# Set Text Guide for students

# J282/03 Prose Literature B (2018 and 2019 prescription)

### General Introduction

### Caesar

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in 100 BC into one of the most ancient Roman families, the *gens Iulia*, who claimed to be able to trace their descent back to Iulus, son of Aeneas. In the century before Caesar’s birth, Rome had risen to become the dominant power in Europe. By 100 BC, the republican system of government, which had lasted for 400 years, was showing signs of weakness. In the first century BC a series of powerful generals dominated the political landscape. Arguably the most famous and influential of these was Caesar.

Caesar fought his first military campaign in 81 BC and by 59 BC had risen to the top political position of *consul*. In the same year he formed an alliance with Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey the Great) and his wealthy friend Crassus. In 58 BC Caesar set out to conquer the parts of Gaul which were not under Roman control, a campaign which lasted for nine years. It was during this time that he visited Britannia, once in 55 BC and again in 54 BC. When he returned to Rome in 49 BC he refused to disband his legions at the political border formed by the river Rubicon. Civil war quickly followed. Caesar fought against the political faction known as the Optimates, who were now led by Pompey. Caesar emerged victorious from these struggles and crushed the last military resistance in Spain in 45 BC. A year later he was dead, assassinated in the Senate house by those to whom he had shown great mercy after the civil war.

During his campaign in Gaul and the civil war against Pompey, Caesar kept a detailed record of his deeds. They arrive to us more or less intact and are an invaluable source for the time they cover.

### Tacitus

Tacitus was a Roman historian who came from the senatorial class. He was born in 56 or 57 AD, possibly in the Mediterranean part of Gaul, and died around 120. He enjoyed a remarkable political career during which he became consul and held the governorship of Asia. He served under five emperors: Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva and Trajan. His experience of Domitian’s reign appears to have strongly influenced his opinion of the monarchic Roman Empire, which is utterly negative. While he never lived in the Roman Republic, which effectively ended in 27 BC, it is clear he had a preference for that system of government.

Tacitus’ first work was a favourable biography of his dead father-in-law, Agricola, who became governor of Britain in 77. He also wrote a detailed account of the tribes in Germania and a discussion about oratory. His two most famous works are the *Histories*, which was being written in 106, and the *Annals*, which he was working on towards the end of his life. The *Histories* covers the period from 69-96 AD and the *Annals* details the events of 14-68 AD. Since Boudicca revolted in 60-61 AD, Tacitus’ account of it appears in the *Annals*.

Tacitus is one of the best sources we have for the early Roman Empire. Large parts of the *Histories* and the *Annals* did not make it through the Middle Ages. Where there are gaps in Tacitus’ work, our understanding of those periods is much poorer. His style is energetic, striking, cutting and wholly his own. The prescribed text has adapted some of the more difficult grammar used by Tacitus. However, students can be assured that this is unquestionably Tacitean literature they are enjoying.

### Talking Points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***Both authors for this literature unit came from Rome’s upper classes. What reasons might there be for this? What barriers were there for ordinary citizens to enjoy a literary career?*** |  |
| ***Caesar’s works chronicle the events of wars in which he was a commander. How might this affect his reporting?*** |  |
| ***Caesar and Tacitus both enjoyed distinguished military and political careers. Can you think of any more modern authors who rose to prominence in either of these areas?*** |  |

### Context

### Roman Britannia

The Mediterranean world probably first came into contact with Britain through Phoenician traders from the African city of Carthage in the 5th century BC. The Phoenicians would have been interested in the tin found in the south west, which was necessary for the production of bronze. The tin trade brought the Celtic tribes of Britain in close contact with those of Gaul, and there was plenty of movement between the two. Thus in 55 BC, during his campaign in Gaul, Julius Caesar launched a scouting mission across the water. He returned the following year with 800 ships carrying five legions and 2,000 cavalry. The British tribes appointed a common leader, Cassivellaunus, who was forced to submit and pay tribute. Not long after, Caesar withdrew to Gaul to reassert his authority there. He never returned to Britain.

The idea of invasion was not seriously entertained again until the emperor Gaius (Caligula) drew up his troops on the coast of Gaul in 40 AD, only to abandon the campaign for unknown reasons. His successor Claudius, eager for a military triumph to increase his reputation, attacked in 43 with around 40,000 men, led by Aulus Plautius. The British resistance was fierce, and according to some reports Claudius himself was summoned to help. A Roman province was finally established in the south east, with Colchester as its capital. Claudius used client kings as a cost effective way to maintain control. Caratacus, the British leader of the opposition to Roman rule, was captured in 51 and taken into captivity. Aside from the revolt of Boudicca (see below), the Romans made steady progress through Britain until they limited their expansion with the walls commissioned by Hadrian and Antoninus in the mid-2nd century. The Roman occupation of Britain declined through the 4th century as the military was needed more urgently to deal with the crumbling empire closer to home.

### Druids

The Druids were the educated class among the ancient Celtic tribes of Gaul, Britain and Ireland. They performed a variety of duties, acting as priests, teachers, doctors and judges, among other roles. The earliest evidence for them dates from the 3rd century BC, but it is not until Caesar’s account, which forms part of the prescribed text, that we have a detailed description.

Caesar says that there were two dominant social classes in Gaul: the Druids and the knights (*equites*). The knights took care of military and administrative matters, while the Druids were the driving cultural and religious force of society. Druids might train for as long as 20 years, part of which consisted of learning by heart a large amount of instructional and religious poetry. Unfortunately, none of their oral literature survives.

The Druids held a particular fascination for the Romans as they were said to use human sacrifice in religious ceremonies. Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian writing in the same period as Caesar, states that the Druids would oversee the ritual. The victim would receive a stab wound to the chest. The convulsions of the victim’s limbs as he died were used, along with the pouring of blood, to divine the future. Caesar says that human sacrifice was demanded when men of stature were seriously ill, in the belief that the gods would accept one man’s life in place of another’s. He says that criminals were the preferred victims, but that innocent people might be sacrificed if there was a shortage of convicts.

There is no solid archaeological evidence for human sacrifice among Celtic tribes. It is not hard to see how such a gruesome custom was of interest to the Romans, when one considers the bloodthirsty nature of their public entertainment.

### Boudicca

The native Iceni tribe had shown a degree of cooperation with Rome in the years following the invasion by Claudius. This was true of many tribes in the south and east of Britain. The tribes further west caused considerably more trouble. In 58, Caius Suetonius Paulinus became governor of Britain following the death of Quintus Veranius. Suetonius enjoyed two successful military campaigns before clashing with a fierce group of Britons on Anglesey in 60.

At about the same time, a revolt had started back in the east of the island. The king of the Iceni, Prasutagus, had died, and had named the emperor Nero alongside his own two daughters in his will. The Roman soldiers had used this as an excuse to behave without restraint. Their violent conduct included the flogging of Boudicca and attacks on her family. The Iceni rose up against the Roman forces. The rebellion soon spread to neighbouring tribes, many of whom had lost land to the Romans. The Roman settlements of Colchester, London and St Albans were all destroyed by the rampaging Britons. Around 70,000 inhabitants were killed from the three towns. The Britons headed west. Suetonius regrouped 10,000 men in the Midlands and faced Boudicca’s rebellious tribes head on in what has been called the Battle of Watling Street, after the nearby Roman road. He was heavily outnumbered, but managed to inflict a decisive defeat on the British tribes.

Boudicca is reported to have killed herself by poison following on from the defeat. Suetonius was merciless in his treatment of the tribes involved and began widespread destruction of their lands. He was soon replaced by a more moderate governor. Suetonius’ ultimate fate is unknown.

### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***What features of ancient Britain might have caused the Romans to wait 100 years between first landing there and the launching a successful full-scale invasion?*** |  |
| ***What reasons might there have been for Caesar to allege that the Druids performed human sacrifice, even if he knew the story to be unreliable?*** |  |
| ***Why might Boudicca have killed herself? Can you think of any parallels in Roman history of a queen who commits suicide after a military defeat?*** |  |

### The Texts

### Caesar’s *Gallic War*: the customs of the Druids

Caesar’s *Gallic War* is a firsthand account of his campaign in Gaul, which lasted from 58-50 BC. In his account of 53 BC, as he is preparing to engage with the Suevi tribe, all of a sudden he delivers an ethnographic description of the Germans and the Gauls. The leading Gauls, he says, are from one of two classes: the Druids and the knights.

### Passage 1: The power of the Druids

In this passage, Caesar makes it clear that a great deal of power was in the hands of the Druids. They reportedly hold sway over private disputes as well as public affairs. Caesar pays particular attention to the effective exile which is imposed on anyone who does not abide by the decision of the Druids.

### Stylistic Features

**Asyndeton (1-2)**: Druides…interpretantur

**Repetition (1, 5, 8)**: publica (ac) privata

**Enclosing word order (4):** magnoque…honore

**Anaphora (5-6):** si…si…si

**Varying length of sentences** (lines 7 and 9 contain short, powerful sentences)

**Antithesis (14-15):** omnibus/unus

### Glossary of Key Terms

| ***Key terms regarding content and literary techniques.*** |
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| ***auctoritas*** – ‘influence’. A Roman concept which precipitated the power to rule. |
| ***dignitas*** – ‘dignity’. More than any moral sense of the word, this would be the sum of a man’s reputation. |
| ***suffragium*** – ‘vote’. Romans would have been able to identify with the electoral process for selecting leaders. |
| ***disciplina*** – ‘training’. Caesar expands on this in the next passage. |
| **Anaphora** – using the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive sentences. |
| **Antithesis** – a contrast of terms or ideas. |
| **Asyndeton** – the absence of connectives to simplify or emphasise a list of items. |

| ***Now over to you.***Now find your own examples of literary techniques and list them in the boxes below. |
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### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***Why do you think people who disobeyed the decrees of the Druids were shunned rather than put to death?*** |  |
| **What do you think is meant by *publica ac privata* in line 1? The phrase is used three times in the passage. Does its meaning change? If so, how?** |  |

### Passage 2: Their education

Caesar goes on to talk about the education of trainee Druids. Spurred on by the promise of a tax-free life and exemption from military service, many seek to become a Druid. Caesar says that their learning is traditionally done orally, through the memorisation of verses, even though a writing system is available to them.

### Stylistic Features

**Balanced phrases (24-5):** militiae vacationem omniumque rerum immunitatem habent.

**Symbolic word order (34-5):** ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios

**Superlative adverb (35)**: maxime

**Pleonasm (36-9):** deorum immortalium

### Glossary of Key Terms

| ***Key terms regarding content and literary techniques.*** |
| --- |
| **Oral tradition** – the Druids commit a great deal of their learning to memory, despite having access to writing. |
| **Life after death** – the Roman idea of an afterlife was very different to the one reported by Caesar here. |
| ***Ributum*** – ‘tax’. Little is known about the taxes paid by the Celts. After their conquest, taxes went to Rome. |
| ***Virtus*** – ‘courage’. The word has several meanings, but here it specifically means battle prowess. |
| **Pleonasm** – the use of a redundant word or words in a phrase (e.g. bite with your teeth). |

| ***Now over to you.***Now find your own examples of literary techniques and list them in the boxes below. |
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### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***How does the training to become a Druid differ to modern education? Are there any professions today which require a similar investment of time?*** |  |
| ***The Druids upheld the belief that there was a life after death, and that a person’s soul crossed over to another. How does this contrast to what a Roman like Caesar might have believed?*** |  |

### Passage 3: Their religion

This extract is concerned with state-sanctioned human sacrifice within the Gallic tribes. Caesar claims that the Druids are called upon as assistants for these sacrifices. Criminals are the preferred victims, he says, but the innocent may be killed when deemed necessary.

### Stylistic Features

**Chiasmus (45):** vita hominis…hominis vita

**Tricolon (51):** in furto aut in latrocinio aut aliqua noxia

**Polysyndeton (51):** in furto aut in latrocinio aut aliqua noxia

### Glossary of Key Terms

| ***Key terms regarding content and literary techniques.*** |
| --- |
| **Chiasmus** – an elaborate word order of four elements; the middle elements are related to each other, as are the outer ones. |
| **Polysyndeton** –the use of lots of connectives. Often used to give the sense of abundance. |
| ***Tricolon –*** a list of three elements. |
| ***Human sacrifice –*** this held a particular fascination to the Romans, as was sometimes used as propaganda against her enemies*.* |

| ***Now over to you.***Now find your own examples of literary techniques and list them in the boxes below. |
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### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***What gods would the Druids be making sacrifices for? How did these relate to Roman religion?*** |  |
| ***Caesar says that the usual victims for the Druids’ human sacrifices were thieves and robbers. What do you think of this? Do such crimes usually call for the death penalty?*** |  |

### Tacitus’ *Annals*: the Druids’ Last Stand

Tacitus’ *Annals* is an history of the Roman Empire from the accession of Tiberius in 14 AD to the fall of Nero in 68 AD. The prescribed extract comes from Book 14, and describes events which occurred in 60 AD, during the reign of Nero.

### Passage 4: The Druids’ Last Stand

The Roman general Suetonius arrived in Britain earlier in 59 AD and appears to have sought a quick, easy victory to increase his reputation. The island of Anglesey (Latin: *Mona*) off the north coast of Wales was harbouring the main Celtic resistance, led by a number of Druids.

### Stylistic Features

**Chiasmus (1-2):** incolis validam et receptaculum perfugarum

**Promoted verb (3):** stabat

**Participle phrase (5):** incursantibus feminis

**Dramatic allusion (5):** in modum Furiarum

**Simile (8):** quasi haerentibus membris

**Sibilance (13):** saevis superstitionibus sacri

### Glossary of Key Terms

| ***Key terms regarding content and literary techniques.*** |
| --- |
| **Simile** *–* a direct comparison, introduced by words such as ‘like’ or ‘just as’. |
| **Alliteration** *–* a repeated consonant sound, usually at the start of successive words. Sibilance is specifically an alliteration of the letter ‘s’. |
| **The Furies** *–* Dreadful, avenging goddesses of Greek myth. They were a popular motif in Greek drama too. |
| **Women** *–* Roman women played no part in military affairs. The sight of women on the battlefield would have shocked the Roman soldiers. |
| **Divination** – Romans liked to predict the future from the entrails of slaughtered animals. The gruesome aspect of Tacitus’ description is that the entrails are of people (*hominum* *fibris*). |

| ***Now over to you.***Now find your own examples of literary techniques and list them in the boxes below. |
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### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- |
| ***What threat does the army of Druids pose to the Roman legions?***  |  |
| ***Tacitus reports that women were present on the battlefield. In what ways does this present a cultural difference with the Romans?*** |  |

### Tacitus’ Annals (2): Boudicca’s Rebellion

### Passage 5: Boudicca’s Rebellion

While Suetonius was fighting the Druids on Anglesey, a rebellion swept across the south east of the island after the death of Prasutagus. He had left a portion of his estate to the emperor Nero in his will, and some Roman soldiers had taken this as a cue to act without restraint. They mercilessly pillaged the native Celts and raped Prasutagus’ granddaughters, the daughters of Boudicca.

### Stylistic Features

**Balanced phrases (4-5):** regnum a centurionibus, domus a servis velut capta vastarentur

**Ellipsis (13):** acerrimum in veteranos odium

### Glossary of Key Terms

| ***Key terms regarding content and literary techniques.*** |
| --- |
| **Iceni –** the Iceni tribe came from the East Anglia region of Britannia. Boudicca was their last ruler. |
| **Camulodunum –** Colchester. The capital of the Trinobantes tribe and the site of a Roman colony for veteran soldiers. |
| **Ellipsis –** the omission of a word or words (in Latin, usually part of the verb *esse*) to promote a concept. |
| ***Now over to you.***Now find your own examples of literary techniques and list them in the boxes below. |
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### Talking points

| **Talking Point** | **Notes** |
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| ***Tacitus provides little comment on the events in this passage. Is there any evidence in his choice of words that he disapproved of the treatment of the Iceni?*** |  |
| ***Why do you think the Romans won the battle decisively, despite being heavily outnumbered?*** |  |

### Activities and tasks

| **Explore the Story**Cambridge Schools Classics Project<http://www.cla.cambridgescp.com/files/cscp/cla/cla/exp/cla.html?fn=drui_160_1>An interactive copy of the Caesar prescribed text. Click on the words for their English translations and grammar information (optional). Also works well on touchscreen devices.There are also Explore the Story editions for the other set texts. |
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| **In Our Time: The Druids** BBC<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mqq94>Melvyn Bragg hosts a discussion about the Druids with some of Britain’s leading archaeologists and historians. The material is up-to-date, accessible and thoroughly relevant to the prescribed text.There are also *In Our Time* episodes available for Julius Caesar, Boudicca and Pliny’s Natural History. All are well worth a listen. |
|  |
| **The Museum of Wales: Druids Ancient Druids of Wales**The Museum of Wales<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/articles/2007-05-03/Ancient-druids-of-Wales/>  |
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### **Task 1:** Creating a synopsis

Create a brief synopsis of the text by writing down the subject and verb of every main clause in the passage. Clauses containing a subjunctive or infinitive verb should be ignored.

Write out two columns titled **Subject** and **Verb**. In each row, write down just the subject noun and verb in each sentence, working your way through the passage. Try and work without a translation unless you are stuck. Use a dictionary or word list to help you translate the two-word phrases once you’ve finished writing them down.

Write out a third column in which you are can include **either** an object noun, **or** an adverb **or** an adjective to help flesh out your synopsis.

| ***Subject*** | **Verb** | ***Either an object noun, or an adverb or an adjective*** |
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### Task 2: Creating a storyboard

**Create a storyboard for the prescribed text.**

Draw a 5x5 grid on a sheet of A3 paper. Read through the passage and draw the most notable scenes onto the grid, writing captions in Latin for each cell.

Photocopy your storyboard and cut it out. Shuffle the sections and swap with a partner. Each of you try and arrange the shuffled squares into the sequence they happen in the story.

### Task 3: Creating a practice question

**Create an exam style question.**

Choose a part of the passage which is rich enough in language or drama that it could be used for an extended commentary question. Use the past paper and specimen documents on the OCR website to help you think of a suitable question. Use the past paper mark schemes to give you an idea what answers your question might expect. Swap questions with a partner and compare your thoughts on each other’s selection and question.

Write a full mark scheme for your question using the specimen and past mark schemes on the OCR website.

### Task 3: Creating a practice question

| **Exam Style Question** |
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| **Mark scheme** |
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### Reading list for students

**CSCP: The Druids** (<http://www.cla.cambridgescp.com/cambridge-latin-anthology-prose-selections/druides>) – fantastic resource to supplement the prescribed passages. Vocabulary and grammar help via the interactive stories as well as many useful links to help with the historical and literary context.

**Online translations** (<http://www.morien-institute.org/kendrick.html>) – scroll down for helpful translations for all the prescribed passages. These are a good starting point, but students are encouraged to write out their own translation eventually.

**Classics Video Clips** (<http://www.classics.ox.ac.uk/classics-clips.html>) – Oxford academics discussing GCSE Latin set texts, among others.

**William Whitaker’s Words** (<http://archives.nd.edu/words.html>) – a very efficient and highly accurate word look up tool. Especially handy for students who are attempting their own translation s of the prescribed passages.

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