

Ancient Rome

Lesson 5



MAIN IDEAS

1. Many problems threatened the Roman Empire, leading one emperor to divide it in half.
2. Barbarians invaded Rome in the 300s and 400s.
3. Many factors contributed to Rome's fall.

Key Terms and People

Diocletian emperor who divided the Roman Empire into two parts

Clovis Frankish king who built a huge kingdom in Gaul

Attila fearsome Hun leader who attacked Rome's eastern empire

corruption decay in people's values

Lesson Summary

PROBLEMS THREATEN THE EMPIRE

At its height, the Roman Empire included all the land around the Mediterranean Sea. But by the end of the 100s, emperors had to give up some land.

Rome had to defend itself from attacks from the north and the east. Problems came from within the empire, too. Disease killed many people. Taxes were high. Food was scarce because many farmers went to war. To increase food production, Germanic farmers were invited to work on Roman lands, but they were not loyal to Rome.

The emperor **Diocletian** took power in the late 200s. He divided the empire and ruled the east while a co-emperor ruled the west. The emperor Constantine reunited the empire. He moved the capital from Rome to Constantinople in the east. Constantinople had strategic importance because trade routes passed through it. Also, the city was hard to attack because it could be reached by land from only one direction.

Name three problems facing the Roman Empire in the late 100s.

Which emperor divided the Roman Empire? Which emperor reunited it?

Lesson 5, *continued*

BARBARIANS INVADE ROME

Once the capital moved to the east, barbarians attacked Roman territory in the north. During the late 300s, a fierce group from Central Asia called the Huns began attacking a group called the Goths. The Goths were forced into Roman territory. The Roman rulers kept the Goths in control and even paid them not to attack. However in the end, the Goths destroyed Rome.

After the destruction of Rome, the Vandals invaded Spain. The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded Britain. The Franks invaded Gaul. The Frankish king **Clovis**, who was a Christian, was one of the most powerful German kings. He built a large kingdom in Gaul. Meanwhile, the Huns were under a new leader named **Attila**. He was a brilliant leader and raided Roman territory in the east. Rome's leaders were too weak to survive the attacks. In 476, a barbarian leader overthrew the Roman emperor and declared himself king. This ended the western empire.

What role might the Huns have played in the Goths' destruction of Rome?

Underline the name of the leader of the Huns.

FACTORS IN ROME'S FALL

Barbarian invasions are often considered the cause of Rome's decline. However, the vast size of the empire contributed to its fall as well. Its government suffered from **corruption**, or the decay of people's values. As problems continued, wealthy landowners left Rome. Life became more difficult for those who remained. The population decreased, and schools closed. However, taxes and prices soared, so more people became poor. By the end of the 400s, Rome was not the city it had once been. The empire collapsed around it.

What are two factors that led to the weakening of the Roman Empire?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Evaluate Do you think the rulers of the Roman Empire could have done anything to stop the empire's collapse? Write a one-page essay explaining your answer.

Lesson 5, continued

Attila	Clovis
corruption	Diocletian

DIRECTIONS Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. Who divided the Roman Empire in the late 200s?

2. Who was the fearsome leader of the Huns?

3. What do we call the decay of people's values?

4. Who was the Frankish king who built a huge kingdom in Gaul?

DIRECTIONS Look at each set of vocabulary terms following each number. On the line provided, write the letter of the term that does not relate to the others.

_____ 5. a. Constantine b. Diocletian c. Clovis

_____ 6. a. Franks b. Attila c. Huns