

## Patricians and Plebeians

Your job will be to look into the role that the Plebeian and Patrician citizens may have played in the death of Julius Caesar. You will first want to look into what each of these groups look like and how they function in Roman society.

Who were the patricians? (<http://historylink101.com/2/Rome/roman-patricians.htm>)

Who were the plebeians? (<http://historylink101.com/2/Rome/roman-plebeians.htm>)

### Why would the citizens of Rome want to kill Caesar?

The Patricians and the Plebeians traditionally had a lot of tension between each other. The Patricians were an exclusive club. If your family did not descend from one of the original senators put in place by Romulus when Rome was founded, then you were out of luck. Patricians were the ones that owned most of the land and had all of the political power in Rome. Plebeians were everyone else. A Plebeian couldn't even marry a Patrician so they were never going to get into that exclusive club.

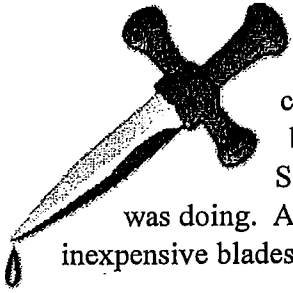


This led to many struggles between the two social classes in Rome. Eventually the Plebeians were able to gain more rights, but they were always seen as second class citizens compared to the Patricians. If you were a Patrician you were just seen as a better and more valuable person than a Plebeian.

When Julius Caesar conquered Gaul with his army he took all of Gaul's treasure. That treasure was sent back to Rome, where he distributed it among the Plebeian people. The Plebeian's loved Julius Caesar because he was a Patrician who seemed to love and care about the Plebeians. When Caesar became dictator for life he gave every citizen, Patrician and Plebeian 100 Denarii, which is about \$2000. He also promised to pay rent for an entire year for each Plebeian living in Rome.

Many of the Patricians did not like Caesar because they were afraid that the common people loved him too much and would want him to become a king. Many Patrician citizens were also afraid of Caesar because he was very good and either killing his political enemies or exiling them from Italy, and they did not want that to happen to them. Because of this, and the fact that Caesar was bypassing the Republican government that had been working for Rome for almost five hundred years, many important wanted Caesar dead. But did they actually do it? Did the citizens of Rome kill Caesar?

## **EVIDENCE!**



A number of bloody daggers were found scattered around Caesar's dead body. These daggers were simply blades and could have easily been purchased by any citizen of Rome for only a couple Denarii. Caesar's body was found in the Senate building. Citizens would be gathered closely around the Senate building anytime the Senators were meeting so they could hear all the latest gossip about what the government was doing. A group of citizens could easily have sneaked into the Senate and killed Caesar with their inexpensive blades.

## **EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT**

It appears there were some witnesses who want to make an account of what they saw. Go collect the Patrician and Plebeian eyewitness account. Be sure to read through it carefully within your group.

# EyeWitness      Account

## Plebeian and Patrician Citizens



We saw the whole thing! We were investigating some good deals outside the Roman Senate. While we were out there we saw a mob of citizens gathered around the building talking. The senators were all walking into the building and a number of citizens seemed really agitated by them. When Julius Caesar walked

by to enter the building there was a group of Patricians who were huddled together looking at him. There was real hate in their eyes.

We overheard them say, "Caesar, the tyrant! He will give away the glory of Rome to lowly plebs!" That is the nickname for Plebeians, by the way. This in itself isn't so bad, but then they said, "It will be glorious day when the blood of this dictator is flowing in the streets!" With that the group moved on. We did not see where, but what they said was shocking enough for us to come to you and let you know about it, especially considering Julius Caesar was assassinated less than an hour later.

Additional clue:

Look closely at the witness written statement and tell me a four letter Latin word that means, "I Came."

Answer on WS

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