

The Beginning of Ancient Rome

Brief #1

Focus

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

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

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



Romulus and Remus

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

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

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

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



Rome in 600 B.C.

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

Vocabulary

1. Romulus and Remus
2. Etruscan civilization

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Brief #1 (cont.)



Rome in 600 B.C. (cont.)

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

