

Rome: Village to Republic

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: ROME: VILLAGE TO REPUBLIC explores the birth of the Roman Empire, from Romulus and Remus, to the Romans' rebellion against their Etruscan rulers. Students will see how the American Founding Fathers used Rome as a model for another new republic. This is also a story of the city as it grew from a primitive village into a republic based upon the most formidable system the Western world has ever known: democracy.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will identify cultural characteristics of the Romans, Etruscans and Americans. They will identify how their belief systems influenced their choices and how each accommodated the other's beliefs.
- Objective 2)** Students will identify what it meant to be a Roman citizen and compare and contrast that to what it means to be an American citizen. They will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each definition.

Vocabulary:

superpower, descendant, exotic, uncharted, subterranean, primitive, auger, fugitives, province, treachery, intrigue, paranoia, decadence, smoldered, virtue, republic, legions, brunt, idealism, skirmish, empire, muster, laurels, tumult, factions, idealism, forum, defame, strife, vagrants, fugitives, proportion, senate, census, republic, honor, momentous, liberty, codified, envoy, ransacked

Pre-Viewing Activities:

Choose one objective and direct students to do the following during the program.

- 1) Have students make a list with words that describe the culture and/or belief systems of the Romans, Etruscans, and Americans. (You may also consider using the Gauls as another category).
- 2) Have students make a list of words that describe what citizenship meant for the Romans and what it means for Americans.

Post-Viewing Activities:

- 1) **Describe the Topic:** Students will volunteer the adjectives that they wrote down to describe 1) culture or 2) citizenship.
- 2) **Create Direct Analogies:** The teacher or another recorder will write and display the adjectives under the headings 1) Roman, Etruscan, American, *Gaul*, or 2) Roman, American.
- 3) Discuss why choices were made.
- 4) Students will choose one of the adjectives from any list and write it down.

- 5) **Describe Personal Analogies:** Students will personalize that adjective. Instead of saying Rome = honor, they will replace Rome with their name (e.g. Sara = honor).
- 6) Discuss with students how that makes them feel to be described with their chosen adjective and record the list of personal feeling adjectives.
- 7) **Identify Conflicts:** Direct the students to take the adjectives from the list of personal feelings and record pairs of words that conflict, contradict, or cause tension (e.g. proud & disgraced or free & enslaved). Note: these pairs of words can include opposites, but don't need to directly oppose each other.
- 8) When students complete this list of pairs, record them.
- 9) **Create a New Direct Analogy:** Students will take as many pairs of adjectives as they can in the time allotted, and create new direct analogies by selecting a completely new object (e.g. proud & disgraced is a prisoner of war, or free & enslaved is a cowboy boot).
- 10) **Reexamine the Original Topic:** Teacher will show the categories again **1) Roman, Etruscan, American, Gaul** or **2) Roman and American.**
- 11) Students will be asked to take their new direct analogy and place it under one of the categories (e.g. Etruscan = prisoner of war, or American = Cowboy boot).
- 12) Discuss the insights this gives into the **1) similarities and differences of these cultures or 2) similarities and differences in citizenship.** Focus on how seemingly opposing ideas can define a concept or idea. Return to the objective and further explore the learning outcomes.

Additional Activities: (From the NCSS National Standard: Science, Technology and Society)

- 1) Direct students to choose an area of Etruscan or Roman science or technology. This may include, but is not limited to drainage systems, irrigation, arches, aqueducts, mining, metal craft, or transportation.
- 2) Have them research the chosen topic and create a three-dimensional model of the technology they are demonstrating.
- 3) In addition to explaining how the technology worked, this project should highlight the impact such techniques had on the lives and culture of the Romans.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- Eastern explorers sailed to modern day Italy, known then as Hesperia (land of evening sun).
- They found the Etruscans, a civilization that had walled cities, kings, artisans, and traders.
- Etruscans had the richest deposits of iron ore, copper and tin in the central Mediterranean.
- First Romans were primitive, tough backwoodsmen who resented the Etruscans.
- Human sacrifice and brutal games were common among the Etruscans.
- Rome learned a great deal from the Etruscans including art, architecture, and city planning.
- Legend said that Romulus and Remus, twins raised by a wolf, founded Rome.
- Romulus became the first leader of Rome after killing Remus in a fight for power.
- When Rome emerged into recorded history it was as a province, ruled by Etruscan kings.
- Rome began to distinguish itself through organization more than anything else.
- The Etruscan king Servius Tullius conducted the first census in the 6th century B.C.
- Servius Tullius's daughter had her father killed in order to make her husband Tarquin king.
- Tarquin's rule was marked by corruption and excess, virtues early Romans stood against.
- Tarquin's son raped the virtuous Roman woman Lucretia.
- Lucretia committed suicide and Romans attacked the Etruscans.
- Romans freed themselves from their Etruscan overloads and vowed never to live under a king.
- Rome became a republic, ruled by laws and elected officials.
- SPQR became the republics banner. It stood for the senate and people of Rome.
- For over 100 years after the Romans gained independence, they fought the Etruscans.
- Romans finally defeated the Etruscans.

- Rome began to conquer her neighbors and expand her power and influence.
- Gauls arrived and were refused land by the Romans causing the Gauls to attack.
- Romans escaped being slaughtered by giving everything to the Gauls and leaving the city.
- Rome rose from defeat stronger and more determined.
- Cincinnatus was named dictator upon an attack on Rome.
- Cincinnatus surrendered his power after winning the battle.

Important People:

Romulus – One of the twin brothers who founded Rome and would become its first leader.

Remus – The other of the twin brothers who founded Rome and would loose a struggle for power.

Livy – One of Rome’s greatest historians who wrote its history 700 years after its founding.

Servius Tullius – The Etruscan king who conducted the first census.

Tarquinius – The son-in-law of Servius Tullius who seized power upon the murder of Tullius.

Lucretia – The Roman woman who embodied all Roman virtue. Her rape and suicide would be the catalyst to set off a war between the Romans and the Etruscans.

Brutus – One of the first Roman senators.

Publius – The Roman who codified laws and rights of its citizens.

Cincinnatus – The virtuous Roman nobleman who surrendered his power as dictator after defeating the enemy.

Important Places

Tuscany, Syria, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, Mediterranean Sea, Tiber River, Sicily, North Africa, and Gaul (present day France)

Important Dates

- 753 B.C. – Rome was founded
- 510 B.C. – Romans set themselves free from the Etruscans.
- 392 B.C. – Romans defeated the Etruscans once and for all.
- 386 B.C. – Gauls arrive in Rome.

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- Renaissance Series (Six Programs)

Rome: Military Conquests

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: ROME: MILITARY CONQUESTS chronicles the expansion brought about by the awesome military power of Ancient Rome between the 5th century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D. Students will witness the expansion of Rome as it extended from central Italy to the entire Mediterranean region and beyond. The viewer will also see how internal power struggles, civil wars and external forces all conspired to threaten this great empire.

Learning Objective:

Objective 1) Students will identify what succeeded and what failed within the structures of power authority and governance in ancient Rome.

Vocabulary: democratic, republic, innovations, unflinching, unwavering, peninsula, treaty, trudge, potent, tactics, cavalry, abide, veteran, perk, astonishing, rampage, fortitude, headlong, anarchy, dictator, gargantuan, ternary, formalized, bleak, invincible

Pre-Viewing Activities:

Before the program direct the students to look for answers to the following questions regarding Rome.

1. What is power?
2. What forms does power take?
3. Who holds the power?
4. How is it gained, used and justified?
5. What is legitimate authority?
6. How is the government created structured, maintained and changed?
7. How is the government responsive to the needs of its citizens?
8. How are individual rights protected?

Post-Viewing Activities:

This activity can be done individually, in pairs, or in cooperative groups. Direct the students to design the power structure of a new empire. Ask them to take the lessons learned from Rome's history to create a more sustainable empire. In doing so, they should answer the questions from the Pre-Viewing Activities for Ancient Rome on one page and contrast that with answers to the same questions for their new empire on another page. After this has been completed have the students share their ideas and conduct a discussion.

Additional Activity:

Have the students build or draw a model of their new empire. Ask them to explain the placement of buildings, homes, and industry as it relates to power, authority and governance. Students may wish to use city-planning software like SIMCITY to complete this project.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- 260 B.C. - Rome controlled entire Italian Peninsula south of the Po River.
- 814 B.C. - Carthage controlled North Africa, Spain Sicily, and Sardinia.

- 265 B.C.- First Punic War pitted Rome against Carthage.

- 241 B.C.- Romans won First Punic War, which gave them control of Sicily and Sardinia.
- 218 B.C.- Hannibal journeyed across Alps; this began Second Punic War.
- 204 B.C. - Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio attacked Carthage.
- Carthage called Hannibal back home and armies met for the decisive battle of Zama.
- 183 B.C. - Scipio defeated Hannibal to end the second Punic War.
- 146 B.C.- Rome slaughtered one half million Carthaginians in Third Punic War.
- Gaius Marius made the Roman army into a professional fighting force.
- Allegiance began to shift from the state to the general himself.
- 89 B.C. - Lucius Cornelius Sulla attacked the city of Rome.
- Julius Caesar and Gnaeus Pompey were powerful rival Roman generals.
- 48 B.C. - Caesar defeated Pompey in civil war.
- 44 B.C.- Caesar assassinated.
- First emperor, Augustus attained peace by making himself sole leader of the military.
- 117 A.D. - Trajan, last Roman emperor to expand Roman territory.
- Emperor Hadrian established policy of maintaining, rather than expanding Roman Empire.
- 166 A.D.- German tribes attacked Roman border.

Important People and Dates:

- Carthage (Founded 814 B.C.)
- The First Punic War (264 – 241 B.C.)
- Hannibal (247 – circa 181-183 B.C.)
- Second Punic War (221 B.C. – 183 B.C.)
- Publius Cornelius Scipio (birth unknown - died 211 B.C.)
- The Battle of Zama (Carthage defeated 202 BC)
- Third Punic War (149. – 146 B.C.)
- Gaius Marius (157 – 86 B.C.)
- Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138 –78 B.C.)
- Julius Cesar (circa 100 – 44 B.C.)
- Gnaeus Pompey (106 – 48 B.C.)
- Augustus (63 B.C. – 14 A.D.)
- Trajan (53 – 117 A.D.)
- Hadrian (76 – 138 A.D)

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Rome: The Empire

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: As Rome moved from a republic to an empire, power struggles and infighting kept it in an almost perpetual state of chaos. Although the popular Julius Caesar was able to seize power, his assassination fueled a fight for his succession. After his victory, Octavian Augustus led Rome into 40 years of peace. Upon his death, however, there was again no clear successor and Rome descended into the chaos it so desperately wished to avoid.

Learning Objective:

Objective 1) The students will identify how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how they can be maintained or changed.

Vocabulary: contradictions, decadence, patronage, notoriously, aristocracy, revolts, unprecedented, treachery, vulnerability, benign, meek, omen, statesmanship, lavish, dynastic, brash, scapegoat, derision, propaganda, imperial

Pre-Viewing Activities:

- 1) During the program, have the students create a list of the techniques Roman emperors used to persuade the public.

Post-Viewing Activities:

Ask the students to share their lists with the class and discuss the variety of techniques used. Discuss these suggested questions.

1. What techniques do politicians use today to sway public opinion?
2. How are these techniques similar to or different from what Roman leaders used?
3. What other people, companies, or institutions try to sway public opinion today?
4. How do they do it?
5. What is an example of how your opinion has been changed by one of these techniques?
6. When is swaying public opinion good and when is it bad?

After the discussion, direct the students to imagine that they are to be the next emperor of Rome. Based on what they learned in this program, have them write a persuasive essay/speech in which they attempt to sway the public to their side.

Divide the class into three sections: the plebeians (the lowest and poorest rank of citizen), the equites (the business people), and the patricians (the nobles). Since the plebeians represented the great majority of the Roman population, assign 75% of the class to this rank. Assign 15 % to the equites and 10% to the patricians.

Choose three to five essays randomly and read them to the class. Ask the students to vote on the most persuasive essay. Direct the students to vote based on their social rank and not on their personal feelings. If they are a plebeian, remind them that they are very poor and feeding and clothing their families is most important, but at the same time, they enjoy attending public games. If they are an equite, remind them that

their interests are in making their businesses successful in order to continue to provide for their families. They are interested in having a strong army to protect their interests and they too enjoy public games. If they are patricians, remind them that they are extremely rich and any change means they will probably lose money. Patricians like the status quo, and want a strong military to protect their interests. They also enjoy public games.

Have the students vote on the most persuasive essay/speech with the traditional Roman thumbs up when in favor and thumbs down when not. Do not reveal the identity of the author of the essay/speech, but do discuss what was and was not persuasive about each candidate. When discussing this, ask the students to identify their social rank and explain their reasoning based on their station in society.

Additional Activity:

Ask students to watch a television commercial and to identify any techniques that they think were used to sway opinions.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- 509 B.C. - the Roman republic was created.
- 95% of Romans were below the poverty line and women had few rights.
- Patronage began - wealthy patrons would take care of the poor in exchange for their vote.
- 1st century B.C.- poverty and slave revolts were dividing leaders and causing social unrest.
- 59 B.C. - Caesar became military commander over Gaul.
- 49 B.C. - Caesar marched on Rome and Rome sent Gnaeus Pompey to defend it.
- 48 B.C. - Caesar easily defeated Pompey.
- Caesar went to Egypt, met Cleopatra. With his help, she overthrew her brother and ruled Egypt.
- 46 B.C. - Cleopatra accompanied Caesar back to Rome. Caesar threw a lavish party for the poor.
- Caesar voted to be absolute dictator, but surprised many by using his power for social reform.
- 44 B.C.- Caesar asked people to vote him dictator for life, but Senate assassinated him.
- Octavian and Marc Antony vied for the political vacancy left by Caesar.
- 31 B. C. - Octavian defeated Antony.
- 27 B.C.- Roman Senate allowed Octavian the constitutional right to absolute power for life. Octavian took the name Augustus (the sacred one). Thus began Pax Romana.
- 14 A.D. - Augustus died at 76, after ruling Rome peacefully for over 40 years.
- Augustus's successors were haunted by fears, because power gained by force could be taken away by force. One threat came from the Praetorian Guard (the force assigned to protect the emperor).
- During reign of Tiberius, his most trusted member of the Praetorian Guard turned on him and attempted to take power, but was later executed when the truth was known.
- 41 A.D. - Caligula assassinated by Praetorian Guard after suggesting his horse be elected Consul.
- At 16 Nero became the 6th emperor of Rome; his mother, Agrippina, tried to control him.
- Agrippina's influence was too much for Nero and he banished her.
- Nero ordered Praetorian Guard to kill her. This appalled the Romans.
- 64 A.D. – Great fire that left half the population homeless. Nero built a huge palace and rumors spread that he had intentionally set the fire to clear space for his new palace.
- In search of a scapegoat, Nero blamed Christians.
- 68 A.D. - Roman senate declared Nero a public enemy; Nero took his own life.

Important People and Dates:

- Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138 B.C. – 78 B.C.)
- Julius Caesar (circa 100 B.C. – 44 B.C.)
- Gnaeus Pompey (106 B.C. – 48 B.C.)
- Cleopatra (69 B.C. – 30B.C.)
- Octavian Augustus (63 B.C. – 14 A.D.)

- Marc Antony (circa 81 B.C. – 30 B.C.)
- Livia (58 B.C. – 29 B.C.)
- Tiberius (42 B.C. – 37 A.D.)
- Caligula (12 A.D. – 41 A.D.)
- Nero (37 A.D. – 68 A.D.)

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Rome: Imperialism and Slavery

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: As Rome grew in power and wealth, it experienced the Pax Romana, 200 years of peace and prosperity. But, population growth, the rise of slavery, barriers to further expansion, and economic trouble all began to slowly erode the foundation of the empire by the 1st century A.D. A barbarian invasion across the Danube River into Roman territory marked the beginning of the end of this great civilization.

Learning Objective:

Objective 1) Students will be able to identify what was being produced in Ancient Rome, how production was organized, what goods were demanded and how goods and services were manufactured and distributed. They will evaluate the efficacy of these factors and propose solutions to any Roman mistakes.

Vocabulary: brute, cajoled, coerced, refugees, displaced, meager, decadence, ingenuity, aqueducts, prosperity, toiled, rebellion, notorious, insatiable, quell, chasm, flourish, inflation, corruption

Pre-Viewing Activities:

- 1) Explain to the students that people have wants that often exceed the resources available to them. How things are produced, distributed and consumed all play a role in how civilizations provide these resources to their populations. Ask them to prepare a list of what was being produced in Ancient Rome, how production was organized, what goods were demanded and how goods and services were manufactured and distributed. Ask the students to prepare very specific lists with as many examples as possible.

Post-Viewing Activities:

1. Call on students to share items on their lists and record them for all to see.
2. Divide the students in to cooperative groups. Each group should have four to five students and each student should be assigned a job. Job suggestions include, **READER** – reads all pertinent information to the cooperative group, **RECORDER** – takes notes and/or writes any information needed, **REPORTER** – reports information found to the whole class and/or teacher, **RUNNER** – retrieves all supplies and/or asks the teacher for assistance when needed, and **RESEARCHER** – is the primary user of research materials and also delegates research assignments to other members of the group. When groups are of four students, combining the Runner with another job is a useful suggestion. Assign each student a job within his or her group.
3. Ask the groups to look at the students' lists of production, consumption, and distribution and have them vote to choose the top five items that they would like to learn more about.

4. Go group by group and ask the reporter to tell the groups' first choice. If that choice is not taken assign that group to research that topic. If it is taken, assign that group to their next choice.
5. Direct the students to research their chosen area. You may choose to limit the time in which this research can be done.
6. After the research time has expired, have the students prepare a report on their subject.
7. Have the reporter report what his or her group has learned to the rest of the class. You may choose to limit the time for these reports.
8. Discuss what is being reported on as it relates to issues of production, distribution and consumptions. Some suggested discussion questions are:
 - In Rome, wants often exceeded resources. You have been asked to research ways in which Rome attempted to meet these needs. Were these solutions effective? Why or why not?
 - Did this problem contribute to the downfall of Rome? If so, how?
 - In our times, do we have needs that exceed our resources? If so, what? How have we attempted to deal with these issues? Has it worked?
 - If you were in a position of power, how would you address the problem of wants exceeding resources?

Additional Activity:

Direct the students to research the aqueducts or other technical advance made by the ancient Romans. Ask them to prepare a working model of this technology with a descriptive report that describes who used it, how it was used, what it was used for, and when it was used.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- 140 B.C. - Rome controlled more than 250,000 square miles with more than four million people.
- At its peak the slave trade was said to have sold 10,000 slaves a day.
- Family farms could no longer compete and refugees entered cities looking for work.
- 2nd century B.C.- City of Rome's population had grown to nearly one million.
- High level of consumption in Rome fueled by imports, but Rome exported little.
- City building, and a single language and currency were what Rome gave back to its colonies.
- Ideal Roman city had temples, theatres, baths, roads and outdoor public spaces.
- At its peak Roman land covered more than two million square miles with 53,000 miles of road.
- Aqueducts brought clean water from mountains to baths, fountains, and homes of the rich.
- Sewer systems provided a high level of sanitation.
- 1st century A.D. - one in three inhabitants of Rome was a slave, about sixteen million people.
- 140 A.D. - In Sicily the slave Eunice armed 400 slaves in a revolt that lasted seven years.
- When Romans finally quelled the rebellion, they massacred 20,000 slaves.
- Rome's formula of conquest and pillage kept a steady flow of gold and riches into the city.
- Rome was able to feed its military and poor. It experienced the Pax Romana, 200 years of peace.
- 106 A.D. - Roman Empire stopped expanding.
- Marcus Aurelius responded to economic crisis as Romans always had: by going to war.
- 162 A.D. - Marcus Aurelius invaded the Parthian Empire.
- Rome came back with few treasures and an unknown disease that killed ¼ of the population.
- Barbarians began to gather along the border. For the first time in 200 years a foreign army had crossed the Danube River and attacked the Roman Empire.
- This attack was driven back, but it was a sign of Rome's increasing weakness.

Important People and Dates:

- Trajan (53 A.D. –117 A.D.)
- Marcus Aurelius (121 A.D. – 180 A.D.)

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Rome: The Rise of Christianity

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: Rome had been a symbol of order and stability for centuries. But disease, invaders, and cultural decay were now threatening the foundation of the great empire. The population began to seek an alternative to a Rome in which 95% of the population was below the poverty line. After much persecution, Christianity rose as that alternative and by the 3rd century A.D. there were over five million Christians.

Learning Objective:

Objective 1) Students will identify the social process that influenced Christian identity formation and the ethical principals underlying the actions that caused this change.

Vocabulary: astounding, diversity, conformity, methodical, logistical, ravaged, tainted, imperial, arrogance, festered, horded, recluse, hierarchy, oppression, subversive, pagan, scapegoat, labyrinth, martyrs, repressive, arrogance

Pre-Viewing Activities:

Christianity moved from a small cult from Judea in the 1st century A.D. to a full-blown religion with over five million faithful in the 3rd century A.D. While viewing this program ask students to create lists of ideas that they believe influenced the rise of these new religious ideas.

Post-Viewing Activities:

- 1) **Share the lists that were prepared during the program.** Call on students to volunteer adjectives from their lists. Record these items for all to see.
- 2) **Group the items.** Ask the students to consider which of the items listed go together because they are alike in some way. In this step students begin to examine the relationships among the items listed. Direct each student to put these items into several groups and to write these groups down.
- 3) Upon completion, let the students share the groups they created. Remind them that if they would like to share a list, it should be one that is different from one that has already been recorded. Record them for all to see. Have the students study the lists on the board and challenge the students to look for unusual connections among items within each list.
- 4) **Label the items by defining the reasons for grouping.** Ask the students to come up with a label for each group. It is very important at this stage for the teacher to ask the students to articulate and defend their reasoning processes. Teachers may want to allow several labels per group to accommodate different points of view. If this option is taken, a vote to decide the most suitable label is a good way to enhance the students' reasoning processes.
- 5) **Regroup or subsume individual items or whole groups under other groups.** Ask, "Are there items in one group that could be placed in another group?" "Are there whole groups that could be placed under one of the other labels?" Again, ask the students for reasoning here. Record the regroupings.

- 6) **Synthesize the information by summarizing the data and forming generalizations.** Ask the class to look over all the lists and work done. Direct them to make a general statement about the topic in one or two sentences. Students must try to pick out the trends. At this point return to your chosen objective and encourage the students to find a statement that speaks to the learning outcomes. Have the students share and discuss their generalizations.

Additional Activities:

1. Saturnalia was a time in which all Romans would switch societal roles. Direct the students to design their own version of Saturnalia. Have them identify whom they would switch roles with and what they would do.
2. Ask the students to research and report on the origins of their own religion.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- 64 A.D. - Roman emperor Nero publicly massacred hundreds of Christians, blaming them for a fire they did not start. This brought the once obscure cult to the forefront.
- 161 A.D. - Marcus Aurelius became emperor. Disease and invaders threatened Rome.
- Marcus Aurelius spent eight years on the front fighting for Rome's survival.
- Outside threat was real, but cultural decay was the larger problem.
- The internal decay would cause many to turn to foreign cults for salvation.
- 180 A.D. – Commodus, son of Aurelius took power. He demonstrated excess and power abuse.
- 190 A.D. – The Poor rioted, thinking that Commodus had inflated grain prices to increase profits.
- In an effort to sway public opinion, Commodus became the first emperor to fight as a gladiator.
- 192 A.D. - Commodus was assassinated.
- 95% of the Roman population lived below the poverty line.
- Women were considered inferior to men, and Rome had a rigid social hierarchy
- For one week, Romans would celebrate the Saturnalia. All social roles would be reversed.
- The African Septimius Severus succeeded Commodus as Emperor; he encouraged diversity.
- Foreign religions were accepted as long as they respected the cult of Rome.
- 211 A.D.- Caracalla, his son, succeeded Septimius Severus.
- 212 A.D. - Caracalla murdered his brother.
- Caracalla, angered by criticism of his brother's murder, had 5000 citizens killed.
- These senseless acts led people to look outside Roman culture for spiritual fulfillment.
- Christianity offered spiritual equality and threatened Rome's hierarchy and social division.
- Women were especially attracted to Christianity as it gave them independence.
- The only position of power open to Roman women was that of the Vestal Virgins. Their principal duty was to look after the sacred fire of Vesta, the Roman goddess of the hearth.
- But, Vestal Virgins were executed for breaking their vows of chastity.
- Inflation, invaders, and internal unrest made the promise of salvation in the next life appealing.
- 284 A.D. - Diocletian became emperor. He divided Empire in two and shared power with three other generals. Peace was gained for a time.
- Diocletian persecuted the Christians, which only seemed to increase the popularity of the cult.
- Late 3rd century A.D. – Five million Christians in the Roman Empire.

Important People and Dates:

- Marcus Aurelius (121 A.D. – 180 A.D.)
- Commodus (161 A.D. – 192 A.D.)
- Septimius Severus (146 A.D. – 211 A.D.)
- Caracalla (188 A.D. – 217 A.D.)

- Trajan (53 A.D. – 117 A.D.)
- Diocletian (245 A.D. - 316 A.D.)

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Rome: Decadence and Decline

The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World History, World Geography and Cultures, Ancient Civilizations

Synopsis: As Rome began its decline, several attempts were made to preserve it. War, persecution, and the division of the Roman Empire were all tried, to no avail. The aging empire had grown too large and in 476 A.D. the last Roman emperor stepped down.

Learning Objective:

Objective 1) Students will identify how we are connected to the past, how the world has changed, and how it might change in the future

Pre-Viewing Activities:

Have the students create a Venn diagram. Simply have them draw two circles that overlap each other so that there are three sections. Label the first section Rome, the second section Commonalities, and the third section United States. During the program have the students fill in the diagram with ideas that are unique to Rome in the Rome section, with ideas that are common to Rome and the United States in the Commonalities section, and ideas that are unique to the United States in the United States section.

Post-Viewing Activities:

1. Ask the students to share a few items from their Venn diagram. Tell them to use their Venn diagrams for the following assignment.
2. The Sibyl was a priestess who lived in a cave and foretold the future. The Sibyl's predictions were written down and consulted in times of trouble by emperors and politicians. Some believed that she predicted the fall of Rome.
3. Ask the students to imagine that they have the power of Sibyl, and to write their predictions about the future of the United States. Suggest that the students use what they know about the history of Rome to support their predictions about the United States. Also remind them that predictions do not have to be of doom.
4. Upon completion of this assignment have the students share their work and discuss.

Additional Activity:

The Roman games offered the people of Rome a great deal of mindless distraction. In fact, at its peak games were staged for almost 200 hours each week. Direct the students to write an editorial or opinion piece in which they discuss the characteristics of our modern day mindless distractions. Students should identify such distractions and compare and contrast those with the Roman games.

Essential Facts for Discussion and Evaluation:

- 190 A.D. - During the reign of Commodus, the decline of Rome began.
- After the assassination of Commodus in 192 A.D., civil war began.
- Balancing the power of rulers with the needs of ordinary citizens was forgotten.
- Many in cities depended on grain handouts and the diversion of the Roman games.

- Citizenship, civil rights, trade, and prosperity were all benefits of being conquered by Rome, but by the 3rd century A.D. these benefits were increasingly replaced by slavery.
- Poverty and resentment were building internal discontent.
- 248 A.D. - Emperor Philip staged Millennium Games while internal revolts took place and barbarians threatened Rome's borders.
- Climatic changes in Central Asia forced its nomadic people to move west. Their migrations pushed others against the Roman Empire's northeastern frontier.
- 259 A.D. - Persians attacked the Roman Empire. The Roman emperor Valerian and his men were defeated and Valerian was captured and killed.
- The defeat of Valerian caused Rome to build her military. That was done by raising taxes and this caused inflation to spiral out of control.
- 285 A.D. - Diocletian attempted to streamline the bloated government by splitting the empire in two, freezing prices and banning Christianity.
- This provided peace for a time. Diocletian then retired.
- Constantine became emperor, revoked many of Diocletian's edicts, and converted to Christianity.
- Constantine thought Christianity could unify Roman civilization again.
- Because of Rome's strategic irrelevance Constantine moved the capital to Byzantium and renamed the city Constantinople after himself.
- Soon, practices that were not Christian were outlawed and non-Christians were persecuted.
- Despite its severity, Romans flocked to Christianity, which gave women more respect.
- 378 A.D. - Emperor Valens entered into battle with the Goths. Valens and his army were massacred.
- Alaric settled his people inside the northern frontier. He wanted a peaceful coexistence.
- 410 A.D. - Alaric's army was camped outside of the city. He wanted part of the Danube River Valley and what is now Austria. Rome refused.
- Alaric attacked the city and increased his demands.
- Rome procrastinated and Alaric sacked the city.
- Western Rome was overrun, but, surprisingly, the barbarians tried to live peacefully with the Romans.
- Eastern Rome became the Byzantine Empire, but continued to call itself Roman until Middle Ages.
- 476 A.D. - Last Roman emperor resigned; ironically his name was Romulus.
- Rome was dead, but reborn again and again in Italian Renaissance, and in the beginnings of U.S.A.

Important People and Dates:

- Commodus (161 A.D. – 192 A.D.)
- Diocletian (245 A.D. - 316 A.D.)
- Constantine (circa 280 A.D. – 337 A.D.)
- Alaric (circa 370 A.D. – 410A.D.)

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