

Ancient Rome

Name _____

1. Read the ENTIRE article
2. Highlight 10 annotations (6 for ELL) or define terms
3. Write a comment for each one

The Roman Empire began as a small shepherd village 3000 years ago along the Tiber River in Italy. Legend has it that Rome was founded by two twin brothers – Romulus and Remus. They were the sons of the Roman god Mars and the daughter of King Numitor. A wicked Uncle ordered the twins to be drowned at birth in the Tiber River, but a kind servant put them in a basket to float down river. When Romulus and Remus washed ashore, a she wolf heard them crying and fed them with her own milk. Later a Shepard rescued them and returned them to King Numitor. The Village of Rome expanded and eventually became a city-state around 753 BCE.

Around 550 BCE the Romans were ruled by Etruscan Kings. The last king of Rome was cruel and tyrannical, resulting in a great deal of unrest.

In 509 BCE, after a group of nobles overthrew the king of Rome, the Roman Republic was formed. After the overthrow, the nobles decided to create a new government called a republic. Under this new government, officials were elected once a year to rule the city. During times of war in the Roman Republic, the people of Rome would elect a dictator to rule with almost unlimited power for a period of six months. This limitation of power to a six month period was set up to ensure that dictators would not abuse their power.

One of the most well-known dictators in Ancient Rome was Julius Caesar. After becoming dictator, many of Rome's senators were concerned that Caesar would abuse his power. Rather than risk Caesar taking their power away, they decided to have him killed.

The Roman Republic fell apart soon after, and in approximately 31 BCE, the Roman Empire came into being. This occurred because Octavius, Julius Caesar's nephew, inherited all of Caesar's wealth. Octavius was able to support an army and hold onto control of the government against the wishes of the Senate. Because the Senate did not have the support of the people, Octavius was able to hold onto power.

Octavius changed his name to Augustus. Augustus was on a mission to restore order to the empire after the death of Caesar. He reformed the government and extended citizenship to all Italians. Although he allowed elections for public offices, he rigged them so that his choices would win. He turned the military from a voluntary army into a standing, professional army. Augustus began a vast project of building and patronage to the arts. Roman culture flourished. It was known as the Golden Age of Roman Literature. In it flourished the writers Vergil, Horace and Ovid.

After Augustus, Tiberius and Caligula demonstrated how emperors could wield power as they liked. Caligula had a nervous breakdown following the death of his sister and was famous for his cruelty. He was assassinated. It became obvious that military power alone determined and legitimated an emperor's rule.

Christianity was introduced into Europe and the Roman Empire. The apostle Paul devoted his life into translating Christianity to a form that would be accepted by the Greeks and Romans. Other than Nero and Domitian, the Romans largely left the Christians alone. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, Christianity grew dramatically in the Roman Empire and was finally declared the state religion by Emperor Constantine.

Emperor Nero began as a brilliant leader, but it was under his rule that the Romans began to vigorously persecute Christians. Among those he executed was Saul of Tarsus, or Paul. This time period saw great exportation of Roman culture, government and law. Roman provinces were granted the right of citizenship and the empire became a single state.

Tacitus became the foremost Roman historian with his *Annals*, a huge work. The Romans undertook huge building projects during the Imperial Age, including the Pantheon, the Coliseum, and aqueducts. The physician Galen made the discovery that blood circulated in the veins.

Diocletian came to the throne after a century of disorganization, internal dissent, economic collapse and foreign invasions. He was a former soldier with one goal: to retire from the imperiate alive. He divided the empire into two halves and stabilized the empire. He shifted the center of power to the east.

Constantine ruled the western half of the empire. He shifted the seat of the empire to Constantinople and ruled as a monarch. He was the first emperor to convert to Christianity. At his death, Constantine divided his empire among his three sons. Eventually Theodosius reassembled the rule to one person – himself.

Rome was sacked (invaded) by the Visigoths and later defeated by others such as Attila the Hun and the Vandals. This began the Middle Ages in Europe.