LESSON 1
The Founding of Rome

Rome's location, especially its nearby farmlands and easy access to the Mediterranean Sea, enabled it to grow and influence the world.

The Beginning of Rome

Greek culture did not die when Greece's power declined. Parts of it were adapted and used by the Romans. The Romans had been mostly isolated from the great civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean region. Over time, however, they learned from these civilizations and used their new knowledge to build a vast and powerful empire. Roman rule extended throughout much of present-day Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The Settling of Italy

Italy's location has attracted people for thousands of years. Italy is centrally located in the Mediterranean region. People can easily travel to it from Africa, Asia, and Europe. In addition, people and goods moved with little difficulty through passes in Italy's rugged mountains. These mountain passes also linked settlements together.

There is another key reason why Italy has attracted settlers. Italy has a sunny, mild climate and fertile farmland. Its mountain slopes level off to large flat plains that are ideal for growing crops. With the ability to grow plenty of food, Italy could support a large population.

Rome's Location

The Romans made their home on the Italian Peninsula. This long, thin peninsula juts out from central Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. On a map, Italy looks like a high-heeled boot. The boot's heel points to Greece. The toe points to the island of Sicily. The Alps are like shoelaces that are strung across the top of the boot. These rugged mountains separate Italy from northern Europe. Another mountain range in Italy is the Apennines. These mountains extend from north to south. Volcanoes dot southern Italy's landscape. Italy has long been affected by volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.

Physical features influenced Rome's development. Rome was founded about 15 miles up the Tiber River from the Mediterranean Sea. People used the river to move goods easily between northern and southern Italy. Merchants could also ship their goods out to the Mediterranean Sea using the river. In addition, Rome was far enough up the Tiber River to escape raids by sea-going pirates. Rome's location across seven steep hills made it easy to defend against enemy attacks.

Roman Origins

Several different legends describe how Rome began. One legend about the founding of Rome is contained in The Aeneid, written by the Roman poet Virgil. He described what took place after the Greeks captured the city of Troy. First, the Trojan Aeneas (us) and his soldiers escaped from Troy to find a new homeland. The Trojans settled in Italy and waged war. Then Aeneas
married a local king's daughter. Their marriage united the Trojans with a group of Latin-speaking people who lived in this region. Because of this, Aeneas is known as the "father" of the Romans.

Another legend describes the founding of Rome much differently. This tale involves twin brothers, Romulus (RAHM• yuh• luhs) and Remus (REE• muhs). After they were born, they were left beside the Tiber River. A female wolf discovered the boys and cared for them. A shepherd and his wife found and raised the twins.

When the brothers grew up, they planned to build a city along the Tiber River. However, the two boys argued about the construction of the city. Remus made fun of the walls that Romulus built. The Roman historian Livy (LIH• vee) tells what happened next:

"Then followed an angry altercation [argument]; heated passions [emotions] led to bloodshed; in the tumult [uproar] Remus was killed. The more common report is that Remus contemptuously [spitefully] jumped over the newly raised walls and was with his enraged Romulus, . . . Romulus thus became sole ruler, and the city [Rome] was called after him, its founder."

—from History of Rome, by Livy

Historically, little is known about the first people to settle in Italy. Archaeological artifacts (AHR• tih• faks) suggest that Neolithic people might have settled in Italy as early as 5000 B.C. These early groups built farming villages but moved after they had used up the nutrients in the soil. Between 2000 B.C. and 1000 B.C., other groups of people settled permanently in the hills and on the plains. Latin-speaking people, called Latins, settled on the plain of Latium (LAY• shee• uhm) in central Italy.

One group of Latins built straw-roofed huts on Rome's hills. They tended animals and grew crops. This settlement, which occurred (uh• KUHRD) between 800 B.C. and 700 B.C., marks the birth of Rome. The people living there became known as Romans.

Influences of Greeks and Etruscans

After 800 B.C., other groups moved into the region where the Romans lived. Two of these groups, the Greeks and the Etruscans (ih • TRUHS • kuhnz), would greatly influence Roman civilization.

From about 750 B.C. to 500 B.C., Greeks settled in farming villages in southern Italy. The Greeks introduced grape and olive farming to the region. The Greeks also passed on the Greek alphabet to the Romans. Later, the Romans would model their buildings, sculpture, and literature after those of the Greeks.

The Etruscans had an even greater influence on Roman civilization. The Etruscans settled north of Rome in Etruria (ih • TROOR • ee • uh). After 650 B.C., they moved south. The Etruscans eventually (ee • VEN • choo • uh • lee) took control of Rome and its surrounding area.

The Etruscans were ruled by nobles, who grew wealthy from trade and mining. Other Etruscans devoted themselves to the study of the arts. Skilled Etruscan artisans worked with copper, iron, lead, and tin. They turned these metals into weapons, tools, and jewelry. Etruscan artists covered the walls of tombs with colorful paintings. They painted men and women feasting, dancing, and playing music. Some wall paintings also displayed violent battle scenes. These images showed that the Etruscans were proud of their powerful army.

The Etruscans taught the Romans to build with brick and to roof their homes with tiles. They drained the water from marshes that lay between Rome's hills. They laid out city streets. The Etruscans built temples, passing on their religious rituals to the Romans. They even influenced the style of clothing that the Romans wore. Roman men adopted the Etruscan fashion of wearing short cloaks and togas. Finally, the Etruscan army served as the model for the mighty army that the Romans would later create.

Explaining How did the Etruscans influence early Rome?
Thinking Like a Historian

Analyzing Primary and Secondary Sources

The Roman historian Livy wrote about the history of Rome. What were his sources? What other sources about these events do we have that are as reliable as Livy's? For example, is a fresco an historical source? If so, is it a primary or secondary source? Which type of source is more trustworthy? Write a brief explanation of how you would compare sources if sources were reliable, such as Livy's writing and images painted on a wall. For more information about analyzing primary and secondary sources, read the chapter What Does a Historian Do?

Becoming a Republic


How did Rome become a great power?

The Romans greatly benefited from the contributions of the Etruscans. However, they grew weary of Etruscan rulers. According to Roman tradition, in 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew Tarquin the Proud, the Etruscan king, and established a republic (rih• PUH• blihk). A republic is a form of government in which citizens elect their leaders. The creation of a republic began a new era in Rome's history. When Rome became a republic, it was still a small city. It was also still surrounded by different groups of people. These groups included Etruscans, Greeks, and other Latins. Over the next 200 years, the Romans fought many wars against these neighbors. By 267 B.C., Rome controlled almost all of Italy. The Roman Republic was able to acquire land because of its strong army. During the early years of the republic, every male citizen who owned land had to serve in the army. Roman soldiers were well trained, and deserters were punished by death. This strict discipline ensured soldiers stayed loyal to Rome.

The Romans also developed new battle strategies. In the early days of the republic, the Romans fought like the Greeks. Rows of soldiers moved in a single large group. They attacked from only one direction. Roman generals realized that this way of fighting was slow and hard to control. They reorganized their soldiers into smaller groups, called legions (LEE• juhnz). Each legion had about 6,000 men. A legion was further divided into groups of 60 to 120 soldiers. These smaller groups could move quickly around the battleeld to wherever they were most needed.

Roman soldiers were also well armed. Most soldiers carried a short, double-edged iron sword called a gladius (GLAY• dee• uhs) and an iron spear called a pilum (PY• luhm). Each of the small groups in a legion carried its own standard into battle. The standard was a tall pole topped with a symbol, such as an eagle.

Because the standard could be seen above the action, it showed soldiers where they were supposed to be on the battlefield.

Who Ruled Rome?

In addition to having a strong army, the Romans ruled effectively. After they conquered a region, they built permanent military outposts to protect it. These settlements were built at strategic locations, such as on a high hill or at a river crossing. They also built roads between settlements. As a result, troops and supplies could move quickly within the conquered lands.

The Romans stressed the need to treat conquered people fairly. If conquered people were treated well, the Romans believed, the people would become loyal subjects. To encourage fair treatment, the Romans created the Roman Confederation. This system gave some conquered peoples, especially other Latins, full Roman citizenship. They could vote and serve in the government of Rome. They were treated the same as other citizens under the law.

Other conquered peoples became allies, or friends, of Rome. As allies, they paid Roman taxes. In addition, they were required to supply soldiers to fight for Rome. Allies, however, were free to manage their own local affairs.
With these policies, the Romans hoped to maintain the peace in their conquered lands. If conquered peoples turned against Rome, its rulers were ready to crush any revolts. Rome's generosity paid off. The republic grew stronger and more unified.

Analyzing Why were the Romans able to expand their control of Italy?

LESSON 1 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary
1. How was the growth of the republic aided by the Roman army's use of legions in warfare?
   SS.6.W.3.8, LA.6.1.6.1

Answer the Guiding Questions
2. Explaining How did Rome's location affect its development?
   SS.6.G.2.1, SS.6.G.2.2

3. Summarizing How did the Roman government maintain control over conquered territories?
   SS.6.G.2.2

4. Differentiating How did the attitude of Romans toward the Etruscans change over time?
   SS.6.G.2.6

5. Persuasive Writing You are a Roman living about 650 B.C. The Etruscans have taken over, and your friends are worried about the new rulers. Write a persuasive speech in which you encourage them to adopt Etruscan ways. Tell what Romans may learn from the Etruscans and why they should not turn against the new rulers.
   SS.6.G.2.6, LA.6.1.7.1
Rome’s ideas about democracy would greatly influence the people who founded the United States many centuries later.

Governing Rome

Not everyone was treated fairly in the Roman Republic. Rome's government reflected divisions within its society.

Early Romans were divided into two classes: patricians and plebeians. The patricians (puh • TRIH • shuhn-z) were Rome's ruling class. Patricians were wealthy landowners. They came from Rome's oldest and most prominent families. Most Romans, however, were plebeians (plih • BEE • uhn-z). Plebeians were not as wealthy as the patricians. In some cases, they were very poor. Plebeians included artisans, shopkeepers, and owners of small farms.

Patrician and plebeian men were Roman citizens and had the right to vote. Both groups were required to pay taxes and serve in the army. Plebeians, however, had a lower social position than the patricians. For example, it was illegal for a patrician and a plebeian to marry each other. Plebeians also lacked important basic rights. They could not hold public office or lead the public ceremonies that honored the gods of Rome. Rome's republic would be shaped by a struggle between the patricians and the plebeians over the right to govern.

Government of the Republic

The government of the Roman Republic was organized into three branches. One branch made laws; another ran the daily affairs of government; a third branch acted as judges. The republic had a system of checks and balances. This system was designed to prevent one branch from becoming too strong. It did not separate powers like the United States government does today, however. Judges helped run the government and could lead armies. Some leaders who ran the government also helped make laws.

Two patrician consuls (CAHN • suh-lz) headed the government. The consuls were administrators and army leaders. Each consul served one year in office. Their terms of office were short so that they would not become too powerful. Each consul could veto (VEE • toh), or reject, the other's decision. The word veto is Latin for "I forbid." Rome also had other major government officials called praetors (PREE • tuhrz). They interpreted the law and served as judges in court. They could also lead armies.

The Senate was Rome's legislature. The Senate was a group of 300 patrician men. These senators served the republic for life. During the early republic, the Senate only advised the consuls. By the 200s B.C., however, senators debated foreign policy, proposed laws, and approved the construction of roads and temples. The Assembly of Centuries was another legislative body in Rome. It elected consuls and praetors and passed laws. The Assembly of Centuries was, like the Senate, controlled by patricians.

Conflict Between Classes

As time passed, the plebeians grew frustrated. They had to serve in the army and pay taxes, yet they had no power in the government.

In 494 B.C., many plebeians went on strike, refusing to fight in the army. They even left Rome to create a government of their own. The patricians feared that the republic was in danger of collapsing, so they agreed to share power with the plebeians.
The patricians allowed the plebeians to have their own body of representatives, called the Council of the Plebs. The Council of the Plebs elected officials called tribunes (TRIH • byooonz). Tribunes voiced plebeian concerns to the government. Tribunes could also veto government decisions. Later, plebeians were even allowed to become consuls, and marriages between plebeians and patricians were made legal.

In 287 B.C., the plebeians won another important political victory. The Council of the Plebs was given the right to pass laws for all Romans. Politically, all male citizens were now considered equal. In practice, however, a few wealthy patrician families still held most of the power. Women did not have any political rights. The Roman Republic had become more representative, but it was still not democratic.

Cincinnatus and Civic Duty

The Romans believed that there were times when the republic needed a strong leader. To lead Rome, the Romans created the office of dictator (DIHK • tay • tuhr). Today, this word is used to describe an oppressive ruler who has total control over a country. In the Roman Republic, however, the consuls resigned during difficult or dangerous times, and the senate appointed a dictator to lead the republic. During a crisis, the dictator had complete control over Rome. After the crisis was over, the dictator was expected to give up his power, and the regular government's power would then be restored.

One of the most famous Roman dictators was Cincinnatus (SIHN • suh • NA • tuhs). Cincinnatus had been a respected Roman consul who was known for his loyalty to Rome. In 458 B.C., a powerful enemy of Rome threatened to destroy the Roman army. The Senate appointed Cincinnatus as dictator to handle this emergency. Messengers were sent to his farm to tell him about his appointment. They found him plowing his fields. Cincinnatus accepted the role of dictator, and he immediately created an army. Then, he led it into battle, easily defeating the enemy. Next, Cincinnatus marched his army back to Rome and resigned as dictator. Just 16 days after taking control of the republic, Cincinnatus returned to his farm.

Cincinnatus was widely admired because he fulfilled his civic duty. Civic duty is the idea that citizens have a responsibility to help their country. This idea was important to the Romans and has been valued by other people as well. George Washington, for example, was inspired by Cincinnatus. Like Cincinnatus, Washington was a farmer who was asked to lead an army: the Continental Army in the American War for Independence. After leading the Americans to victory, Washington returned to his farm in Virginia. Later, he reluctantly agreed to become the first president of the United States.

Rome's System of Law

One of Rome's greatest contributions to later civilizations was its system of law. Roman law has influenced the legal systems of the United States and other countries.

At first, Roman laws were not written down. This sparked criticism from the plebeians. They believed that patrician judges would always rule in favor of the upper classes if there were no written laws. The plebeians demanded that laws be put into writing. Thus, the judges would have to refer to the laws when they made a legal decision. The patricians eventually agreed.

In 451 B.C., Rome adopted its first written code of laws known as the Twelve Tables. The laws were carved on twelve bronze tablets and placed in Rome's marketplace, called the Forum (FOHR • uhm). These laws served as the foundation for all future Roman laws. The Twelve Tables supported the idea that all free citizens—patrician and plebeian alike—had the right to be treated equally in the Roman legal system.

As the Romans conquered more people, they expanded their system of laws. They created laws that would apply to people who were not Roman citizens. These new laws were known as the Law of Nations. The Law of Nations identified the laws and rights that applied to all people everywhere in the Roman lands.

Roman Justice

The ideas found in Roman laws are woven throughout the American legal system today. For example, the American legal system, like the Roman legal system, assumes that a person is innocent until proven
guilty. People accused of crimes have the right to defend themselves before a judge. Judges must carefully consider all the evidence in a case before making a decision.

The rule of law is one of the key ideas that the Romans passed on to the world. The rule of law means that laws apply to everyone equally. It also means that the legal system should treat everyone the same way. Before the Romans, the rule of law was unfamiliar to people.

In many regions, people of the upper classes enjoyed special privileges. They often had different laws and courts from the lower classes. People in the lower classes, however, had few legal rights or none at all. The Romans extended the idea of the rule of law to all their lands. Today, the rule of law is the guiding principle of the American legal system.

**Explaining** What was the emergency that caused Cincinnatus to be appointed dictator?

### The Punic Wars


**How did Rome conquer the Mediterranean region?**

Rome continued to grow as a republic. Its power, however, was threatened by another civilization in the Mediterranean region. Carthage (KAHR • thihj) was a powerful trading empire based along the north African coast. Carthage traced its beginnings to the Phoenicians, who created a trading colony there about 800 B.C. Carthage became the largest and wealthiest city in the western Mediterranean area because of trade. Its territory included parts of northern Africa and southern Europe.

Carthage became Rome's main rival. Each wanted to control the entire Mediterranean world. In 264 B.C., their rivalry intensified. It grew into a series of wars that took place over a period of nearly 120 years.

### The Punic Wars Begin

War between the Romans and the Carthaginians, or the people of Carthage, erupted in 264 B.C., The original conflict is known as the First Punic War. The First Punic War began when Rome sought control of the fertile island of Sicily. The Carthaginians had already established colonies on the island. So they were determined to stop the Roman invasion.

Carthage used its strong navy to protect its trading empire. Although Rome had a powerful army, it did not have a navy. It was forced to build a fleet quickly in order to fight Carthage. The Romans modeled their new warships after those of Carthage. They made one key innovation. They built a small moveable bridge on the front of each ship. This bridge allowed Roman soldiers to board a Carthaginian ship and fight hand-to-hand on its decks. In a way, it changed a sea war into a land war.

For more than 20 years, the Romans and Carthaginians fought each other at sea. Finally, in 241 B.C., a Roman fleet badly defeated Carthage's navy off the coast of Sicily. Carthage was forced to give up Sicily and pay a huge fine to the Romans. Rome then took control of the island.

### Hannibal Attacks: The Second Punic War

After losing Sicily, Carthage tried to expand its empire into Spain. They wanted to make up for the losses caused by Rome taking over Sicily. Spain had valuable resources of silver, copper, gold, lead, and iron.

The Romans bitterly opposed Carthage's attempt to establish territory so near to Rome. So the Romans encouraged the Spanish to rebel against Carthage. In response, Carthage sent its greatest general, Hannibal (HA • nuh • buhl), to attack Rome. This event, in 218 B.C., started the Second Punic War.
Hannibal planned to fight the Romans in Italy. To do this he gathered an army of about 46,000 men and 37 elephants. He sailed from Carthage to Spain. Then, his soldiers marched through southern Gaul, or present-day France.

Next, they crossed the Alps into Italy. The Carthaginians crossed the Alps with their elephants, hoping to overpower the Roman army. Instead, the bitter cold and attacks by mountain tribes killed almost half of the Carthaginian soldiers and most of the elephants. The remaining army, however, was still a powerful fighting force when it reached Italy.

As Hannibal and his army grew closer and closer to Italy and the Roman forces, Roman military leaders looked to the Senate for advice.

"They [the Roman commanders] therefore sent frequent messages to Rome asking for instructions, . . . in view of the fact that the country was being plundered, . . . The Senate passed a resolution . . . give the enemy battle."

—from The Histories of Polybius, by Polybius

In 216 B.C., Hannibal defeated the Romans at the Battle of Cannae (KA • nee) in southern Italy. Following the battle, Hannibal's army raided the country. In response, the Romans assembled another army to stop the Carthaginians. In 206 B.C. Roman forces, led by Scipio (SIH • pee • oh), captured Spain and then attacked the city of Carthage. Hannibal returned home to North Africa to defend his people. Scipio's troops defeated the Carthaginians in 202 B.C. at the Battle of Zama (ZAY • muh). Carthage was forced to give up its navy and pay Rome a large sum of money. It also had to give its Spanish territory to Rome. As a result, Rome became the supreme power in the western Mediterranean.

The Third Punic War

Rome still considered Carthage a military threat. In 146 B.C., Rome finally destroyed it in the Third Punic War. At the same time, Rome also waged war against other states in the eastern Mediterranean region. In the 140s B.C., all of Greece fell under Roman rule. About twenty years later, Rome acquired its first province in Asia.

Describing How did Hannibal lose the Second Punic War?

Connections to TODAY

Hannibal's Elephants

Historians have wondered how Hannibal obtained elephants for his march. Were they Indian or African elephants? Indian elephants are easier to train. In fact, most circus elephants today are Indian elephants. However, it would have been very difficult for Hannibal to obtain elephants from India. Even African elephants are not native to North Africa, where Hannibal started his march. Historians continue to question which type of elephant Hannibal used—or how he obtained them.
LESSON 2 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. Why were Roman consuls awarded the power of the veto?
   SS.6.W.3.8, LA.6.1.6.1

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. Explaining How did plebeians gain power in the republic? For what changes were they responsible?
   SS.6.W.3.16

3. Summarizing Describe how Rome defeated Carthage to become the ruler of the Mediterranean region.
   SS.6.W.3.1

4. Distinguishing Fact from Opinion Identify whether the following statement is a fact or an opinion: "At first, patricians had more rights than plebeians."
   SS.6.W.3.16

5. EXPOSITORY WRITING In an essay, describe what the idea of "rule of law" meant to the average Roman.
   SS.6.W.3.10, SS.6.C.1.2

LESSON 3
The End of the Republic

Without a strong system of checks and balances, a powerful individual or group can easily take control of a representative government.

Problems in the Republic

What factors led to the decline of the Roman Republic?

The Roman army won victories abroad, but the republic faced mounting economic troubles at home. The gap between the rich and the poor grew wider. Many farmers faced financial ruin. The cities of the republic were becoming overcrowded and dangerous.

Romans—Rich and Poor

Most Romans were plebeians who farmed small plots of land. The plebeians had made some political gains in the Roman Republic, but they lacked real power. Power was still held by the patricians. The upper class still made up most of the Senate and served in key government positions. They also managed Rome's finances and directed its wars.
In the 100s B.C., farmers began to fall into poverty and debt. Why? Many small farmers had neglected their fields while fighting in Roman wars. Others had their farms destroyed by the Carthaginians. Now, the farmers did not have crops to harvest. As a result, they could not pay back loans they owed.

In addition, small farmers could not compete with wealthy Romans, who owned latifundia (la • tuh • FUHN • dee • uh), or large farming estates. Farmers could not even find jobs on these huge farms. Those jobs went to a new source of labor—the thousands of prisoners captured in the Roman wars. Wealthy landowners did not have to pay wages to enslaved workers. Instead, they bought more land for their latifundia. Small farms were pushed out of business.

As small farms shut down, thousands of poor unemployed people left the countryside. They poured into Rome's cities looking for jobs. Even in the cities, however, enslaved people did most of the work. Paying jobs were hard to find. If free people could find a paying job, it was generally for a low wage.

Desperate economic conditions created mounting anger among the poor. Roman leaders worried about a rebellion. To prevent a revolt, Roman leaders began offering cheap food and free entertainment to the poor. Numerous Roman rulers used this policy of "bread and circuses" to acquire or stay in power.

**Roman Reformers**

Not all wealthy Romans ignored the problems of the poor. Two government officials, who were also brothers, worked for reforms. Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (GRA • kuhs) thought that Rome's problems were caused by the actions of wealthy landowners. The brothers wanted to stop the wealthy from taking over small farms to create their latifundia. They urged the Senate to take some land from the latifundia and return it to the poor.

The Senate was made up of wealthy Romans, some of whom owned the latifundia. They fought the Gracchus brothers' proposals. A group of senators even killed Tiberius in 133 B.C. Gaius was also murdered 12 years later. Dark days had fallen on the Roman Republic. The people charged with making and upholding the laws repeatedly broke them.

**Roman Politics and the Army**

The republic soon faced more challenges. Rome's military leaders began to seek political power. In 107 B.C., a general named Marius (MARE • ee • uhs) became consul. Marius, the son of a worker, was not a patrician.

Marius believed that he could solve Rome's economic problems. He transformed the army in order to provide opportunities for the poor. Until then, only property owners served in the military. Marius, however, recruited soldiers from the landless poor. In return for their service, he paid them wages—and promised them land. The Roman army was no longer a force of citizen volunteers. It was now a force of professional soldiers.

The plan that Marius put into action provided work for many jobless, landless Romans. However, it also weakened the republican form of government. Soldiers felt more loyalty to the general who hired and paid them than to the republic. As a result, military generals grew enormously powerful. Some generals sought political office. This allowed them to pass laws that gave land to their soldiers—and increased their power.

The creation of a professional army led to new power struggles. Marius was soon opposed by another general, named Sulla (SUH • luh), who commanded his own army. In 82 B.C., Sulla drove his enemies out of Rome and named himself dictator. It marked the first time a Roman general had led his army into the capital.

Over the next three years, Sulla made changes to the government. He reduced the power of the tribunes and gave the senators more responsibilities. Sulla then stepped down as dictator. Sulla hoped that his reforms would restore the Roman Republic to its earlier days of glory. Instead, Rome plunged into conflict.
that lasted for the next 50 years. Some Romans took notice of how Sulla had used an army to achieve his goals. Those who were eager for power decided that they would do the same thing.

Analyzing What was the purpose of "bread and circuses"?

The Rise of Julius Caesar

How did Julius Caesar rise to power in Rome?

After Sulla left office, different Roman leaders fought among themselves for power. Many of them were military officials who relied on their loyal armies to support them. In 60 B.C., three men ruled the Roman Republic: Crassus, Pompey (PAHM • pee), and Julius Caesar (JOOL • yuhs SEE • zuhr). Crassus was a general and one of Rome's wealthiest men. Pompey and Caesar were also rich and known for their military accomplishments. These three men formed the First Triumvirate to rule Rome. A triumvirate (try • UHM • vuh • ruht) is a political group of three people who share equal power.

Caesar's Conquests

Each Triumvirate member commanded a military post in an outlying area of the Roman Republic. Pompey led in Spain, Crassus in Syria, and Caesar in Gaul. Gaul was made up mostly of what are now France and Belgium. While serving in Gaul, Caesar fought the Celts and invaded Britain. He won the admiration and support of the poorer classes. Roman senators grew uneasy with Caesar, however. They feared that he was becoming too popular and would seek power as Sulla had.

By 50 B.C., the First Triumvirate no longer existed. Crassus had died in battle, and Pompey emerged as Caesar's main rival. In 49 B.C., the Senate gave its support to Pompey. It ordered Caesar to give up his army and return to Rome. Caesar, however, refused. He knew that if he returned to Rome, he might be imprisoned or killed by his rivals. Caesar gathered his loyal troops and crossed the Rubicon (ROO • bih • KAHN) River.

This small river separated Caesar's military command area from Roman Italy. According to legend, Caesar saw a vision that inspired him to cross the Rubicon. He exclaimed to his troops:

"Even yet we may draw back; but once cross yon little bridge, and the whole issue is with the sword. . . . Take we the course which the signs of the gods and false dealing of our foes point out. The die is cast."

— from Life of Julius Caesar by Suetonius

Caesar had refused to obey the Senate and was now marching on Rome. He realized that he was starting a civil war. His decision, however, could not be reversed.

Caesar and his soldiers swiftly captured all of Italy. They drove Pompey's forces out of the country. The fighting then spread eastward, with Caesar finally crushing Pompey's army in Greece in 48 B.C.

Caesar Takes Power

In 44 B.C., Caesar took over the Roman government. He ended the practice of dictators serving in office for short terms by declaring himself dictator for life. To strengthen his power, Caesar appointed people to the Senate who supported him.

Meanwhile, Caesar introduced reforms that made him popular with Romans, especially the poor. He gave citizenship to many people living in Roman territories. He created jobs for the unemployed. In the countryside, he organized new settlements for landless laborers. He ordered landowners using slave labor to hire more free workers.

One of the most famous reforms that Caesar introduced was the creation of a new calendar. It had 12 months, 365 days, and a leap year. Known as the Julian calendar, it was used throughout Europe
until A.D. 1582. Then it was changed slightly to become the Gregorian calendar. The Gregorian calendar is based on the date of the birth of Jesus. This calendar is still used by most countries in the world today.

Many Romans praised Caesar as a wise ruler because he brought peace and good government to Rome. Others, however, hated him. They believed that he wanted to be a king. Caesar's enemies, led by the senators Brutus and Cassius, plotted to kill him. In 44 B.C., Caesar's opponents gathered around him as he entered the Senate and stabbed him to death. Caesar was killed on March 15, also known as the "Ides of March" in the Julian calendar. His murder was made famous in the play Julius Caesar, by William Shakespeare. In the play, Caesar was warned to "Beware the Ides of March."

**Explaining** Why did some Romans oppose Caesar?

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**Connections to TODAY**

**Crossing the Rubicon**

Caesar crossed the Rubicon at great risk. Even today, the phrase "crossing the Rubicon" is used when a person makes a decision that cannot be undone.

**From Republic to Empire**


**How did Rome become an empire?**

After Caesar's death, civil war broke out. Caesar's 18-year-old grandnephew Octavian (ahk • TAY • vee • uhn) joined two of Caesar's top generals, Mark Antony (AN • tuh • nee) and Marcus Lepidus (LEH • puh • duhs). The three leaders' forces defeated those who killed Caesar. In 43 B.C., they formed the Second Triumvirate. Next, they divided the Roman Empire among themselves. Octavian took command of Italy and the west. Antony ruled in Greece and the east. Lepidus took charge in North Africa.

**Antony and Cleopatra**

The Second Triumvirate, however, did not last long. Lepidus retired from politics. Soon Octavian and Antony became rivals. Antony fell in love with the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Together, they formed an alliance. Octavian accused Antony and Cleopatra of plotting against Rome. According to Octavian, Antony planned to make himself the sole ruler of the republic with Cleopatra's help. Many Romans grew alarmed at this news.

Their support enabled Octavian to declare war on Antony. In 31 B.C., Octavian and Antony's navies clashed off the coast of Greece. At the Battle of Actium (AK • shee • uhm), Octavian's forces defeated those of Antony and Cleopatra. Within a year, Octavian captured Alexandria and made Egypt Roman territory. Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves to avoid being captured by Octavian. Octavian became the supreme ruler of Rome. The civil wars had ended and so, too, did the Roman Republic.

**Octavian—a New Direction**

Octavian could have made himself a life-long dictator. However, he knew that many Romans favored a republic. These Romans were influenced by Cicero (SIH • suh • ROH) who was a well-known political leader and writer in Rome. Cicero strongly supported the representative, republican government. Cicero also did not trust dictators.

Throughout Rome's civil wars, Cicero had argued that a representative government should be restored to Rome. He died before Octavian rose to power. Cicero's ideas, however, would influence the writers of the United States Constitution centuries later.

Publicly, Octavian voiced his support for a republic. Privately, however, Octavian felt differently. He believed that a republican government was too weak to solve Rome's problems. Octavian felt that Rome
needed a strong leader. With a strong and loyal army supporting Octavian, the Senate consented to his wishes. It declared Octavian consul, tribune, and commander-in-chief for life in 27 B.C. Octavian, however, took the title Augustus (aw • GUHS • tuhs), or “the majestic one.” Caesar Augustus, as Octavian was now called, became Rome’s first emperor, or all-powerful ruler.

**Predicting** How do you think Cicero might have reacted when the Senate named Octavian the first emperor of Rome?

**LESSON 3 REVIEW**

**Review Vocabulary**

1. Why did the creation of *latifundia* cause poor people to move to cities?  
   LA.6.1.6.1

**Answer the Guiding Questions**

2. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How did the election of Marius as consul reflect a change in Rome’s government?  
   SS.6.W.3.8

3. **Summarizing** What changes did Julius Caesar bring about as ruler of Rome?  
   SS.6.W.3.8

4. **Explaining** How did Octavian’s rule serve as a transition from Roman republic to empire?  

5. **Identifying** Who was Caesar Augustus?  
   SS.6.W.3.8

6. **PERSONAL WRITING** You own a small Roman farm in the 100s B.C. Write a letter to a friend describing the changes you have witnessed in agriculture and the Roman government. Describe how those changes have affected you personally.  
   SS.6.W.3.11, LA.6.1.7.1
LESSON 4
Rome Builds an Empire

The achievements of the Roman Empire influenced the Western world for centuries and continued to affect the modern world today.

The Rule of Augustus

How did Augustus create a new age of prosperity for Rome?

The rule of Caesar Augustus (formerly called Octavian) marked the beginning of a new era. For nearly two hundred years, the Roman world enjoyed peace and prosperity. This time period lasted until about A.D. 180. It is known as the Pax Romana (PAHKS roh• MAH• nah), or “Roman Peace.” During this time, Rome reached the height of its power.

What Reforms Did Augustus Make?

As emperor, Augustus was determined to protect the empire. To do this, he created a permanent professional army. About 150,000 soldiers—all Roman citizens—made up this powerful military force. In addition, Augustus created a special unit known as the Praetorian Guard. The 9,000 men in this select unit guarded the emperor.

Augustus thought that Rome’s borders should be easier to defend. He established the empire’s boundaries along natural physical features. These included the Rhine (RYN) River and Danube (DAN•yoob) River to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Sahara to the south, and near the Euphrates River to the east. Troops were stationed along these frontier areas to protect the empire from invaders.

In addition to protecting the empire, Augustus wanted to display the power of Rome. Augustus had many public buildings, fountains, and palaces rebuilt to reflect the greatness of Rome. "I found Rome a city of brick,” he boasted, “and left it a city of marble.”

Augustus also worked to improve Rome’s government. During his reign, more than 50 million people lived within the empire’s borders. This is slightly fewer than the number of people living in Italy today. To maintain control over his empire, Augustus named an official called a proconsul (PROH• KAHN• suhl), or governor, to oversee each of Rome’s provinces. These new local officials replaced the politicians who had been appointed by the Senate. Augustus himself often visited the provinces to inspect the work of the proconsuls.

With new leaders in place, Augustus changed the empire's tax system. Before Augustus, tax collectors paid the government for the right to collect taxes. Tax collectors could keep some of what they collected from the people. Many tax collectors, however, were dishonest and took too much from the people. To solve this problem, Augustus made tax collectors permanent government officials and paid them regular wages.

Augustus also changed Rome’s legal system. He created a code of laws for people living in the provinces who were not Roman citizens. As time passed, most of these people became citizens, so eventually, the laws were applied to everyone. However, the legal system often favored the authority of the empire over individual citizens' rights.

Despite all of his reforms, Augustus feared that people might still be unhappy with his leadership. To preserve his rule and the empire, Augustus imported grain from Africa and distributed it to the poor. Augustus believed that a well-fed population would be less likely to revolt against him.
Emperors After Augustus

Augustus ruled Rome for almost 40 years. After Augustus died in A.D. 14, his adopted son, Tiberius, became emperor. After Tiberius, three other emperors from Augustus's family ruled Rome—Caligula (kuh• LIH• gyu• huh• luh), Claudius, and Nero (NE• roh). They are known as the Julio-Claudian emperors. Tiberius and Claudius governed the empire effectively. In contrast, Caligula and Nero proved to be cruel rulers.

Caligula murdered many people and spent money recklessly. He even appointed his favorite horse as consul. The Praetorian Guard murdered him and made Claudius emperor.

Nero was also a brutal emperor who killed many people. Among his victims were his mother and two wives. Nero committed suicide after the Senate had sentenced him to death for treason.

Explaining How did Augustus protect Rome's borders?

The Roman Peace


How did the Roman Empire become rich and prosperous?

After Nero died, violence erupted throughout the Roman Empire. Then, in A.D. 69, a general named Vespasian (veh• SPAY• zhee• uhn), became emperor. Vespasian restored order, but he treated harshly anyone who opposed Roman rule. Vespasian crushed several uprisings throughout the empire. One such uprising was the Jewish revolt in the eastern province of Judaea. Vespasian's son, Titus, commanded troops that defeated the Jewish rebels. Roman soldiers also destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Vespasian began the construction of the Colosseum, the huge amphitheater located in central Rome. After Vespasian died, his sons Titus and Domitian each governed Rome. While Titus was emperor, two disasters struck the empire. In A.D. 79, the volcano Mount Vesuvius erupted, destroying the city of Pompeii. A year later, a great fire badly damaged Rome. Both sons, however, ruled during an era of relative growth and prosperity.

Five Good Emperors

During the early A.D. 100s, several emperors who were not related to Augustus or Vespasian ruled the empire. Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius are known as the "good emperors." The five "good emperors" did not abuse their power. They were among the most capable rulers in Rome's history.

The five emperors governed during a time of economic growth. Agriculture and trade flourished during this period, which lasted from A.D. 96 to A.D. 180. Tertullian, a Roman writer, described this time:

"All places are now accessible [easy to reach], all are well known, all open to commerce. . . . cultivated fields have subdued [tamed] forests . . . marshes are drained; and where once were . . . solitary cottages, there are now large cities. . . . everywhere are houses, and inhabitants, and settled government, and civilized life."

— from Treatise on the Soul by Tertullian

The five emperors introduced programs to help the empire's people. For example, Trajan made money available so that poor children could receive an education. Hadrian made Roman laws easier for ordinary citizens to understand.
The five emperors also improved Roman cities. They spent tax money to build arches and monuments, bridges, roads, and harbors. They also built extensive aqueducts (A• kwuh• duhks) to bring water from the country to the city.

A United Empire

The Emperor Trajan expanded the Roman Empire to its maximum size. The empire’s borders extended to Britain in the northwest and Mesopotamia in the east.

Trian’s successors believed that the empire had become too large to rule effectively. They withdrew Roman forces from regions they could not defend and reinforced areas that were easier to protect. Hadrian pulled troops from Mesopotamia but strengthened defenses at the Rhine and Danube rivers.

By the A.D. 100s, the Roman Empire was one of the largest empires in history. Its land area was about 3.5 million square miles (9.1 million square km), almost the size of the United States.

Many groups of people lived in the Roman Empire. Roman law, Roman rule, and a shared Roman identity united them all. By A.D. 212, every free person within the empire was considered a Roman citizen. All citizens were treated equally under Roman laws.

The Empire's Economy

Agriculture remained the most important economic activity in the Roman Empire. Most people were farmers. Farmers in northern Italy and in the provinces of Gaul and Spain grew grapes and olives to make wine and olive oil. Grain from Britain, Sicily, and Egypt supplied Rome’s people with food. Industry thrived in the cities. Potters, weavers, and jewelers produced pottery, cloth, and jewelry. Other artisans made glass, bronze, and brass. These goods were exported throughout the Mediterranean region.

Trade flourished. By A.D. 100, a common Roman system of money was used within the empire. Merchants used the same money in Gaul, Greece, or Egypt as they did in Rome. People also used a standard system of weights and measurements.

A network of paved roads extended throughout the empire. The roads allowed the Romans to communicate and move armies and goods easily. The Roman navy eliminated piracy on the Mediterranean Sea and other waterways. As a result, goods could be shipped safely to and from the empire’s ports.

Traders from all over the empire arrived in Rome’s port cities. Traders sold luxury goods to wealthy Romans. The Romans also imported raw materials, such as British tin and Spanish silver and lead. Roman workshops turned them into different goods.

Trade made many people wealthy. The wealth, however, did not extend to all Romans. Most city dwellers and farmers remained poor, and many other people remained enslaved.

Analyzing Why were five of Rome’s rulers known as the “good emperors”?
LESSON 4 REVIEW

Review Vocabulary

1. What was the role of a *proconsul* under Augustus?
   SS.6.W.3.8, LA.6.1.6.1

Answer the Guiding Questions

2. *Explaining* How did the changes that Augustus made to the Roman tax system reduce government corruption?

3. *Analyzing* How did roads contribute to the empire's success?
   SS.6.G.5.2

4. *Drawing Conclusions* What do you think was the greatest achievement of Augustus?
   SS.6.W.3.8

5. *Expository Writing* You are a Roman living around A.D. 215. Write an essay about how the Roman empire has changed since the reign of Trajan. As an ordinary citizen, which change affects you most?