



CLEOPATRA & PTOLEMY

Cleopatra VII was born in 69 B.C. in Alexandria, Egypt. The city had been founded by the Macedonian conqueror Alexander the Great and ruled since his death by his general, Ptolemy, and the line of pharaohs he established. Cleopatra's father was Ptolemy XII. Based on her ancestry, it could be said that Cleopatra was not really Egyptian but Greek, though she would surely have disagreed.

Cleopatra came to the throne upon her father's death in 51 B.C. at the age of seventeen. She co-ruled with her 12-year-old brother, the pharaoh Ptolemy XIII, whom she married as was the Egyptian tradition for keeping the rule in the family. Highly intelligent, Cleopatra spoke nine languages and proved to be a skilled ruler. Her little brother stayed in the background for a time until he conspired with one of his advisors to force her from power.

In 48 B.C. she was stripped of all power and forced into exile in Syria, but was determined to regain her position. Creative and willing to do whatever was necessary, Cleopatra was determined to regain the throne her brother had stolen from her.



CLEOPATRA & CAESAR

As Cleopatra was assembling an army to attack Alexandria, the Roman leader Julius Caesar was also on his way to the city. He arrived to a gift from the pharaoh, Ptolemy, intended to gain Caesar's favor. The gift was the head of Caesar's greatest political rival, Pompey! Instead of being pleased, though, Caesar was furious about the gruesome murder and the horrible gift!

Recognizing an opportunity, Cleopatra dressed to the nines, had one of her attendants wrap her in a Persian rug, and arranged to be delivered to Caesar. When he unrolled the present, he came face to face with Cleopatra and was smitten. Together the couple went to war against Alexandria. In less than six months time Ptolemy was dead and Cleopatra was back on the throne. As tradition demanded, the queen married another young brother, Ptolemy XIV, to rule with her, and then left with Caesar for a relaxing Nile cruise.

When they returned two months later, Caesar left a pregnant Cleopatra in Egypt with three legions of Roman troops to protect her. A year later, on Caesar's invitation, she and her infant son, Caesarion, went to Rome where she spent two years. Despite the fact that Caesar already had a Roman wife, he showered Cleopatra with gifts and even had a temple built in her honor.

The Roman senators already disliked and distrusted Caesar, fearing his power and popularity would end the Republic. The Cleopatra scandal only added fuel to the fire, so a conspiracy to assassinate him was hatched. On March 25, 44 BC, a group of senators surrounded Caesar and stabbed him to death.

Recognizing that she too was in danger, Cleopatra fled Rome and returned to Alexandria. About the same time Ptolemy XIV mysteriously died a sudden death, and Cleopatra made her young son, Caesarion, her new co-ruler.



CLEOPATRA & MARK ANTONY

The death of Caesar plunged Rome into civil war over who should lead. Two major figures were vying for control: Caesar's nephew, Octavian, and Mark Antony. Since it appeared to Cleopatra that Mark Antony would emerge victorious, she openly supported his claim to rule.

In 42 B.C. she went to Tarsus in Asia Minor to meet with Mark Antony. She arrived for the meeting elegantly dressed as the goddess Venus on a golden barge with purple sails and silver oars. As Caesar before him, Mark Antony, too, fell captive to Cleopatra's beauty and charm. After a time of courtship Mark Antony returned to Rome and his official duties. Six months later Cleopatra again gave birth, this time to twins, Cleopatra and Alexander. Yet this time four years passed before she again saw their father. In that time Mark Antony had married the sister of Octavian in an effort toward a peaceful solution to the division in the empire.

Still, Mark Antony truly loved Cleopatra and returned to her in 37 B.C. He then divided his time between military campaigns abroad and Cleopatra in Alexandria. He even officially wed her in 36 B.C. and she gave him another son. Once more the Romans were scandalized by Cleopatra and furious, this time with Mark Antony's treatment of his Roman wife. To make matters worse, Mark Antony gave Roman lands to Cleopatra and their sons to rule.

Once again the Senate was outraged and supported a plan by Octavian to declare war on Egypt. In 31 B.C. the Roman navy attacked Mark Antony's and Cleopatra's ships at Actium off the Greek coast. When their defeat seemed certain, the two fled for Egypt but Roman forces followed. It was then that Cleopatra began to experiment with poisons in case the need arose.

Cleopatra hid while Mark Antony went to face his rival in battle, but he arrived to find his soldiers saluting Octavian. Shortly thereafter, he received a message that Cleopatra was dead, and he believed it since alas, it seemed that the need for her to take her own life had arisen.

Unable to face life without his great love, Mark Antony stabbed himself in the abdomen. He was carried home by his servants to learn that Cleopatra was indeed alive, and he died in her arms.



CLEOPATRA & AUGUSTUS

Octavian took control of Alexandria and Egypt in 30 B.C. Cleopatra was taken prisoner and, knowing she would be executed, she took her own life by allowing a poisonous snake to bite her. Cleopatra's death ended Egypt's more than three thousand years of rule by pharaohs as the land became one more province of the vast Roman Empire.

In 27 B.C. Octavian went to the Senate where he was officially declared "Augustus," the revered one of Rome. Augustus Caesar, as he was called, became the first of a line of many Roman emperors, marking the end of the Roman Republic.

Name _____

Per _____

Writing to Persuade

When writing to express and support your opinion, it is good to think about it as convincing someone else that you are right. A persuasive paragraph supports an opinion or seeks to persuade another person to act in a certain way. Persuasive paragraphs clearly present an opinion and then support it with facts as follows:

1. Begin by stating your point of view.
2. Provide sentences that explain and support your view. You can also compare your view with another, explaining why the other view is wrong.
3. Give several specific examples to back up your opinion, clearly explaining how each supports your view.
4. Finish with a closing sentence that ties everything together. This can restate your opinion in a different way.

DIRECTIONS: In this activity you will use what you’ve learned about Cleopatra to write a persuasive paragraph. You may choose one of the point-of-view statements provided or make up one of your own. Then follow the directions and write a paragraph below to support your view.

Point of View Statements:

“Cleopatra was a dishonest temptress, who used her beauty and charm to try to get whatever she wanted.”

“Cleopatra was a devoted queen, who did anything and everything she had to do to protect and defend her beloved Egypt.”

“Cleopatra was a shallow, spoiled woman, who didn’t know what she wanted.”
