

Roman Civilization

Lesson 2 Rome's Decline

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why do civilizations rise and fall?

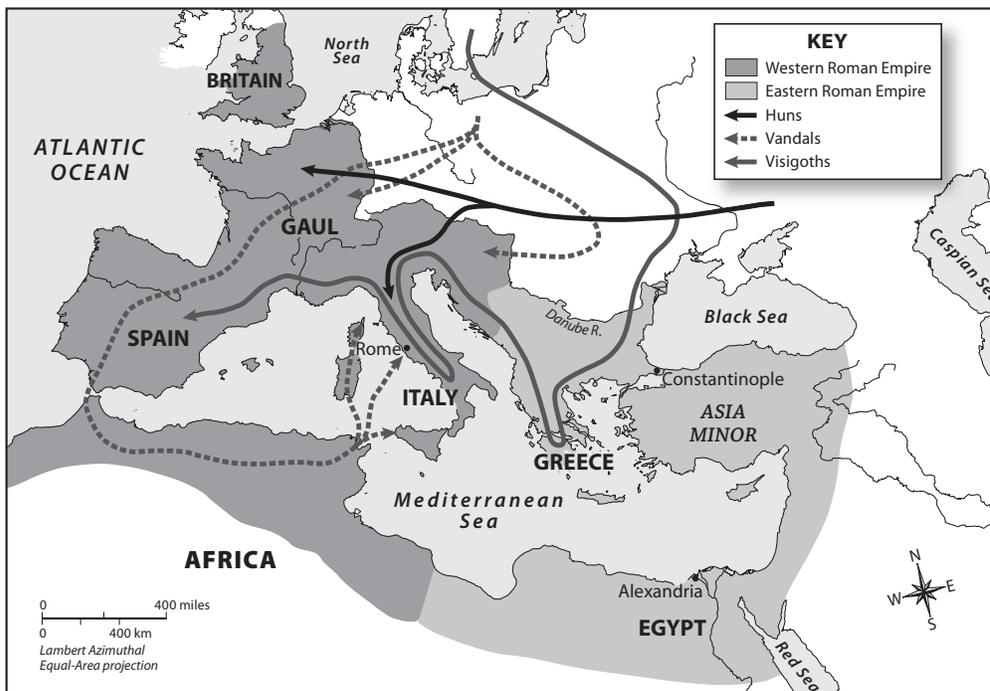
GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What problems led to Rome's decline?*
2. *What effect did Germanic invaders have on the Roman Empire?*
3. *What are the key achievements and contributions of Roman civilization?*

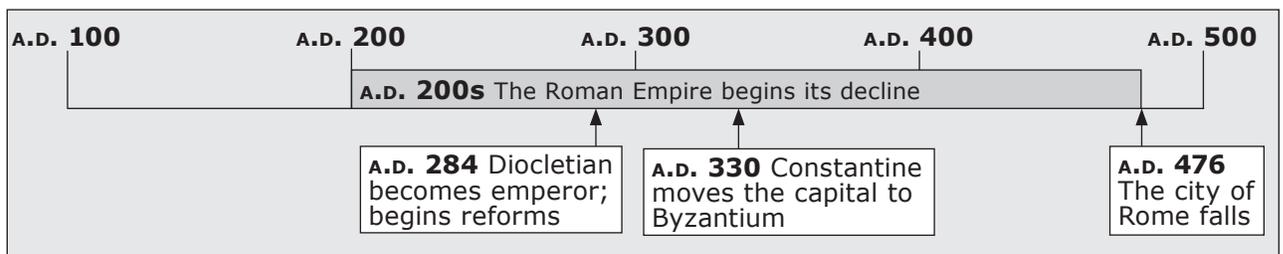
Term to Know

reforms political changes to bring about improvement

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Roman Civilization

Lesson 2 Rome's Decline, *Continued*

A Troubled Empire

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The peace of the *Pax Romana* was followed by a century of confusion and violence. Roman government grew weak while the army grew strong and independent. The legions of the army fought each other to put new emperors on the throne. Rome had 22 emperors in a period of 50 years.

This period of civil war caused great suffering, including:

- Food shortages
- High prices
- Decreased support for education
- Unpaid taxes

The government tried to fix the economy by making more new coins. These new coins had less value, so it cost more to buy goods. This is called inflation. Inflation happens when prices go up and money is worth less. People began to barter. Instead of using money, they traded one product or service for another.

As Rome struggled, Germanic tribes began to attack the empire. The Romans built walls around their cities for protection. The Roman government hired Germanic soldiers for the army, but these soldiers had no loyalty to Rome.

In A.D. 284, a general named Diocletian became emperor. He tried to strengthen the empire by making many **reforms**, or changes to make things better.

Diocletian's Reforms	Reasons
Built forts on borders	for defense
Split empire into four parts	to make it easier to rule
Set prices for goods and wages	to stop inflation
Ordered workers to keep their jobs until they died	to improve the amount of goods being made
Made officials responsible for local taxes	to make sure taxes were paid

He built forts along the borders. He set prices for goods and wages. This was to keep prices from rising even more. People paid no attention to his rules. Diocletian was not strong enough to enforce them, so his reforms did not work.

FOLDABLES®



Explaining

1. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line. On the anchor tab, write *Roman Empire*. Label the left tab *Western* and write *Rome* below it. Label the right tab *Eastern* and write *Constantinople* below it.

Draw arrows from the anchor tab to each label on the tabs. Write facts about both halves of the Roman Empire.



Marking the Chart

2. Place a dollar sign to the left of the three reforms that Diocletian made to help Rome's economy.



Reading Check

3. How did Diocletian try to improve Rome's economy?

Roman Civilization

Lesson 2 Rome's Decline, *Continued*

 **Identifying**

4. Which phrase tells what Constantine finally did when his reforms failed to help Rome?

 **Explaining**

5. Why did some Germanic tribes want land?

 **Drawing Conclusions**

6. Why did the Visigoths rebel?

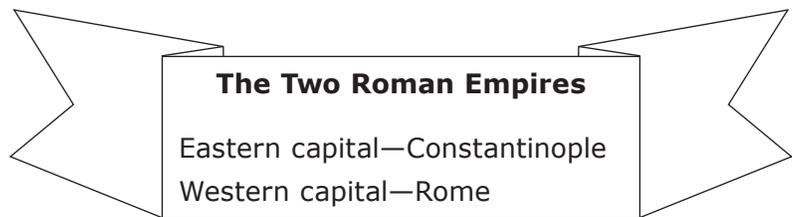
 **Reading Check**

7. Why do historians consider A.D. 476 an important date?

The Fall of Rome

The next emperor was Constantine. He tried to make Diocletian's reforms work so the empire would grow strong again. Constantine made the military stronger. Nothing seemed to help Rome improve. In A.D. 330, he moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium in the east. Then he changed the name of the new capital to Constantinople. That name lasted many years. Today the city is known as Istanbul in present-day Turkey. Constantine's reforms helped the empire, but not enough.

After Constantine died, Theodosius took power. He realized that the empire had grown too big to rule. When Theodosius died, he left a will that instructed the Romans to divide the empire into eastern and western parts. When the Romans divided the empire, they also divided the army. The western half of the empire was now too weak to stop invaders.



In the A.D. 300s and A.D. 400s, many Germanic tribes took over Roman land. Some wanted better land for raising crops and farm animals. Many were running away from the Huns, a fierce group of warriors. A tribe called the Visigoths asked Rome for protection. The Romans let the Visigoths live just inside the empire's border. Later, the Romans treated the Visigoths badly so the tribe fought back. The Visigoths captured Rome in A.D. 410.

Then, another Germanic tribe, the Vandals, invaded the Western Roman Empire. They burned buildings and took valuable things. The Germanic people now had entered every part of Roman society. Many held high government positions.

The last Western Roman emperor was a 14-year old boy name Romulus Augustulus. He did not have strong power or support.

In A.D. 476, a Germanic general named Odoacer overthrew the emperor. He took control of Rome. No Roman emperor ever again ruled from Rome. This is considered the end of the Western Roman Empire.

Roman Civilization

Lesson 2 Rome's Decline, *Continued*

Rome's Legacies

Roman ideas still influence our lives in the United States today. We read Roman literature. Modern buildings use Roman arches, domes, and concrete.

We share Roman ideas about justice and the law. Like the Romans, we believe that everyone is equal under the law and that a person is considered innocent until proven guilty. We also require judges to decide court cases fairly.

Our government, too, is similar to the Roman republic. In a republic, citizens elect their leaders. As in Rome, our republic works best when citizens get involved.

The Romans also influenced how we speak. The Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian languages come from Latin. Many English words have Latin roots. We use the Latin alphabet. Doctors, lawyers, and scientists use Latin phrases in their work. All plant and animal species have Latin names.

Some of our architecture and construction comes from the Romans. Government buildings and state capitols often use domes and arches. Concrete, developed by the Romans, is an important building material today.

One of the world's major religions, Christianity, began in the Roman Empire. It spread with the help of the Roman road system. When Roman emperors adopted Christianity in the A.D. 300s, they also helped spread the new religion.

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Check for Understanding

List four contributions or achievements of Roman civilization that influence our lives today.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Marking the Text

8. Underline the Roman ideas that tell how the language of the Romans influenced languages used today.



Reading Check

9. What Roman contributions still influence our lives today?



10. Place a one-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding. Label the anchor tab *Positive and Negative Aspects*. Write *The Roman Empire* in the center.

Make a memory map by drawing five arrows around the title and writing words about Rome. Use your map to list the information in the Check for Understanding.