

Julius Caesar

Name _____



Gaius Julius Caesar (100 BC-44 BC) was a Roman politician and military leader. Though he revitalized Rome by expanding the empire, he undermined the republic when he appointed himself dictator for life.

An ambitious youth, Caesar returned to Rome in 78 BC after a stint in the army. His popularity grew as he climbed the Roman bureaucracy. Caesar and the generals Crassus and Pompey created the First Triumvirate (an alliance among three people). With the Triumvirate's power, Caesar became Consul—two Consuls were elected as joint leaders of Rome each year. After his consulship, Caesar became Governor of Gaul (roughly modern-day France and Belgium). He was influential in conquering or retaining much of Gaul.

Caesar's conquests stretched Rome's territory to the Atlantic Ocean. Yet the Senate grew nervous about Caesar's private army and took away his governorship. Caesar retaliated by invading Rome in 49 BC. The Rubicon River was on his path, and now "crossing the Rubicon" has come to mean passing a point of no return. Caesar took over Rome, proclaiming himself temporary dictator and then, in 44 BC, dictator for life.

As Caesar stood before his uneasy empire, opposition grew, including one-time ally Pompey. But Pompey's army was too small, and he was killed in Egypt.

Caesar backed popular reforms, including broader citizenship and the "Julian" calendar. Yet many people grew wary of his personal power. The crisis peaked on March 15 (the Ides of March), 44 BC. A group of 60 senators, famously including Marcus Junius Brutus, stabbed Caesar to death.

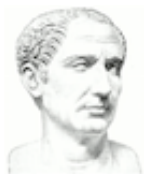
How would Caesar want to be remembered? Here is his life in his own words: "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came, I saw, I conquered").

Questions

1. Caesar was governor of _____, an area in western Europe.
2. How often did Rome get new Consuls? _____
3. Which river did Caesar cross to invade Rome? _____
4. What happened on the Ides of March in 44 BC? _____
5. What does "Veni, vidi, vici" mean? _____

Julius Caesar — Answer Page

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4. What happened on the Ides of March in 44 BC? Julius Caesar was killed.
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