

# From Republic to Empire

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Disorder in the Roman Republic created an opportunity for Julius Caesar to gain power.
2. The Republic ended when Augustus became Rome's first emperor.
3. The Roman Empire grew to control the entire Mediterranean world.
4. The Romans accomplished great things in science, engineering, architecture, art, literature, and law.

### The Big Idea

After changing from a republic to an empire, Rome grew politically and economically, and developed a culture that influenced later civilizations.

### Key Terms and People

Cicero, p. 322  
 Julius Caesar, p. 323  
 Pompey, p. 323  
 Marc Antony, p. 324  
 Augustus, p. 324  
 Pax Romana, p. 326  
 aqueduct, p. 327  
 Romance languages, p. 328  
 civil law, p. 328



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on Rome's change from a republic to an empire and the accomplishments of the empire.

## If YOU were there...

You are a friend of a famous Roman Senator. Your friend is worried about the growing power of military men in Rome's government. Some other Senators want to take violent action to stop generals from taking over as dictators. Your friend wants your advice: Is violence justified to save the Roman Republic?

### What advice will you give your friend?

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** By the first century BC, the government of the Roman Republic was in trouble. Politicians looked for ways to solve the problems. Philosophers offered ideas, too. In the end, however, the Republic could not survive the great changes that were taking place in Rome.

## Disorder in the Republic

Rome in the 70s BC was a dangerous place. Politicians and generals went to war to increase their power even as political order broke down in Rome. There were politically inspired riots to restore the power of the tribunes. All the while, more and more people from throughout the republic flooded into the city, further adding to the confusion.

### Calls for Change

Some Romans tried to stop the chaos in Rome's government. One such person was **Cicero** (sis-uh-roh), a philosopher and gifted orator, or public speaker. In his speeches, Cicero called on upperclass Romans to work together to make Rome a better place. One way to do this, he argued, was to limit the power of generals. Cicero wanted the Romans to give more support to the Senate and to restore checks and balances on government.

But the government did not change. Many Romans didn't agree with Cicero. Others were too busy to listen. Meanwhile, several



generals were working to take over the government. The most powerful of these generals was **Julius Caesar** (JOOOL-yuhs SEE-zuhr).

### Caesar's Rise to Power

Caesar was a great general. Romans admired him for his bravery and skill in battle. His soldiers respected him for treating them well. Between 58 BC and 50 BC Caesar conquered nearly all of Gaul—an area that is today the country of France. He wrote about this conquest in great detail. In this description of one battle, notice how he refers to himself as Caesar:

“Caesar, having divided his forces ... and having hastily [quickly] constructed some bridges, enters their country in three divisions, burns their houses and villages, and gets possession of a large number of cattle and men.”

—Julius Caesar, *The Gallic Wars*

Caesar's military successes made him a key figure in Roman politics. In addition to

being a strong leader, Caesar was an excellent speaker. He won many supporters with his speeches in the forum.

Caesar also had powerful friends. Before he went to Gaul, he made an alliance with two of Rome's most influential men, **Pompey** (PAHM-pea) and Crassus (KRAS-uhs). Together the three ruled Rome.

### Challenges to Caesar

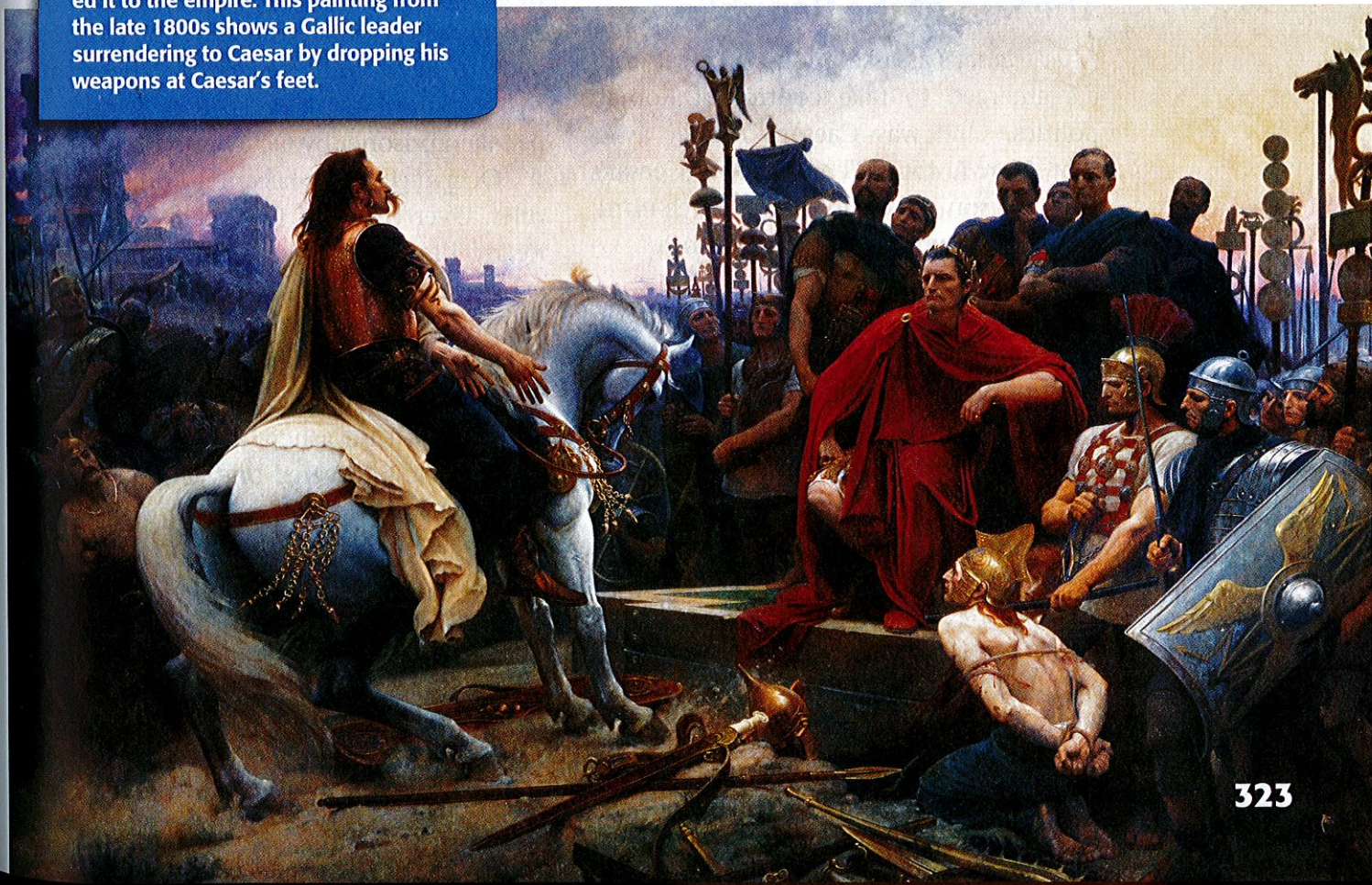
The partnership lasted about 10 years. But after his conquests in Gaul, Caesar was so popular that even his friends were jealous of him. In 50 BC Pompey's allies in the Senate ordered Caesar to give up command of his armies. They wanted Pompey to control Rome alone.

Caesar refused. Instead he led his troops back toward Rome for a confrontation. Once his men crossed the Rubicon River, the boundary between Gaul and Italy, Caesar knew that there was no turning back.

#### THE IMPACT TODAY

People now use the phrase “crossing the Rubicon” when they do something that can't be undone.

Julius Caesar conquered Gaul and added it to the empire. This painting from the late 1800s shows a Gallic leader surrendering to Caesar by dropping his weapons at Caesar's feet.





War was certain since Roman law said no general could enter Italy with his army.

Pompey and his allies fled Italy. They didn't think they had enough troops to defeat Caesar. But Caesar's army chased Pompey's forces for a year. They finally defeated Pompey in Greece in 48 BC. Pompey was killed by orders of an Egyptian king.

After Caesar returned to Rome in 45 BC, he made himself dictator for life. Although Caesar worked to improve Roman society, many people resented the way he gained power. They were also concerned that Caesar wanted to become king of Rome.

The Senators were especially angry with Caesar. He had reduced their powers, and they feared his growing strength. On March 15—a date known as the Ides of March—in 44 BC a group of Senators attacked Caesar in the Senate and stabbed him to death.

**READING CHECK** **Sequencing** How did Caesar gain power in Rome?

## The End of the Republic

After Caesar's assassination, two great leaders emerged to take control of Roman politics. One was Caesar's former assistant, **Marc Antony**. The other was Caesar's adopted son Octavian (ahk-TAY-vee-uhn), later called **Augustus** (aw-GUHS-tuhs).

### Antony and Octavian

One priority for Antony and Octavian was punishing the men who killed Caesar. The murderers had thought they would become heroes. Instead they were forced to flee for their lives. Rome was shocked by Caesar's murder. Many people loved Caesar, and riots broke out after his death. In order to end the chaos that followed Caesar's assassination, the Senate had to act quickly to restore order.

At Caesar's funeral, Antony delivered a famous speech that turned even more Romans against the killers. Shortly afterward, he and Octavian set out with an army to try to avenge Caesar's death.

Their army caught up to the killers near Philippi (FI-luh-py) in northern Greece. In 42 BC Antony and Octavian soundly defeated their opponents. After the battle, the last of Caesar's murderers killed themselves.

### Octavian Becomes Emperor

After the Battle of Philippi, Octavian returned to Italy. Antony went east to fight Rome's enemies. In 40 BC Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia. Eight years later, however, he divorced her to marry Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt. Octavian saw this divorce as an insult to his sister and to himself.

Antony's behavior led to civil war in Rome. In 31 BC Octavian sent a fleet to attack Antony. Antony sailed out to meet it, and the two forces met just west of Greece in the Battle of Actium (AK-shee-uhm). Antony's fleet was defeated, but he escaped back to Egypt with Cleopatra. There the two committed suicide so they wouldn't be taken prisoner by Octavian.

Octavian then became Rome's sole ruler. Over the next few years he gained nearly limitless power. He took the title *princeps* (PRIN-seps), or first citizen.

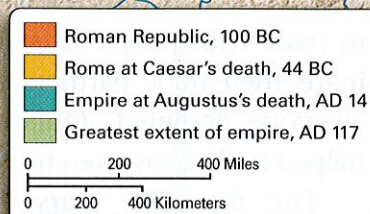
In 27 BC Octavian announced that he was giving up his power to the Senate, but, in reality, he kept all his power. The Senate gave him a new name—Augustus, which means “revered one.” Modern historians consider the naming of Augustus to mark the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire.

**READING CHECK** **Summarizing** How did the Roman Republic become an empire?



## Expansion of Rome, 100 BC–AD 117

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ANIMATED HISTORY



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Place** Where were the borders of the empire in AD 117?
- 2. Location** Based on the map, why do you think the Romans called the Mediterranean "Our Sea"?

## Rome's Growing Empire

When Rome became an empire, it already controlled most of the Mediterranean world. Augustus and the emperors who followed him further expanded the empire. Some emperors conquered territories to control hostile neighbors. Other Roman leaders wanted to gain control of gold, farmland, and other resources.

By the early AD 100s the Romans had taken over Gaul and much of central Europe. Under the emperor Claudius, the Romans conquered most of the island of Britain. Rome also controlled Asia Minor,

Mesopotamia, and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. All of the north African coast belonged to Rome as well.

The Roman conquests promoted trade. People in Rome needed raw materials that were lacking in Italy. Many of the materials, though, could be found in Rome's provinces, the outlying areas that the Romans controlled. Traders brought metals, cloth, and food from the provinces to the city. They also brought more exotic goods, like spices and silk from Asia and animals from Africa. In return, the Romans sent goods made by artisans to the provinces. These goods included jewelry, glass, and clothing.



To pay for their trade goods, Romans used currency, or money. They traded coins made of gold and silver for the items they wanted. These coins allowed the Romans to trade with people even if they had no items their trade partners wanted. Nearly everyone accepted Roman coins, which helped trade grow even more.

The first 200 years of the Roman Empire was a time of general peace and prosperity. Stable government and a well-run army helped Rome grow wealthy in safety. There were no major wars or rebellions in the empire. We call this peaceful period the **Pax Romana, or Roman peace**. It lasted until the AD 180s.

During the Pax Romana, the empire's population grew. Trade increased, making many Romans wealthy. As a result of these changes, the quality of life improved for people in Rome and its provinces.

**READING CHECK** Identifying Cause and Effect  
How did Rome's territorial expansion affect trade?

## Rome's Accomplishments

The Romans made lasting achievements in science, engineering, architecture, and art. In addition, Rome's literary tradition and legal system remain influential today.

### Science and Engineering

The Romans took a practical approach to their study of science and engineering. Roman scientists wanted results that could benefit their society. They studied the stars to produce a calendar. They studied plants and animals to learn how to obtain better crops and meat.

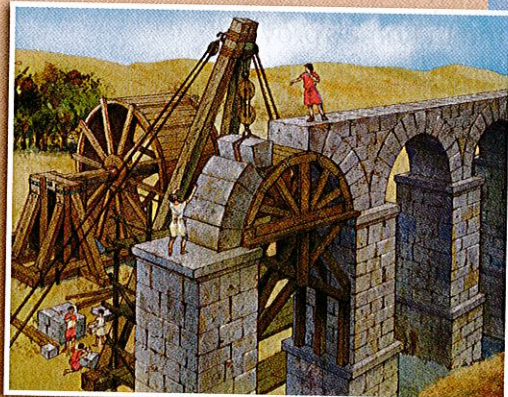
To improve health, Roman doctors studied the works of the Greeks. One great doctor in the empire was Galen (GAY-luhn), who lived in the AD 100s. He was a Greek surgeon who studied the body. Galen described the valves of the heart and noted differences between arteries and veins. For centuries doctors based their ideas on Galen's teachings.

The Romans' practical use of science also can be seen in their engineering. The

## The Roman Arch

The Romans were the first people to make wide use of the arch. The photograph at right shows a Roman aqueduct supported by hundreds of arches. Below is a drawing showing how Roman engineers built their tall and strong arches.

*How did the Romans support arches during their construction?*



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**ANIMATED  
HISTORY**

Roman  
Aqueducts



**Roman Accomplishments**

**Government**

- Importance of written laws
- Equal treatment for all citizens
- Rights and duties of citizens

**Engineering**

- Excellent, durable roads
- Strong bridges
- Aqueducts to move water
- Building designs that inspired later societies

**Architecture**

- Large and strong buildings
- Columns and open spaces

**Art**

- Realistic statues
- Lifelike portraits

**Philosophy**

- Focused on improving people's lives
- Stoic philosophy emphasizing people's civic duty

Romans were great builders. They developed new materials to help their structures last. For example, the Romans made cement by mixing a mineral called lime with volcanic rock and ash. The resulting material dried to be very hard and watertight.

More important than the materials they used, though, were the designs the Romans had for their structures. They built their roads in layers. Each layer was made of a different material. This layered construction made the road highly durable. Many Roman roads have not worn down even after centuries of traffic.

The Romans also created lasting structures by using arches. Because of its rounded shape, an arch can support much more weight than other shapes can. This strength has allowed many arched Roman bridges to last until the present.

The Romans also used arches in their aqueducts (A-kwuh-duhkts). An **aqueduct is a raised channel used to carry water from mountains into cities.** Because they crossed deep valleys, Roman aqueducts needed to be strong. Many still stand today.

Roman builders also learned how to combine arches to create vaults. A vault is a set of arches that supports the roof of a building. The Romans used vaults to create huge, open areas within buildings.

**Architecture and Art**

The Romans weren't interested only in practicality. They also admired beauty. This appreciation can be seen in the new designs of architecture and art that they created.

Roman architecture also copied some older Greek designs. For example, the Romans used columns to make their public buildings look impressive. The Romans also copied the Greeks by covering many of their buildings with marble.

Their engineering techniques allowed the Romans to make new architectural

advances. The vault, for example, let them build huge structures, much larger than anything the Greeks could build. One such structure was the Colosseum in Rome—a huge building constructed for gladiator fights. Many other Roman structures are topped with domes.

Roman artists were known for their beautiful mosaics, paintings, and statues. Mosaics and paintings were used to decorate Roman buildings. Most Roman paintings were frescoes. A fresco is a type of painting done on plaster. Many Roman painters were particularly skilled at creating portraits, or pictures of people. Roman sculptors were also very talented. They studied what the Greeks had done and tried to re-create this brilliance in their own statues.

**Literature and Language**

Rich in art and architecture, Rome was also home to many of the greatest authors in the ancient world. One such author was Virgil, who wrote a great epic about the founding of Rome, the *Aeneid* (ih-NEE-uhd). Another was Ovid (AHV-uhd), who wrote poems about Roman mythology.



The Glory of the Colosseum

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**FOCUS ON READING**

What key words would you use to search for Web information on a subject discussed in this paragraph?



In addition, Roman writers produced histories, speeches, and dramas that are still studied and enjoyed today.

Virgil, Ovid, and other poets wrote in Latin, the language of government and law. People throughout the Roman world wrote, conducted business, and kept records in Latin. In the eastern half of the empire, Greek was just as important.

Latin later developed into many different languages. These languages are called **Romance languages**. They include Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian.

Latin also influenced other languages. Many non-Romance languages, including English, contain Latin words. Words like *et cetera*, *circus*, and *veto* were all originally Latin terms. Latin words are also common in scientific terms and mottoes.

### Law

Rome's greatest influence may have been in the field of law. Roman law was enforced across much of Europe. Even after the

empire fell, Roman laws continued to exist in the kingdoms that followed.

Over time, Roman law inspired a system called civil law. **Civil law is a legal system based on a written code of laws**, like the one created by the Romans.

Most countries in Europe today have civil law traditions. In the 1500s and 1600s, colonists from some of these countries carried civil law around the world. As a result, many countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas have legal systems influenced by Roman law.

### READING CHECK Finding the Main Idea

How did Roman literature and language influence later societies?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Augustus made the Roman Republic into an empire. The empire grew during its first 200 years, and the Romans made many lasting contributions to the world. In the next section, you will learn about an influential development that changed life in Rome—Christianity.

## Section 1 Assessment

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**ONLINE QUIZ**

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Recall** To whom did **Cicero** want to give power?
  - Making Inferences** Why did many Senators consider **Julius Caesar** a threat?
  - Evaluate** What role did the military play in Caesar's rise to power?
- Identify** Who took over Rome after Caesar's death?
  - Summarize** How did Octavian take power from **Marc Antony**?
  - Evaluate** Why is it significant that Octavian did not take the title of dictator?
- Identify** What areas of the world did the Romans take over?
  - Elaborate** Why did trade increase during the **Pax Romana**?
- Recall** What type of law is based on the Roman law code?
  - Draw Conclusions** Latin is no longer spoken. Why do you think people still study it?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Review your notes on Rome's accomplishments. Describe how the effects of one Roman accomplishment in each of the fields below is being felt today.

Engineering	
Language	
Law	
Literature	

### FOCUS ON WRITING

- Taking Notes for a Screenplay** In your notebook, create a three-columned chart labeled "Characters," "Setting," and "Plot." Under the columns, write notes about the people and events from this section that you think would make good material for a movie.