

Ancient Rome Learning Outcomes

Geography

- Rome was founded on the **Tiber River**, in the center of the **Italian peninsula**.
- Rome grew from a city in central Italy to a huge empire that occupied parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia all at once.
- The Tiber River gave the Romans easy access to the Mediterranean Sea.
- The Alps are the tallest mountains in Europe and separate the Italian Peninsula from the rest of Europe.
- The mountains and hills of Italy helped keep Romans safe from invasions.
- The climate allowed the Romans to easily grow the crops they needed and wanted.
- Rome's location on the Mediterranean Sea and the warm climate of that location made it easy to expand.

History

- The early city of Rome was greatly influenced by the ancient Greek and Etruscan cultures.
- Rome was first ruled by Etruscan kings, who had overthrown the Latin kings.
- The Romans rebelled against the Etruscans and formed a new government called a republic.
- Between 264 and 146 BCE, Rome fought three wars, known as the Punic Wars, against the powerful city of Carthage.
- **Pax Romana** is Latin for "Roman Peace" and is considered the Golden Age of the Roman Empire.
- A **census** is a system of counting members of a society. The Romans used their results to determine who to tax and how much to tax each individual or family.
- When Rome became too large for one emperor to manage it was divided into two.
- In 312 CE Constantine became Emperor of the Western Roman Empire.
- Constantine moved the capital of the empire from Rome to a new city, which he named for himself, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey).

Economics

- Roman coins and roads helped make trade and travel much easier during the Roman Empire.
- Romans built thousands of miles of roads and bridges that were used by groups of soldiers (**legions**), messengers, and traders throughout the empire.
- Romans had such advanced engineering technology that some of their roads still exist today.
- Romans minted coins that were used for trade throughout the empire, and showed images of Roman rulers, gods, and goddesses.



The Fall of the Roman Empire

- Rome had no orderly transfer of power as emperors replaced one another by force, bribery, and murder.
- High taxes to pay for the army and for bribes to enemy leaders drove Romans into poverty and crippled trade.
- The invasion of the empire by the Huns, under their leader Attila, eventually caused the Germanic tribes to break up the empire.
- The Eastern Roman Empire survived as the Byzantine Empire until 1453.

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Government

- The Romans had two social classes: Patricians and Plebeians.
- The **Patricians** were the nobles or wealthy upper class of ancient Rome. They provided Rome with leaders in politics, the military and religion.
- The **Plebeians** were common citizens. They had limited rights and few could read and write.
- Patricians had most of the power at first, but over time plebeians fought for and won a significant role in their government.
- A **republic** is a form of government in which citizens elect leaders to make all of the political decisions.
- The Roman Republic was a government in which the people elected their leaders. Roman citizens had certain rights and responsibilities.
- The **consuls** were the highest elected government officials in the Roman government.
- A **tribune** was a military or civil official in the Roman government.
- A **veto** is to refuse or reject a law.
- **Julius Caesar** was a Roman general and dictator, or a ruler with complete authority.
- Caesar's victory in **Gaul** gave him the political strength to defeat Pompey.
- Julius Caesar's defeat of Pompey led to the end of the Roman Republic and the founding of the Roman Empire.
- Julius Caesar was assassinated by members of the Roman Senate on the Ides of March. (March 15)
Augustus Caesar fought **Mark Antony** to control Roman lands and became the first emperor of the Roman Empire and changed his name to **Octavian**.

Culture

- Men held the most importance in Roman society.
- Slavery supported the empire. Enslaved people could buy their freedom on occasion.
- Conquered nations were absorbed into the Empire. Cities were built to resemble Rome, and the Roman culture was passed on to the new citizens.
- The Roman's borrowed much from the Greek (religion, art, architecture, language).

Architecture

- Rome used Greek building styles but also added their own architectural strategies (vaults, arches, use of concrete) to build larger, taller, and heavier buildings.
- An **arch** is the curved part of an opening, as in a doorway.
- An **aqueduct** is a system of bridges and canals that carry water.
- The Colosseum was a public amphitheater created to entertain the public with spectacles such as battles, gladiator fights and public executions.
- Invention of concrete explains, in part, why so many Roman **buildings** and roads throughout the empire still survive today.

Religion

- Latin became the common language of the Roman Empire and is the official language of the Roman Catholic Church.
- The early Roman Empire required all people worship the Roman gods and goddesses.
- The Roman government persecuted Christians in public to establish order and set an example of what might happen to those who break laws.
- **Constantine** was the first Roman emperor to proclaim himself Christian and to legalize **Christianity**.