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History for Kids: The Illustrated Lives of Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus

Charles River Editors

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*Perfect for ages 7-10.
*Includes pictures and illustrations.

In Charles River Editors' History for Kids series, your children can learn about history's most important people and events in an easy, entertaining, and educational way. Pictures help bring the story to life, and the concise but comprehensive book will keep your kid's attention all the way to the end.

Possibly the most important man of antiquity, and even all of history, was Julius Caesar. Alexander Hamilton, the famous American patriot, once remarked that "the greatest man who ever lived was Julius Caesar". Such a tribute, coming from one of the Founding Fathers of the quintessential modern democracy in reference to a man who destroyed the Roman Republic, is testament to the enduring mark that Caesar left upon the world. The ultimate conqueror, statesman, dictator, visionary, and opportunist, during his time in power Caesar expanded the borders of Rome to almost twice their previous size, revolutionized the infrastructure of the Roman state, and destroyed the Roman Republic for good, leaving a line of emperors in its place. His legacy is so strong that his name has become, in many languages, synonymous with power: the Emperors of Austria and Germany bore the title Kaiser, and the Czars of Russia also owe the etymology of their title to Caesar. His name also crept further eastward out of Europe, even cropping up in Hindi and Urdu, where the term for "Emperor" is Kaisar.

Even in his time, Caesar was in many ways larger than life, and because of his legacy as virtual founder of the Roman Empire, much of what was written about – and by – him during his life and immediately after his assassination was politically motivated. His successor, Octavian Augustus, had a strong interest in ensuring that Caesar's life be painted in a favorable light, while Caesar's political enemies attempted to paint him as a corrupt, undemocratic dictator who was destroying the old order of the Republic.

Of course, Caesar's life and death left a vacuum of power in Rome that was ultimately filled by his chosen heir, Octavian. The importance of Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (or as he was known from birth, Gaius Octavius "Octavian" Thurinus) to the course of Western history is hard to overstate. His life, his rise to power, his political, social and military achievements, all laid the foundations for the creation of an Empire which would endure for almost five centuries, and whose traditions, laws, architecture and art continue to influence much of Europe and the world today. Octavian was the first true Roman Emperor, and the first man since the Etruscan Tarquins, five centuries earlier, to establish a successful hereditary ruling dynasty in what had been a proud Republic for over half a millennium. He was a canny strategist, an excellent orator, a fine writer, a generous patron of the arts and enthusiastic promoter of public works, but above all he was a master politician. Octavian's great-uncle (and adoptive father) Julius Caesar was a great general, his rival Mark Antony was a great soldier, but as a politician Octavian outmatched them all.

Like his adoptive father before him, Octavian is one of those figures whom it is difficult to know exactly what to make of, because he appears, even at a distance, to be larger than life. Yet the amount of personal correspondence and contemporary writings penned by Octavian himself, as well as his friends and associates (and rivals) is such that, when we analyse it all together, a clear picture of the man behind the bronze statue begins to emerge – the man who found Rome a city of bricks, but left her behind a city of marble.

This books chronicles the lives of Rome's two most important leaders, separating fact from fiction and analyzing their legacies. Along with pictures and illustrations, your kids will learn about Caesar and Augustus like never before.

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