

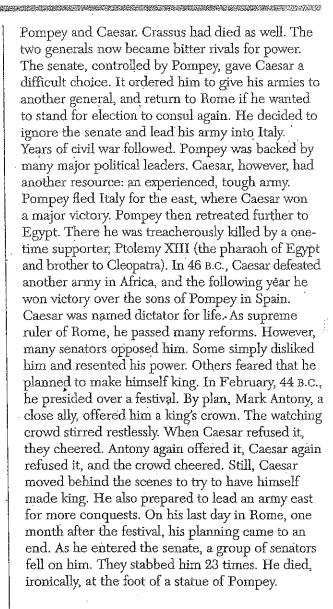
HISTORYMAKERS Julius Caesar

General, Writer, Politician, Dictator-King?

"Caesar could no longer endure a superior, nor Pompey an equal."—Lucan, a Roman poet, on the cause of the Roman civil war

riven by ambition and a thirst for power, Julius Caesar became a great and controversial leader of the Roman Republic. He had a tremendous impact on a growing power at a crucial point in its rise. He was also a man of extraordinary abilities—skills in war, politics, writing, and leadership. Caesar was born to an old Roman family, part of the group of families that founded the Roman Republic. He had the standard education of someone in his social position and became known as a charming, cultured, and well-read person. In addition, he gained experience in the military in Asia Minor and experience in government in Spain. Gradually, he won election to important public offices. In 63 B.C., he was voted pontifex maximus, the chief priest of the Republic. He also served in Spain, where he won fame by winning battles. He returned to Rome and was elected consul, the most important political office in the Republic. Caesar joined with two other leading Romans in an alliance. One was Crassus, a wealthy political leader whose money could be used to advance the plans of the three. The other was Pompey, another brilliant general. To cement the alliance, Pompey married Julia, Caesar's only daughter. As consul, Caesar worked for some new laws that eased the overcrowding in Rome and other cities. He was rewarded by being made governor of Gaul, located in modern France. He took command of the Roman armies there, determined to extend Roman control of the area. It took several years, but he eventually conquered all of Gaul and part of

The victories brought Caesar riches, which he used to fund building projects in Rome—thus winning popularity in the city. He also made sure to create some effective propaganda in his own favor. He wrote Commentaries on the Gallic Wars, a history of his campaigns in Gaul. Throughout the book, he referred to himself as "Caesar" and not as "I." This made the history seem objective. He also made sure that "Caesar" got credit for all victories. The situation in Rome, however, had changed. Julia had died, which removed one link between



Questions

- 1. Clarifying How did Caesar show he was a brilliant general?
- 2. **Drawing Conclusions** How did Caesar use his success in Gaul to improve his political position in Rome?
- 3. **Determining Main Ideas** Why did the senators oppose Caesar?



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