepidus to deal with Pompey, and although when Antony appears they can make a peace treaty with the pirate, Caesar soon breaks this and successfully puts his plans into action, achieving a decisive victory. Caesar does not seem to need Antony's military or political skills any longer. The outcome is that Pompey is killed, and the pirates diminished so that they are no longer a threat. Caesar coldly goes further than this. He calculates that Antony is unable to prevent his actions, so he takes the opportunity to

snatch more power by imprisoning Lepidus on made-up charges and confiscating his assets, taking Lepidus's responsibilities on himself. This is a stark snatching of power and influence in Rome for Caesar, and Antony sees it for what it is – an open challenge to him for dominance. This makes Antony prepare his forces for war against Caesar. That Antony is surprised by Caesar's military readiness shows that Caesar had been planning this coup for some time.

Caesar shows his strategic abilities by recognising Antony's strength is on land; he gives orders not to fight by land until the sea battle is over. Antony plays into his hands by insisting they fight by sea, despite the warnings of his generals against it. The retreat by Cleopatra's ships, followed by Antony, ensures Caesar's victory and Antony's subsequent shame. Caesar opportunistically tries to divide his opponents. He sends a messenger, Thidias, to Cleopatra, with instructions to make Cleopatra break with Antony; and promises to grant her wishes. It seems almost to work; Cleopatra seems amenable and praises Caesar, but Antony's fury makes her swear loyalty to him, which he accepts.

Caesar's actions following his victory at the end of the play show his ruthlessness. Antony is to be killed, and Cleopatra is to be paraded through the streets of Rome to humiliate her and increase his own standing by showing his domination over the foreigner. However, he realises it will be easier to get her to come to Rome of her own free will, so he lies to her. He tries to reassure her by pretending to be her friend and promises her whatever she requests, apparently allowing her to keep her entire treasure, despite her trying to cheat him by only declaring half of her assets. Cleopatra is too astute to be taken in, and commits suicide, therefore achieving a victory of sorts, since she thwarts Caesar's plans.

At the last minute, Caesar shows his statesmanlike qualities after both Antony's and Cleopatra's deaths, by immediately eulogising each one once they can no longer harm him. He portrays himself as magnanimous in victory, claiming Antony as his brother and equal, and honouring Cleopatra with burial next to Antony. His generosity might be easier to credit if he didn't also arrogantly point out that their defeat enhances the greatness of their victor – himself.

Quotation	This suggests...
<i>'...we do bear So great weight in his lightness'</i> Act 1, Scene 4, lines 25–26  <i>'Antony, Leave thy lascivious wassails'</i> Act 1, Scene 4, Lines 55–56	...Caesar's resentment of having an increased workload while Antony remains in Egypt in lewd and drunken behaviour instead of returning to Rome to carry out his civic duties as triumvir.
<i>'He is a god, and knows What is most right.'</i> Act 3, Scene 13, lines 60–61	...that Cleopatra is praising Caesar's strength, acknowledging his victory over Antony, and may be considering agreeing to his suggestion to break with Antony.
<i>'High events as these Strike those that make them; and their story is No less in pity than his glory which Brought them to be lamented.'</i> Act 5, Scene 2, lines 357–360	...Caesar's self-confidence and arrogance, as, in praising the greatness of Antony and Cleopatra, he points out his own glory in defeating them.

Create your own character summaries including quotation tables:

[Character name]

[illegible]

Quotation	This suggests...



### 3. Character animations







Can you identify the names of the different characters in the videos?

Character name	Character image
	
	
	
	



Character name	Character image
	
	
	
	

Here are the answers.

Character name	Character image
Mark Antony	
Cleopatra	
Octavius Caesar	
Pompey	
Lepidus	

Character name	Character image
Octavia	
Enobarbus	
Eros	

## 4. Reflection and activities



Now you have read the text, reflect on your thoughts:

**Consider the relationship between the ending and the rest of the play.**

Did you find the ending surprising or shocking?

Were you able to predict the ending, and at what stage did the ending become clear?

Did you find the ending satisfying?

Did the characters get the ending they deserved?

What dramatic contribution did the ending make to the play as a whole?

To what extent does [author] make this a satisfying ending to the play?

[illegible]

## Explore the dramatic impact of a key moment from the play

Read the extract you have selected and consider the points below:

- Explore the use of particular words or lines spoken by character.
- Were there any shifts in topic, tone and mood? Is it a moment of quiet pathos or one of dramatic intensity?
- How does the writer convey the mood at this moment in the play?
- What is the dramatic impact on the audience?

[illegible]

## Explore the characters in the play

Create practice questions around the characters of the play, for example:

- Explore how [author] portrays the relationship between [character] and [character]?
- How does the writer memorably depict the life of [character]?
- Explore how [character] makes this moment in the play so memorable/entertaining/dramatic?

Choose **one** of your questions and complete the following activities:

Compile a QUOTATION + COMMENT table to record your ideas about specific characters.

Add notes to each quotation about what it reveals about the character and their relevant contexts.

Learn some key quotations.

Answer the question. Peer-evaluate each other's answers.

Note examples of:

- irrelevant points (which perhaps narrate or describe)
- repeated points (where no more credit can be given)
- unsupported assertions (which do not constitute analysis)
- long quotations (which indicate a lack of clear focus).

Tick:

- ✓ points that are valid and thoughtful
- ✓ quotations that are concise and relevant
- ✓ critical comments on key words or aspects of structure and form.

[illegible]

## Explore the themes of the play

Create practice questions around a theme, for example:

- How does [author] portray [theme] in the play?
- In what ways does [author] convey [theme] in the play?
- How does [author] present his ideas about [theme] in the play?

Choose **one** of your questions and complete the following activities:

- Compile a QUOTATION + COMMENT table to record your ideas about specific characters.
- Add notes to each quotation about what it reveals about the character and their relevant contexts.
- Learn some key quotations.
- Answer the question. Peer-evaluate each other's answers.

Note examples of:

- irrelevant points (which perhaps narrate or describe)
- repeated points (where no more credit can be given)
- unsupported assertions (which do not constitute analysis)
- long quotations (which indicate a lack of clear focus).

Tick:

- ✓ points that are valid and thoughtful
- ✓ quotations that are concise and relevant
- ✓ critical comments on key words or aspects of structure and form.

[illegible]

## 5. Quiz



### 1. Why does Caesar urgently call on Antony to leave Cleopatra and return to Rome?

- A) ...because he needs Antony's military prowess to join in the fighting against Pompey and his pirates.
- B) ...because he is jealous of Antony's relationship with Cleopatra.
- C) ...because he dislikes Antony's rejection of Rome in favour of Egypt.
- D) ...because he needs Antony's wealth to pay for the army against Pompey.

### 2. Why does Antony agree to marry Octavia?

- A) ...because he has left Cleopatra.
- B) ...because he wants Octavia's money.
- C) ...because he loves Octavia.
- D) ...because the marriage strengthens his alliance with her brother, Octavius Caesar.

### 3. What does Cleopatra do when a messenger tells her that Antony has married Octavia?

- A) She gives the messenger gold and money for him to take back to Antony and Octavia as a wedding gift.
- B) She declares her heart is broken and kills herself in grief.
- C) She strikes the messenger, drags him by his hair, and threatens him with a knife.
- D) She vows to get her revenge on Antony by killing him.

### 4. When Menas says he can make Pompey 'lord of all the world' by killing the triumvirs, how does Pompey respond?

- A) He tells Menas not to kill them because it would go against his honour – but he wishes that Menas had killed them without telling him first.
- B) He charges Menas with treason and throws him in prison.
- C) He tells Menas not to kill them because it would be too risky.
- D) He tells Menas not to kill them because he wants them alive.

### 5. What convinces Antony of Caesar's increasing power?

- A) Caesar has himself crowned emperor in Rome.
- B) Caesar has betrayed the triumvirate and its treaties by imprisoning Lepidus and killing Pompey.
- C) Caesar has amassed an enormous army quartered just outside Rome.
- D) Caesar has ordered Antony to obey him, leave Cleopatra and return to his wife Octavia in Rome.



**6. What causes Antony's first defeat against Caesar at Actium?**

- A) Cleopatra's fleet of 60 ships turns round and flees from battle, and Antony follows her.
- B) Antony's ships sink in a violent storm.
- C) Caesar has double the number of ships that Antony has.
- D) Caesar has better weapons than Antony.

**7. Why does Enobarbus desert Antony?**

- A) ...because Caesar asks him to inform on Antony's battle plans.
- B) ...because Canidius deserted earlier, and he wants to join him.
- C) ...because he believes Antony has completely lost his military judgement when he decides to fight Caesar again.
- D) ...because he disapproves of Antony's relationship with Cleopatra.

**8. How does Antony die?**

- A) Caesar defeats him in hand-to-hand combat and stabs him with a sword.
- B) He is betrayed by Cleopatra who stabs him with a golden dagger.
- C) He drowns in the second sea battle when his ship is sunk by Caesar.
- D) He commits suicide by falling on his own sword, an honourable Roman death.

**9. Why does Caesar want to take Cleopatra back to Rome?**

- A) ... to make her Queen of the Roman Empire.
- B) ...to humiliate her by displaying her to the people of Rome as a prisoner in his victory parade.
- C) ...to dance with her at his victory ball.
- D) ...to kill her publicly as part of the gladiator games.

**10. How does Cleopatra die?**

- A) She drowns in a bath of milk.
- B) She dies from heartbreak because Antony marries Octavia.
- C) She deliberately allows venomous snakes to bite her.
- D) She drowns when she falls off her barge.

## Quiz answers

---

**1. Why does Caesar urgently call on Antony to leave Cleopatra and return to Rome?**

A) ...because he needs Antony's military prowess to join in the fighting against Pompey and his pirates.

**2. Why does Antony agree to marry Octavia?**

D) ...because the marriage strengthens his alliance with her brother, Octavius Caesar.

**3. What does Cleopatra do when a messenger tells her that Antony has married Octavia?**

C) She strikes the messenger, drags him by his hair, and threatens him with a knife.

**4. When Menas says he can make Pompey 'lord of all the world' by killing the triumvirs, how does Pompey respond?**

A) He tells Menas not to kill them because it would go against his honour – but he wishes that Menas had killed them without telling him first.

**5. What convinces Antony of Caesar's increasing power?**

B) Caesar has betrayed the triumvirate and its treaties by imprisoning Lepidus and killing Pompey.

**6. What causes Antony's first defeat against Caesar at Actium?**

A) Cleopatra's fleet of 60 ships turns round and flees from battle, and Antony follows her.

**7. Why does Enobarbus desert Antony?**

C) ...because he believes Antony has completely lost his military judgement when he decides to fight Caesar again.

**8. How does Antony die?**

D) He commits suicide by falling on his own sword, an honourable Roman death.

**9. Why does Caesar want to take Cleopatra back to Rome?**

B) ...to humiliate her by displaying her to the people of Rome as a prisoner in his victory parade.

**10. How does Cleopatra die?**

C) She deliberately allows venomous snakes to bite her.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftsbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
t: +44 1223 553554  
e: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2025 v1