**Dateline of important events in Gaius Julius Caesar’s life.**  
(No, I do not expect you to memorize all of these dates, but to have a general understanding of the sequence of events.)

(all dates are B.C.E.)

100 Caesar is born on July 12th
87 Flamen Dialis, selected to priesthood
83 Marries Cornelia, daughter of Cinna
80-78 Serves in the army in Asia Minor
76-75 Studies oratory in Rhodes
69 Death of Cornelia in childbirth (not of Julia, but a later son who was stillborn)
68 Quaestor, elected
67 Marries Pompeia
65 Aedile, elected
63 Pontifex Maximus, elected
62 Praetor, elected
61 Propraetor, serves in Spain
61 Divorces Pompeia
60 Forms First Triumvirate with Pompey, Crassus
59 Consul, marries Calpurnia
58-49 Proconsul in Gaul
56 Triumvirate renewed at Luca
54 Death of Julia, Caesar’s daughter, Pompey’s wife
53 Death of Crassus in Mithridatic Wars (Carrhae) in the East
50 Openly breaks with Pompey
49 Crosses the Rubicon, civil war begins
48 Battle of Pharsalus in Greece, defeats Pompey’s forces
47 Subdues Egypt
46 Battle of Thapsus in North Africa, defeats Cato and senators, Dictator for 10 years
49 Celebrates Triumphs over Gaul, Egypt, Numidia & Pontus - declared amnesty  
(significant because he did NOT use proscription, but declared a general amnesty for those who had opposed him)
45 Battle of Munda in Spain, defeats sons of Pompey, Imperator for life
44 Assassinated by a conspiracy on March 15th

43 Grand-nephew Gaius Octavius made heir, renamed Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus
Second Triumvirate formed by Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus
31 Battle of Actium, Octavian defeats Mark Antony and Cleopatra, becomes sole ruler
31-AD 14 Octavian receives the cognomen “Augustus,” becomes the first Emperor

The build-up to the prime time of Caesar’s history is at this URL:

http://www.roman-empire.net/republic/laterep-index.html#ageofcaesar

(there are misspellings and grammatical errors, but the information is sound)

Caesar’s first year in Gaul:

**Caesar defeats the Helvetii, the Germans and the Nervii**

In the first year of his governorship of Gaul 58 BC, Caesar's presence was urgently required in Transalpine Gaul (Gallia Narbonensis) because of the movement among the Teutonic tribes which was displacing the Helvetic (Swiss) Celts and forcing them into Roman territory. the year 58 BC was therefore first occupied with a campaign in which the invaders were split in two and their forces so heavily defeated that they had to retire to their own mountains.
But no sooner was this menace dealt with another loomed on the horizon. The fierce Germans tribes (Sueves and Swabians) were crossing the Rhine and threatening to overthrow the Aedui, the Gallic allies of Rome on the northern borders of the Roman province of Transalpine Gaul.

The German chief, Ariovistus, apparently envisaged the conquest of entire Gaul and its partition between himself and the Romans.

Caesar led his legions to the help of the Aedui and utterly defeated the German force, with Ariovistus barely escaping across the Rhine with what was left of his forces.

With the Germans driven back, fear was aroused in Gaul of a general Roman conquest. The Nervii, who were the leading tribe of the warlike Belgae in the north-east of Gaul prepared an attack on Rome's forces. But Caesar received warning from friends in Gaul and decided to attack first, invading Nervian territory in 57 BC. The Nervii fought heroically and for some time the outcome of the decisive battle uncertain, but eventually Caesar's victory proved overwhelming. It was followed by a general submission of all the tribes between the river Aisne and the Rhine.

Next 5 years in Gaul:

Caesar's expeditions into Germany and Britain

Caesar went on, after the the conference of Luca to reduce the whole of Gaul to submission in the course of three campaigns - justified by initial aggression from the barbarians.

The two following years were occupied with expeditions and campaigns of an experimental kind. In 55 BC a fresh invasion of Germans across the Rhine was completely shattered in the neighbourhood of modern Koblenz and the victory was followed by a great raid over the river into German territory, which made Caesar decide that the Rhine should remain the boundary.

Gaul conquered and the Germans crushed, Caesar turned his attention to Britain. In 55 BC he led his first expedition to Britain, a land so far known only by the reports of traders.

The following year, 54 BC, Caesar led his second expedition, and reduced the south-east of the island to submission. But he decided that real conquest was not worth undertaking.

During that winter and the following year 53 BC, the year of the disaster of Carrhae, Caesar was kept occupied with various revolts in north-eastern Gaul.

Last stand of the Gauls/revolt of Vercingetorix:

The Rebellion of Vercingetorix in Gaul

In 52 BC, just as Pompey's jealousies reached their height, a great rebellion was organized in the very heart of Gaul by the heroic Arvernian chief Vercingetorix. So stubborn and so able was the Gallic chief that all Caesar's energies were required for the campaign. On an attack on Gergovia Caesar even suffered a defeat, dispelling the general myth of his invincibility.

Taking heart from this, all Gallic tribes, except for three broke out in open rebellion against Rome. Even the allied Aedui joined the ranks of the rebels. But a battle near Dijon turned the odds back in favour of Caesar, who drove Vercingetorix into the hill-top city of Alesia and laid siege to him.

All efforts of the Gauls to relieve the siege were in vain. At Alesia the Gallic resistance was broken and Vercingetorix was captured. Gaul was conquered for good.

The whole of 51 BC was taken up by the organization of the conquered land and the establishment of garrisons to retain its control.
Crossing the Rubicon:

Caesar's breach with Pompey

Meanwhile the party in Rome most hostile toward him was straining itself to the utmost to effect his ruin between the termination of his present appointment and his entry into a new post. Caesar would be secure from attack if he passed straight from his position of proconsul of Gaul and Illyricum into the office of consul back in Rome. He was sure to win an election to that office, but the rules prohibited him from entering such a position till 48 BC (the rules stated that he had to wait for ten years after holding the office of consul in 59 BC!). If he could be deprived of his troops before that date, he could be attacked through the law courts for his questionable proceedings in Gaul and his fate would be sealed, while Pompey would still enjoy command over his own troops in Spain.

So far Caesar's supporters in Rome delayed a decree which would have displaced Caesar from office in March 49 BC. But the problem was only delayed, not resolved. Meanwhile in 51 BC, two legions were detached from Caesar's command and moved to Italy, to be ready for service against the Parthians in the east.

In 50 BC the question of redistributing the provinces came up for settlement. Caesar's agents in Rome proposed compromises, suggesting that Caesar and Pompey should resign simultaneously from their positions as provincial governors, or that Caesar should only retain one of his three provinces. Pompey refused, but proposed that Caesar should not resign until November 49 BC (which would still have left two months for his prosecution!). Caesar naturally refused. Having completed the organization of Gaul, he had now returned to Cisalpine Gaul in northern Italy with one veteran legion. Pompey, commissioned by a suspicious senate, left Rome to raise more troops in Italy.

In January 49 BC Caesar repeated his offer of a joint resignation. The senate rejected the offer and decreed that their current consuls should enjoy a completely free hand 'in defence of the Republic'. Evidently they had resigned themselves to the fact that there was going to be a civil war.

Caesar was still in his province, of which the boundary to Italy was the river Rubicon. The momentous choice lay before him. Was he to submit and let his enemies utterly destroy him or was he to take power by force. He made his choice. At the head of one of his one legion, on the night of January 6, 49 BC, he crossed the Rubicon. Caesar was now at war with Rome.

Caesar wins the Civil War against Pompey:

Showdown between Casesar and Pompey

Pompey was not prepared for the sudden swiftness of his adversary. Without waiting for the reinforcements he had summoned from Gaul, Caesar swooped on Umbria and Picenum, which were not prepared to resist. Town after town surrendered and was won over to his side by the show of clemency and the firm control which Caesar held over his soldiers.

In six weeks he was joined by another legion from Gaul. Corfinium was surrendered to him and he sped south in pursuit of Pompey.

The legions Pompey had ready were the very legions which Caesar had led to victory in Gaul. Pompey hence could not rely on the loyalty of his troops. Instead he decided to move south to the port of Brundisium where he embarked with his troops and sailed east, hoping to raise troops there with which he could return to drive the rebel out of of Italy. His leaving words are said to have been "Sulla did it, why not I?"

Caesar, with no enemy left to fight in Italy, was in Rome no longer than three months after he had crossed the river Rubicon.

He immediately secured the treasury and then, rather than pursuing Pompey, he turned west to deal with the legions in Spain who were loyal to Pompey.

The campaign in Spain was not a series of battles, but a sequence of skillful manoeuvres by both sides - during which Caesar, by his own admission, was at times outgeneraled by his opposition. But Caesar remained the winner as within
six months most of the Spanish troops had joined his side.
Returning to Rome he became dictator, passed popular laws, and then prepared for the decisive contest in the east, where a large force was now collecting under Pompey.
Pompey also controlled the seas, as most of the fleet had joined with him. Caesar therefore managed only with great difficulty to set across to Epirus with his first army. There he was shut up, unable to manoeuvre, by the much larger army of Pompey. With even more difficulty his lieutenant, Mark Antony, joined him with the second army in the spring of 48 BC.
Some months of manoeuvring following Pompey, though his forces outnumbered Caesar's, knew well that his eastern soldiers were not to be matched against Caesar's veterans. Hence he wished to avoid a pitched battle. Many of the senators though, who had fled Italy together with Pompey, scoffed at his indecision and clamoured for battle. Until at last, in midsummer, Pompey was goaded into delivering an attack on the plain of Pharsalus in Thessaly. The fight hung long in balance, but eventually ended in the complete rout of Pompey's army, with immense slaughter. Most of the Romans on Pompey's side though were persuaded by Caesar's promises of clemency to surrender once they realized the battle lost.
Pompey himself escaped to the coast, took a ship with a few loyal comrades and made his way to Egypt, where he found awaiting him not the asylum he sought, but the dagger of an assassin commissioned by the Egyptian government.

Caesar’s civic accomplishments in what turned out to be the final year of his life:

Into the few months of his remaining regime Caesar compressed a surprising amount of social and economic legislation, most of all the granting of full Roman citizenship to all Italians.
It was in his many reforms and projects that it showed that Caesar was not merely a conqueror and destroyer. Caesar was a builder, a visionary statesman the likes of which, the world rarely gets to see.
He established order, begun measures to reduce congestion in Rome, draining large tracts of marshy lands, revised the tax laws of Asia and Sicily, resettled many Romans in new homes in the Roman provinces and reformed the calendar, which, with one slight adjustment, is the one in use today.

The Assassination:

The Murder of Caesar

A notable situation occurred when, at the festival of the Lupercalia in February 44 BC, Mark Antony offered Caesar the crown as king of Rome. He rejected the offer dramatically, but with obvious reluctance. The idea of a king still remained intolerable to the Romans.
Many senators though suspected it only a matter of time until Caesar should accept such an offer, or that he simply would choose to rule as dictator forever as a quasi-king of Rome.
They saw their suspicions confirmed at hearing that a suggestion was to be put to the senate that Caesar should adopt the title of king for use outside of Italy. More so support for the idea was growing, if not in Rome itself, then with the people of Italy.
And with the appointment of new senators by Caesar, the senate as a whole was becoming more and more am instrument of Caesar's will. A conspiracy was formed by a group which included senators of the highest influence, some of them even Caesar's personal friends.
The organizers of the plot was Gaius Cassius Longinus and Marcus Junius Brutus were pardoned Pompeians, but the majority of their accomplices were former officers of Caesar.
Caesar never took precautions for his personal safety. At a meeting of the senate on the Ides of March (15th March) 44 BC, they gathered round him on the pretext of urging a petition and then stabbed him to death.

1. The Rubicon River divides Gaul from Italy.

2. Alea iacta est = the die is cast
3. The Optimates and the Populares were the political parties of his day. While one would expect Caesar to be a member of the Optimate party, he deliberately announces that he is a Populares instead.

4. Caesar was bald at a young age. He also suffered from epilepsy, which he learned to use to his political advantage.

5. Caesar practically “invented” charisma. He was almost irresistible to both women and men.

6. Caesar had a son with Cleopatra, named Caesarion. He brought them back to Rome with him after the Civil War. Cleopatra later had an affair with Mark Antony. It is presumed that Octavian had Caesarion put to death when he came to power. Cleopatra, of course, committed suicide.

7. Ethnically, the “Romans” were really “Latins”.

8. He was stabbed 23 times. He fell, dying, at the foot of a statue of Pompey.

9. In the formation of the political alliance that came to be known as the Triumvirate, they had originally asked Cicero to join them. He declined. (since it was unconstitutional)

10. As aedile, he curried favor with the common people by throwing lavish games and giving out lots of free food. He had to borrow to finance these, putting himself in financial danger and making it necessary for him to find a way to make a lot of money.

11. Caesar was known for living the life of his common soldiers: sleeping on the ground, racing into battle to meet the enemy. He was also generous to his veterans after the war. Personal loyalty.

12. The Via Sacra runs through the Roman Forum.

13. Basilicae are law courts. Curia is the Senate house. Thermae are the public bath houses.

14. Helvetia = modern Switzerland Gallia = modern France Lusitania = modern Portugal

15. Caesar was the original “spin doctor”, writing his own “press releases” and “PR”.

16. British towns whose names now end in -caster, -chester or -cester were once Roman military outposts (castra, castrorum).

17. “Et tu, Brute” means “Even you, Brutus.”

18. He was descended from Venus, since he claimed ancestry back to Aeneas, and Venus was Aeneas’ mother.

19. He is also descended from Mars, since he claimed ancestry back to Romulus and Remus, and Mars was their father.

20. Ostia was Rome’s seaport. The harbor is now silted over completely and it’s about 2+ miles from the sea.