

The Greeks III: Extra Exercise: Plutarch's Lives of Alexander and Caesar

Write an essay of four paragraphs discussing ways in which the Alexander and Caesar described by Plutarch in his work Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans are both similar and different. (Plutarch is writing in the second century, A.D. He is a Greek living in the Roman Empire and a priest of Isis as well as an important writer. Keep in mind that he is writing almost five hundred years after Alexander and about two hundred years after Caesar, so he's not at all a contemporary. (He is also Shakespeare's main source for the ancient world as you know if you're in Shakespeare's History.) Try not to dwell on the obvious but instead compare these men in terms of things like psychological disposition, wisdom, talents, methodologies, philosophies and flaws.

*In your **introduction**, begin by introducing your topic, the works and characters in question and provide a framework for your essay by supplying the context of the situation. Basic background on the two characters in question will be essential here. Be sure to close this paragraph with a thesis statement, a single sentence that lays out clearly the main point of your essay.

*In the **first body paragraph**, discuss similarities between these two towering figures of antiquity as Plutarch describes them. This is not a research project, so stick to Plutarch. He may not be the fastest reading around, but every truly cultured person has read at least these two of his Lives. Use quotes and/or situations from the text to support your point of view and support facts and quotes with parenthetical notes. Sum up your body paragraph at the end. Given the fact that you are comparing two people, these should be substantial body paragraphs.

*In the **second body paragraph**, discuss similarities between these two towering figures of antiquity as Plutarch describes them. This is not a research project, so stick to Plutarch. He may not be the fastest reading around, but every truly cultured person has read at least these two of his Lives. Use quotes and/or situations from the text to support your point of view and support facts and quotes with parenthetical notes. Sum up your body paragraph at the end. Given the fact that you are comparing two people, these should be substantial body paragraphs.

*In your **concluding paragraph**, summarize the main similarities and differences between Alexander and Caesar. Assess the two men as leaders. Who do you think was the better leader and better person and why? What philosophical/psychological messages does Plutarch seem to stress in purposefully juxtaposing these two lives in his book?

Schedule: Due Monday, May 19 (or earlier if possible)

Revision Due by Tuesday, May 26 at 9 a.m.

These are hard deadlines: no exceptions!