

Ancient Rome

Map of Ancient Rome

Name: _____ Date: _____

In this unit, you will learn about ancient Rome. Look carefully at the map. Put an X on Rome. Put a Y on Greece. Put a W on Gaul.



Ancient Rome

Vocabulary

1. **Augustus**—first Roman emperor
2. **Carthage**—powerful ancient city-state located in North Africa
3. **Caesar**—title given to ancient Roman leaders; means “ruler” in Latin
4. **Christian**—a person who follows the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth
5. **consuls**—two patricians who lead the government of ancient Rome
6. **Etruscan civilization**—an ancient civilization located on the Italian peninsula to the north of Rome
7. **Five Good Emperors**—Roman emperors whose rule was considered effective: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Atoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius
8. **Jesus**—founder of Christianity
9. **Julius Caesar**—first leader of the Roman Republic
10. **Latin**—the language of ancient Rome
11. **New Testament**—a series of books in the Bible that describe the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth
12. **patricians**—the wealthy and powerful citizens of ancient Rome
13. **Pax Romana**—200-year period of peace and prosperity in ancient Rome
14. **plebeians**—the merchants, farmers, and artisans of ancient Rome
15. **Punic Wars**—three armed conflicts between ancient Rome and Carthage
16. **republic**—form of government in which the citizens vote for the leaders
17. **Roman Colosseum**—an amphitheater built in rome between 70–80 A.D.
18. **Romulus and Remus**—the mythical founders of ancient Rome
19. **tribune**—a man who represented the plebeians in the Roman Republic

The Beginning of Ancient Rome

Brief #1

Focus

The Roman Empire began as a small village on the Tiber River.

When most people think of Rome, they think of a large European city—the capital of the country of Italy. Of course, Rome is the capital of Italy. But there was a time, thousands and thousands of years ago, when there was no Italy, and Rome was just a tiny village along the banks of the Tiber River.

You may have heard the expression “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” It took centuries for Rome to go from a small town to one of the largest, most powerful empires the world has ever seen.



Romulus and Remus

There is a legend that tells about the origin of Rome. It is a story about twin brothers, Romulus and Remus. **Romulus and Remus were the sons of Mars, the Roman God of War.** Their mother was a princess named Rhea Silva. She was the daughter of King Numitor. Unfortunately, King Numitor had a jealous brother named Amulius who wanted to be king. He stole the throne from his brother, Numitor.

Amulius feared the sons of Rhea Silva. They were, after all, the grandsons of King Numitor, and he believed that once they grew up they would challenge his power and claim the throne. So Amulius stole the boys from their mother and put them in a basket. He threw the basket into the Tiber River. A she-wolf found the infant twins and rescued them. She took care of them as if they were her own pups.

After Romulus and Remus grew to manhood, they returned to their village and killed their uncle Amulius. They returned their grandfather, King Numitor, to the throne.

Romulus and Remus decided to build a new city, but they disagreed on where it should be located. They fought over this, and eventually, they both built their own cities. One day, Remus paid Romulus a visit. Remus made fun of the way Romulus built his city. This angered Romulus, so he killed his brother. Romulus became the first king of Rome. Rome is named for Romulus.

Vocabulary

1. Romulus and Remus
2. Etruscan civilization



Rome in 600 B.C.

Before the Roman Republic or Empire, Rome was a small village on the Italian peninsula. Other groups of people lived in the area as well. **To the north of Rome was the ancient Etruscan civilization with its own language and culture.** In the south were the Greeks. In North Africa, there was a city-state known as Carthage.

The Beginning of Ancient Rome

Brief #1 (cont.)



Rome in 600 B.C. (cont.)

In about 600 B.C., the Etruscans invaded Rome and took control. The Romans did not like having an Etruscan king, so they rebelled. In 509 B.C., they overthrew the Etruscans. This marks the beginning of the Roman Republic.



The Roman Republic

Brief #2

Focus

Ancient Rome had the world's first republic.

After Rome overthrew the Etruscans, they instituted a form of government known as a republic. **A republic is a type of government in which the citizens are allowed to vote for their leaders.** (The United States is a republic.)

The Roman Republic operated very differently than the republic that is in place in the United States. The citizens of Rome were divided into two groups. **The patricians were wealthy Romans. The plebeians were merchants, artists, and farmers.** In other words, all of the Roman citizens who

were not patricians were plebeians. Most Romans were plebeians. There were other people living in ancient Rome who were neither patricians nor plebeians. These were slaves and people who were born elsewhere. They were not Roman citizens.

In the early days of the Rome Republic, there were two consuls. **These consuls were patricians who were partly in charge of the government.** There was also a senate. The members of the senate were also patricians. The senate members were not elected but appointed by the consuls. There were 300 members in the Roman senate. Once a member of the senate was appointed by a consul, he had the position for life.

The plebeians in Ancient Rome made up the Assembly. The Assembly could vote, but the Senate could block their votes. Even though the Assembly had limited power, every year they were allowed to vote on which two Roman senators would serve as consuls. So if you happened to be an ambitious senator who wanted to one day become consul, you had to work with the Assembly and the plebeians.

As Rome grew and gained more land, wealth, and influence in the region, the plebeians began to worry that their interests and well-being were not being represented in the government. They began to demand that the government become more representative of them.

Vocabulary

1. republic
2. patricians
3. plebeians
4. consuls
5. tribune
6. Latin
7. Punic Wars
8. Carthage
9. Julius Caesar
10. Caesar

Fast Fact

The Roman Senate met in the Forum, part of which still stands today.

The Roman Republic

Brief #2 (cont.)

In response to the demands of the plebeians, the Roman Senate appointed tribunes. **A tribune was a man whose job was to protect the interests and rights of the plebeians in the government.** A tribune could stop the Roman Senate from making a law by simply shouting “*Veto*,” which means *I forbid* in Latin. **Latin was the language of the ancient Romans.**



The Punic Wars

During the Roman Republic, Rome got bigger and more powerful. One of the events that led to Rome’s increase in wealth and power was the Punic Wars. **The Punic Wars were a series of conflicts fought between Rome and Carthage that began in 264 B.C.**

Carthage was a powerful city-state located in North Africa. It developed a huge trading empire. Roman expansion southward created conflict between Rome and Carthage. War broke out over control of trade in the region. The Punic Wars are really three separate wars that were fought within one hundred years of each other. The end result was a Roman victory. Rome conquered Carthage and enslaved the population. The victory of the Romans over Carthage spread the boundaries of Rome even farther.



Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was a powerful and skilled general in the Roman Army. He made many conquests for the Roman Republic. He gained territory in what we know as France, Great Britain, and even parts of Germany. The Romans called these areas *Gaul*.

This increased Rome’s power and wealth even more. As Rome grew and conquered more and more people, slaves poured into Rome. There was competition for land and resources between the plebeians and the new arrivals to Rome. Also, war destroyed many of the homes and farms of the poor. The conquest of more and more people and land only seemed to benefit the patricians. But there wasn’t just unrest among the plebeians.

In 49 B.C., Julius Caesar became the leader of the Roman Republic. ***Caesar* means “ruler” or “leader” in Latin.** Many military leaders and patricians feared Caesar. They thought that he was too powerful and might try to destroy the Roman Republic. Other Roman Senators started to conspire against Caesar. In 44 B.C., Caesar was assassinated in the Roman Senate. Caesar’s death brought an end to the Roman Republic, which had lasted for nearly five hundred years.

Fast Fact

Carthaginian general Hannibal marched elephants over the Alps during the Second Punic War.

The Roman Empire

Brief #3

Focus

The Roman Empire
lasted from 27 B.C.
to 476 A.D.

Scholars and historians consider the Roman Empire to be one of the most influential empires that ever existed. At its height, it encompassed huge areas in Europe, Asia, North Africa, and all of the islands in the Mediterranean.

Even today you can see the legacy of the Roman Empire by simply looking at the languages that so many people speak. Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Romanian all come from Latin, which is the original language of the Romans.



Roman Emperors

The Roman Empire had many emperors. Some of them are very famous. Others accomplished great things. And some were tyrants who are only known because of the destruction they caused.

The first emperor of Rome after the fall of the Republic was Augustus. He ruled from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D. Augustus Caesar was an effective leader. He is considered one of Rome's greatest emperors. He is credited with establishing both a police force and a fire department in Ancient Rome. He also created a standing army in Rome. Under his rule, things got better for most people. Because of this, even people who were conquered by the Romans became loyal to Rome. Augustus ruled at the beginning of a time that would be known as the Pax Romana. **The Pax Romana is a two-hundred-year period of peace and prosperity in Roman history.**

Vocabulary

1. *Augustus*
2. *Pax Romana*
3. *Five Good Emperors*

Between 96 and 180 A.D., Rome was ruled by what historians call the Five Good Emperors. **The Five Good Emperors were Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Atoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.** These emperors were thought to lead with wisdom and honesty. Their emperors increased public services, supported the arts, and improved relations with the Roman Senate.

Not all Roman Emperors were as good. Rome had its share of ineffectual and tyrannical leaders just as modern countries do. One of these was named Caligula. Modern historians think that Caligula may have suffered from a mental illness like schizophrenia. He is said to have put both his friends and enemies to death, and wanted to make his horse a member of the senate. Caligula was murdered by his bodyguards in 41 A.D.

The Roman Empire

Brief #3 (cont.)

Fast Fact

Nearly 30 Roman emperors were murdered or assassinated while in office.



Roman Emperors (cont.)

Probably one of the most infamous Roman Emperors is Nero. He ruled from 54 to 68 A.D. For both political and personal reasons, Nero is accused of murdering his stepbrother, his mother, and his wife. His leadership was so erratic that eventually he was declared an enemy of the state. Upon hearing this news, Nero committed suicide.

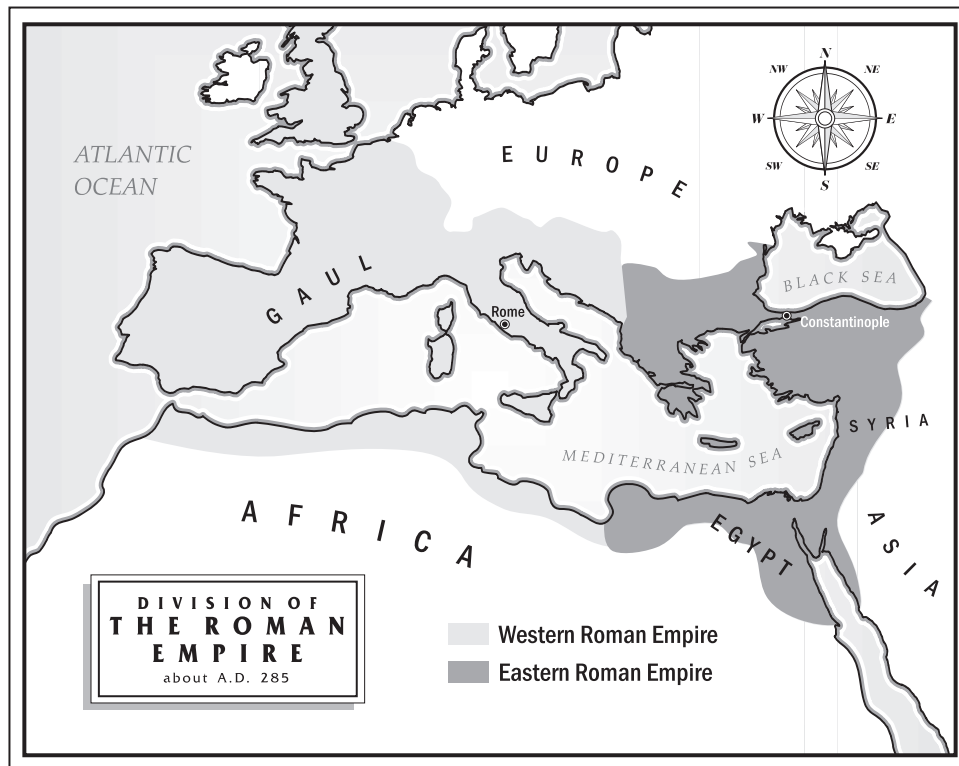


The Decline of the Roman Empire

After the death of Marcus Aurelius, one of the Five Good Emperors, the Roman Empire began to decline, or get weaker, and lose influence. One reason was that Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius who became emperor, was a very poor leader. He was both cruel and violent. Commodus was strangled to death while he took a bath.

Another factor that contributed to Rome's decline was its size. It was very hard to rule an empire as large as Rome. Armies in different Roman provinces fought with each other to see who could gain control of the seat of power.

In around 285 A.D., the then-emperor, Diocletian, divided the Roman Empire into two parts: the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire. He appointed a co-emperor named Maximian to help him rule.



The Roman Empire

Brief #3 (cont.)



The Decline of the Roman Empire (cont.)

The empire stayed divided but intact until 324 A.D. Then an emperor named Constantine came to power. He wanted to reunite the Roman Empire. But instead of having the capital of the reunited empire in Rome, where it always was, he built a new capital. This new capital was called Constantinople. It was in the eastern part of the empire. It was located in what we now call Turkey. Eventually, Constantinople would become the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

Although the Roman Empire was technically united, it really was two separate empires: the empire in the west with its capital in Rome, and the empire in the east with its capital in Constantinople. Different cultures were beginning to spring up in the two empires. Many of them had different religious traditions. At the same time, the western part of the Roman Empire was being invaded by people from different parts of Europe. The Huns, the Visigoths, and the Vandals invaded Rome in the 4th century A.D. They robbed the Romans and destroyed their homes and farms.

Eventually, the already-weakened western part of the Roman Empire collapsed in 476 A.D. The eastern half continued on for another thousand years, but the Roman Empire as it had been was over.

Fast Fact

Twelve-year-old Romulus Augustulus was the last emperor of Rome.



The Legacy of Ancient Rome

Like the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, and Greeks, the ancient Romans made a huge impact on civilization and left an enormous legacy. The ancient Romans built roads, aqueducts, and buildings that still stand today. You can see Roman architecture in Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Romans also wrote literature, poetry, plays, and music.

The ancient Romans developed a constitution which is used as a model for contemporary governments. The Constitution of the United States actually used the Roman Constitution as a model. The Roman Constitution includes a balance of powers and a series of checks and balances.

Fast Fact

The Roman Colosseum, built in Rome between 70 and 80 A.D., could seat 50,000 spectators.

Ancient Romans came to the amphitheatre to watch gladiators battle wild animals and each other.

Christianity

Brief #4

Focus

Christianity had its beginnings in Jerusalem and Judea, and spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Christianity is a religion that is practiced by million of people all over the world. **A Christian is a person who believes and follows the teachings of Jesus.**

The Roman Empire covered a large area populated with lots of different types of people. Many people who lived in the provinces of ancient Rome worshipped different gods.

The Romans were polytheistic. They worshipped more than one god, like the Egyptians and the Greeks. But there were other people who lived in the Roman provinces of Judea and Israel. These people were Jews, and practiced a religion called Judaism. Generally, the ancient Romans tolerated religious differences among the peoples. As long

as everyone paid their taxes and obeyed the law, they were permitted to practice whatever religion they liked.



Jesus of Nazareth

In about 7 B.C., a man named Jesus was born in Nazareth. Nazareth was a part of the Roman Empire. Like many people of the region, Jesus was a Jew.

When Jesus grew up, he began to teach about God and how people should behave in the world and to one another. Because Jesus was a Jew, he preached about Jewish law and the importance of the Ten Commandments. But he also talked about some things that not everyone agreed with. Some people in the community felt their power was threatened, and also feared that what Jesus taught might anger the Romans and cause them trouble. These people had Jesus arrested. He was put on trial and sentenced to death.

Vocabulary

1. Christian
2. Jesus
3. New Testament



The Spread of Christianity

The life, teachings, and death of Jesus are written about in the New Testament part of the Bible. The New Testament is a very important book for Christians. Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God and was sent to Earth to save people. They also believe that after he was put to death, he rose from the dead.

After the death of Jesus, his teachings began to spread to other places. At first, many Christians were persecuted for their beliefs. Many were put to death in the Colosseum in Rome. Then, the Emperor Constantine made it a crime to persecute a Christian. Constantine became a Christian before he died. In 380, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.