Dear Sophomore English Students:

I am writing to you in order to explain what happens at the end of *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* and to show you a business letter.

The following is a summary of Acts IV and V of the play.

In Act IV of the play Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus create the Second Triumvirate. Lepidus and Antony agree to have members of their own family killed because they *might* be enemies of their cause. Lepidus is then sent to get Caesar’s will, so they can amend some of the bequests. Antony and Octavius, after much discussion, agree to battle the newly formed armies of Brutus and Cassius. Antony and Octavius will then take away Lepidus’ power for themselves.

Next, Brutus waits for Cassius to reach his camp, so they can plan their future battles with Antony and Octavius. Brutus feels that Cassius may have offended him and wants to hear Cassius’ explanation. When Cassius arrives they begin to quarrel and decide to enter Brutus’ tent, so the armies do not see them disagree.

Once inside the tent, Brutus and Cassius argue that each has offended the other, and they begin to threaten each other. Finally they apologize to one another, and they shake hands to show their good faith. The two generals then sit down to have some wine when they are told that Antony and Octavius are marching their armies to Philippi.

Before leaving Rome, however, Antony and Octavius killed a hundred senators including Cicero. Brutus wants to march to meet the enemy armies, but Cassius disagrees. Cassius believes this will tire their armies too much, but he finally agrees. Also, Brutus is told his wife killed herself by swallowing hot coals, but he stoically shows no emotion. Brutus then retires to bed, but he later awakens to see Caesar’s ghost. The spirit tells Brutus they will meet at Philippi, which scares Brutus, especially when no one else has seen the ghost.

In Act V of the play Antony and Octavius wait with their forces on the plain of Philippi for Brutus’ and Cassius’ armies. When Brutus and Cassius arrive, the four generals begin to insult one another. Antony accuses Brutus of hypocrisy, while Cassius accuses Antony of deceit. Cassius also reminds Brutus that he wanted to kill Antony before, and that this battle is only necessary because Brutus would not listen before. Octavius wants to fight now. The generals then exit and prepare for battle.
As the battles commence Brutus sends a messenger to Cassius asking him to combine forces against Octavius’ army, which looks uninspired and tired. Cassius, not having received Brutus’ message yet, sees Brutus’ army pushing Octavius’ army back and collecting spoils of war. This leaves Antony’s army free to circle Cassius’ army. Cassius sends Titinius to see who some distant soldiers are (enemy or friend). Titinius sees that the soldiers are from Brutus’ army and gets off his horse to greet them. Cassius, looking at the scene from a long distance, mistakenly thinks Titinius is captured and asks Pindarus to kill him (Cassius). This way he is not killed by an enemy, which would be insulting, but instead by an honored friend. When Titinius and Brutus’ men return, they find Cassius’ body and send word to Brutus and then Titinius kills himself. Brutus arrives and sees the bodies. He bids them farewell and leaves.

Brutus returns to the battlefield and urges his men to continue fighting. Young Cato helps inspire the troops but is killed. Lucilius is captured and Antony’s men believe he is Brutus. When Antony arrives to see “Brutus,” Antony sends troops to bring back the real Brutus.

Meanwhile, Brutus and his men are weary from battle. Brutus tells his advisors that he must now meet Caesar’s ghost again. His main advisor, Volumnius, refuses to kill Brutus even so. When an alarm sounds, warning them that Antony’s army is approaching, Brutus tells his men to flee. Another advisor, Strato, agrees to hold Brutus’ sword but will not kill Brutus. Brutus then runs himself onto the sword, so he may die at the hands of a friend.

Antony and Octavius arrive and find Brutus’ and Strato’s bodies. Octavius agrees to take Brutus’ men into his care, and Antony delivers a speech calling Brutus “the noblest Roman of them all.” He says Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome; the others were simply envious. Octavius orders a funeral for Brutus in the near future and calls everyone to begin a celebration of victory.

I hope this helps you understand the ending of the play. You will need to be familiar with the events of Acts IV and V for the final test over the play. You will not be able to use this sheet on the final test.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Chris Cloke
English Teacher