



4

The Fall of the Roman Empire

MAIN IDEA

EMPIRE BUILDING Internal problems and invasions spurred the division and decline of the Roman Empire.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The decline and fall of great civilizations is a repeating pattern in world history.

TERMS & NAMES

- inflation
- mercenary
- Diocletian
- Constantinople
- Attila

SETTING THE STAGE In the third century A.D., Rome faced many problems. They came both from within the empire and from outside. Only drastic economic, military, and political reforms, it seemed, could hold off collapse.

A Century of Crisis

Historians generally agree that the end of the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180) marked the end of two centuries of peace and prosperity known as the *Pax Romana*. The rulers that followed in the next century had little or no idea of how to deal with the giant empire and its growing problems. As a result, Rome began to decline.

Rome’s Economy Weakens During the third century A.D., several factors prompted the weakening of Rome’s economy. Hostile tribes outside the boundaries of the empire and pirates on the Mediterranean Sea disrupted trade. Having reached their limit of expansion, the Romans lacked new sources of gold and silver. Desperate for revenue, the government raised taxes. It also started minting coins that contained less and less silver. It hoped to create more money with the same amount of precious metal. However, the economy soon suffered from **inflation**, a drastic drop in the value of money coupled with a rise in prices.

Agriculture faced equally serious problems. Harvests in Italy and western Europe became increasingly meager because overworked soil had lost its fertility. What’s more, years of war had destroyed much farmland. Eventually, serious food shortages and disease spread, and the population declined.

Military and Political Turmoil By the third century A.D., the Roman military was also in disarray. Over time, Roman soldiers in general had become less disciplined and loyal. They gave their allegiance not to Rome but to their commanders, who fought among themselves for the throne. To defend against the increasing threats to the empire, the government began to recruit **mercenaries**, foreign soldiers who fought for money. While mercenaries would accept lower pay than Romans, they felt little sense of loyalty to the empire.

Feelings of loyalty eventually weakened among average citizens as well. In the past, Romans cared so deeply about their republic that they willingly sacrificed their lives for it. Conditions in the later centuries of the empire caused citizens to lose their sense of patriotism. They became indifferent to the empire’s fate.

TAKING NOTES

Analyzing Causes and Recognizing Effects
Identify the main causes of the effects listed below.

Causes	Effects
	Inflation
	Untrustworthy army
	Political instability

Emperors Attempt Reform

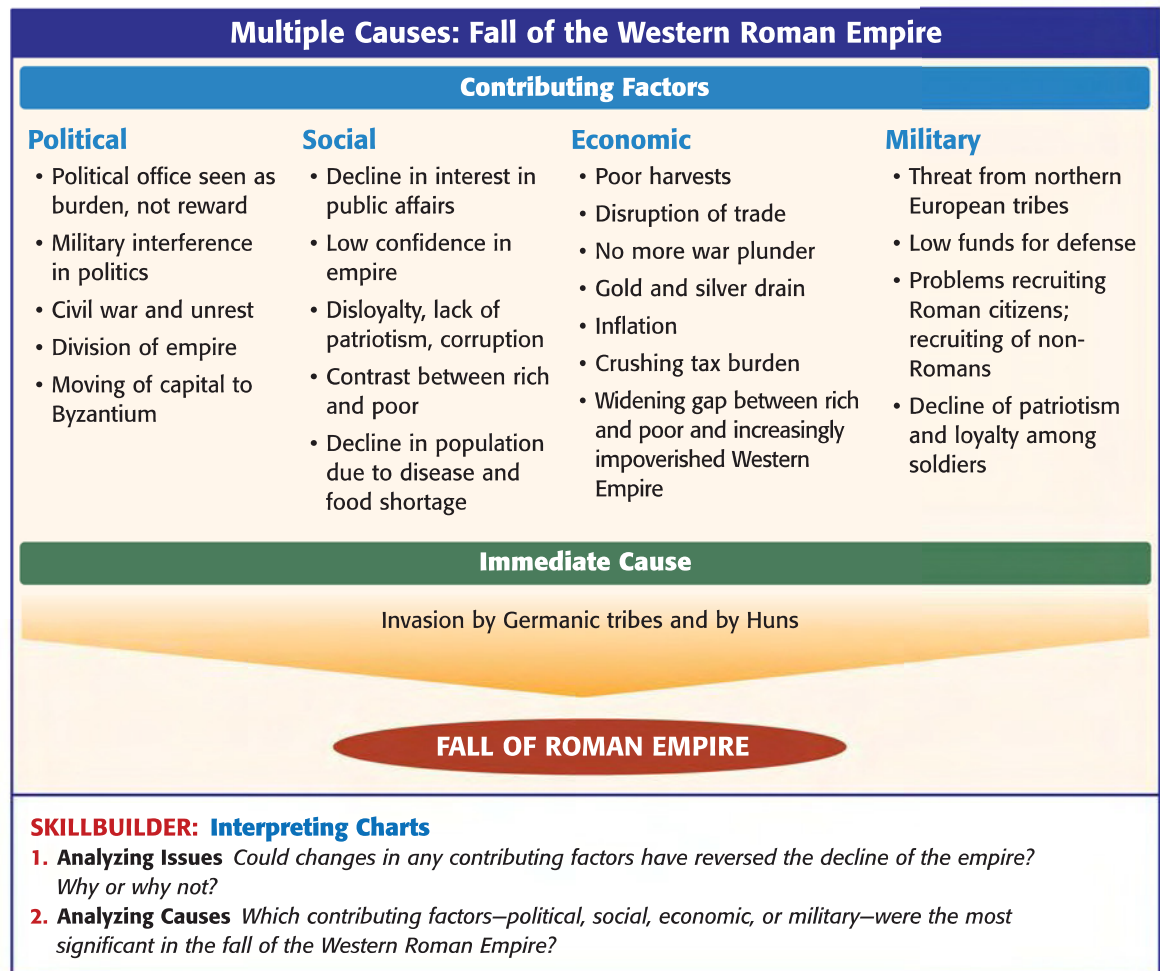
Remarkably, Rome survived intact for another 200 years. This was due largely to reform-minded emperors and the empire's division into two parts.

Diocletian Reforms the Empire In A.D. 284, **Diocletian**, a strong-willed army leader, became the new emperor. He ruled with an iron fist and severely limited personal freedoms. Nonetheless, he restored order to the empire and increased its strength. Diocletian doubled the size of the Roman army and sought to control inflation by setting fixed prices for goods. To restore the prestige of the office of emperor, he claimed descent from the ancient Roman gods and created elaborate ceremonies to present himself in a godlike aura.

Diocletian believed that the empire had grown too large and too complex for one ruler. In perhaps his most significant reform, he divided the empire into the Greek-speaking East (Greece, Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt) and the Latin-speaking West (Italy, Gaul, Britain, and Spain). He took the eastern half for himself and appointed a co-ruler for the West. While Diocletian shared authority, he kept overall control. His half of the empire, the East, included most of the empire's great cities and trade centers and was far wealthier than the West.

Because of ill health, Diocletian retired in A.D. 305. However, his plans for orderly succession failed. Civil war broke out immediately. By 311, four rivals were competing for power. Among them was an ambitious young commander named Constantine, the same Constantine who would later end the persecution of Christians.

Constantine Moves the Capital Constantine gained control of the western part of the empire in A.D. 312 and continued many of the social and economic policies



Invasions into the Roman Empire, A.D. 350–500



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Movement** What group of invaders came the greatest distance?
- 2. Location** What areas of the empire were not threatened by invasion?

of Diocletian. In 324 Constantine also secured control of the East, thus restoring the concept of a single ruler.

In A.D. 330, Constantine took a step that would have great consequence for the empire. He moved the capital from Rome to the Greek city of Byzantium (bih•ZAN•tshee•uhm), in what is now Turkey. The new capital stood on the Bosphorus Strait, strategically located for trade and defense purposes on a crossroads between West and East. **A**

With Byzantium as its capital, the center of power in the empire shifted from Rome to the east. Soon the new capital stood protected by massive walls and filled with imperial buildings modeled after those in Rome. The city eventually took a new name—**Constantinople** (KAHN•stan•tuhn•OH•puhl), or the city of Constantine. After Constantine's death, the empire would again be divided. The East would survive; the West would fall.

The Western Empire Crumbles

The decline of the Western Roman Empire took place over many years. Its final collapse was the result of worsening internal problems, the separation of the Western Empire from the wealthier Eastern part, and outside invasions.

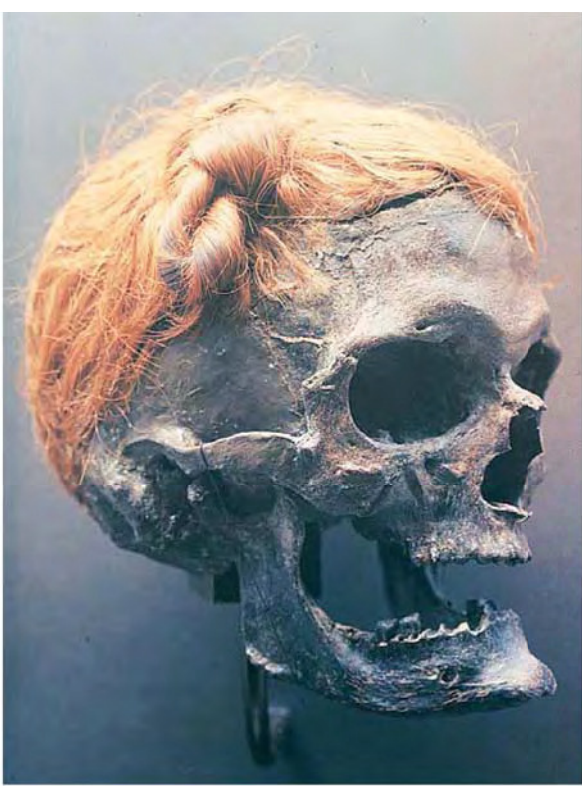
Germanic Invasions Since the days of Julius Caesar, Germanic peoples had gathered on the northern borders of the empire and coexisted in relative peace with Rome. Around A.D. 370, all that changed when a fierce group of Mongol nomads from central Asia, the Huns, moved into the region and began destroying all in their path.

In an effort to flee from the Huns, the various Germanic people pushed into Roman lands. (Romans called all invaders “barbarians,” a term that they used to refer to non-Romans.) They kept moving through the Roman provinces of Gaul,

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives

A Why did Constantine choose the location of Byzantium for his new capital?



▲ This skull, still retaining its hair, shows a kind of topknot in the hair that some Germanic peoples wore to identify themselves.

Spain, and North Africa. The Western Empire was unable to field an army to stop them. In 410, hordes of Germans overran Rome itself and plundered it for three days.

Attila the Hun Meanwhile, the Huns, who were indirectly responsible for the Germanic assault on the empire, became a direct threat. In 444, they united for the first time under a powerful chieftain named **Attila** (AT•uhl•uh). With his 100,000 soldiers, Attila terrorized both halves of the empire. In the East, his armies attacked and plundered 70 cities. (They failed, however, to scale the high walls of Constantinople.)

The Huns then swept into the West. In A.D. 452, Attila's forces advanced against Rome, but bouts of famine and disease kept them from conquering the city. Although the Huns were no longer a threat to the empire after Attila's death in 453, the Germanic invasions continued.

An Empire No More The last Roman emperor, a 14-year-old boy named Romulus Augustulus, was ousted by German forces in 476. After that, no emperor even pretended to rule Rome and its western provinces. Roman power in the western half of the empire had disappeared. **B**

The eastern half of the empire, which came to be called the Byzantine Empire, not only survived but flourished. It preserved the great heritage of Greek and Roman culture for another 1,000 years. (See Chapter 11.) The Byzantine emperors ruled from Constantinople and saw themselves as heirs to the power of Augustus Caesar. The empire endured until 1453, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks.

Even though Rome's political power in the West ended, its cultural influence did not. Its ideas, customs, and institutions influenced the development of Western civilization—and still do so today.

MAIN IDEA

Hypothesizing

B Do you think Rome would have fallen to invaders if the Huns had not moved into the west? Explain.

SECTION 4 ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- inflation
- mercenary
- Diocletian
- Constantinople
- Attila

USING YOUR NOTES

2. How did these problems open the empire to invading peoples?

Causes	Effects
	Inflation
	Untrustworthy army
	Political instability

MAIN IDEAS

3. What were the main internal causes of the empire's decline?
4. How did Diocletian succeed in preserving the empire?
5. Why did so many Germanic tribes begin invading the Roman Empire?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How do you think the splitting of the empire into two parts helped it survive for another 200 years?
7. **IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS** Which of Rome's internal problems do you think were the most serious? Why?
8. **ANALYZING ISSUES** Why do you think the eastern half of the empire survived?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **EMPIRE BUILDING** Imagine you are a journalist in the Roman Empire. Write an **editorial** in which you comment—favorably or unfavorably—on Constantine's decision to move the capital of the empire.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACTIVITY

Use the Internet to gather information and create a **travel brochure** about modern-day Constantinople, now known as Istanbul. Include an introductory paragraph about the city and any facts you think a traveler might want to know.

INTERNET KEYWORD

Istanbul tourism

The Fall of the Roman Empire

Since the fifth century, historians and others have argued over the empire's fall. They have attributed it to a variety of causes, coming both from within and outside the empire. The following excerpts are examples of the differing opinions.

A SECONDARY SOURCE

Edward Gibbon

In the 1780s Gibbon published *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In this passage, Gibbon explains that a major cause of the collapse was that the empire was simply just too large.

The decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and, as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring why the Roman Empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long.

B SECONDARY SOURCE

Arther Ferrill

In his book *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1986), Arther Ferrill argues that the fall of Rome was a military collapse.

In fact the Roman Empire of the West did fall. Not every aspect of the life of Roman subjects was changed by that, but the fall of Rome as a political entity was one of the major events of the history of Western man. It will simply not do to call that fall a myth or to ignore its historical significance merely by focusing on those aspects of Roman life that survived the fall in one form or another. At the opening of the fifth century a massive army, perhaps more than 200,000 strong, stood at the service of the Western emperor and his generals. The destruction of Roman military power in the fifth century was the obvious cause of the collapse of Roman government in the West.

C SECONDARY SOURCE

Finley Hooper

In this passage from his *Roman Realities* (1967), Hooper argues against the idea of a “fall.”

The year was 476. For those who demand to know the date Rome fell, that is it. Others will realize that the fall of Rome was not an event but a process. Or, to put it another way, there was no fall at all—ancient Roman civilization simply became something else, which is called medieval. [It evolved into another civilization, the civilization of the Middle Ages.]



D PRIMARY SOURCE

St. Jerome

This early Church leader did not live to see the empire's end, but he vividly describes his feelings after a major event in Rome's decline—the attack and plunder of the city by Visigoths in 410.

It is the end of the world . . . Words fail me. My sobs break in . . . The city which took captive the whole world has itself been captured.

Document-Based QUESTIONS

1. Compare the reasons for the fall of Rome given in Sources A and B. How might they be considered similar?
2. What became of Rome according to Source C? Do you agree or disagree with that conclusion?
3. Source D is different from the other sources. How?



5

Rome and the Roots of Western Civilization

MAIN IDEA

POWER AND AUTHORITY The Romans developed many ideas and institutions that became fundamental to Western civilization.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Evidence of Roman culture is found throughout Europe and North America and in Asia and Africa.

TERMS & NAMES

- Greco-Roman culture
- Pompeii
- Virgil
- Tacitus
- aqueduct

SETTING THE STAGE Romans borrowed and adapted cultural elements freely, especially from the Greek and Hellenistic cultures. However, the Romans created a great civilization in their own right, whose art and architecture, language and literature, engineering, and law became its legacy to the world.

TAKING NOTES

Summarizing Use a chart to list the accomplishments of Roman civilization.

<i>Fine Arts</i>	<i>Literature</i>
<i>Law</i>	<i>Engineering</i>

The Legacy of Greco-Roman Civilization

Under the Roman Empire, hundreds of territories were knitted into a single state. Each Roman province and city was governed in the same way. The Romans were proud of their unique ability to rule, but they acknowledged Greek leadership in the fields of art, architecture, literature, and philosophy.

By the second century B.C., Romans had conquered Greece and had come to greatly admire Greek culture. Educated Romans learned the Greek language. As Horace, a Roman poet, said, “Greece, once overcome, overcame her wild conqueror.” The mixing of elements of Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman culture produced a new culture, called **Greco-Roman culture**. This is also often called classical civilization.

Roman artists, philosophers, and writers did not merely copy their Greek and Hellenistic models. They adapted them for their own purposes and created a style of their own. Roman art and literature came to convey the Roman ideals of strength, permanence, and solidity.

Roman Fine Arts Romans learned the art of sculpture from the Greeks. However, while the Greeks were known for the beauty and idealization of their sculpture, Roman sculptors created realistic portraits in stone. Much Roman art was practical in purpose, intended for public education.

The reign of Augustus was a period of great artistic achievement. At that time the Romans further developed a type of sculpture called bas-relief. In bas-relief, or low-relief, images project from a flat background. Roman sculptors used bas-relief to tell stories and to represent crowds of people, soldiers in battle, and landscapes.

Roman artists also were particularly skilled in creating mosaics. Mosaics were pictures or designs made by setting small pieces of stone, glass, or tile onto a surface. Most Roman villas, the country houses of the wealthy, had at least one colorful mosaic. (See the Social History feature on pages 166–167.)

In addition, Romans excelled at the art of painting. Most wealthy Romans had bright, large murals, called frescoes, painted directly on their walls. Few have survived. The best examples of Roman painting are found in the Roman town of **Pompeii** and date from as early as the second century B.C. In A.D. 79, nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted, covering Pompeii in a thick layer of ash and killing about 2,000 residents. The ash acted to preserve many buildings and works of art.

Learning and Literature Romans borrowed much of their philosophy from the Greeks. Stoicism, the philosophy of the Greek teacher Zeno, was especially influential. Stoicism encouraged virtue, duty, moderation, and endurance.

In literature, as in philosophy, the Romans found inspiration in the works of their Greek neighbors. While often following Greek forms and models, Roman writers promoted their own themes and ideas. The poet **Virgil** spent ten years writing the most famous work of Latin literature, the *Aeneid* (ih•NEE•ihd), the epic of the legendary Aeneas. Virgil modeled the *Aeneid*, written in praise of Rome and Roman virtues, after the Greek epics of Homer. Here he speaks of government as being Rome’s most important contribution to civilization:

PRIMARY SOURCE

Romans, never forget that government is your medium! Be this your art:—to practice men in habit of peace, Generosity to the conquered, and firmness against aggressors.

VIRGIL, *Aeneid*

While Virgil’s writing carries all the weight and seriousness of the Roman character, the poet Ovid wrote light, witty poetry for enjoyment. In *Amores*, Ovid relates that he can only compose when he is in love: “When I was from Cupid’s passions free, my Muse was mute and wrote no elegy.”

Global Patterns

The Epic

While many know the epics of Virgil and the Greek poet Homer, other cultures throughout history have created their own narrative poems about heroic figures. India’s *Mahabharata* tells the story of a battle for control of a mighty kingdom, while the Spanish epic *El Cid* celebrates a hero of the wars against the Moors. And while it is not a poem, *The Lord of the Rings*, the fantasy trilogy by English writer J.R.R. Tolkien, is considered to contain many aspects of the epic.

Most epics follow a pattern derived from the works of Homer. However, the emergence of epics around the world was not so much the result of one writer but the common desire among civilizations to promote their values and ideals through stories.

► Depictions of scenes from *The Lord of the Rings* (left), *El Cid* (top right), and *Mahabharata* (bottom right)



Western Civilization

Western civilization is generally seen as the heritage of ideas that spread to Europe and America from ancient Greece and Rome. Some historians observe, however, that Western civilization does not belong to any particular place—that it is the result of cultures coming together, interacting, and changing. Still, the legacy of Greece and Rome can be seen today.

The diagram below shows how ancient Greek and Roman ideas of government, philosophy, and literature can be traced across time. As with many cultural interactions, the links between the examples are not necessarily direct. Instead, the chart traces the evolution of an idea or theme over time.

Influence of Greek and Roman Ideas

Government	Philosophy	Literature
<p>509 B.C. Rome developed a form of representative government.</p>	<p>300s B.C. Aristotle developed his philosophical theories.</p>	<p>ABOUT 800 B.C. Homer wrote the <i>Odyssey</i>.</p>
<p>400s B.C. Greece implemented a direct democracy.</p>	<p>A.D. 1200s Thomas Aquinas attempted to prove the existence of a single god using Aristotelian ideas.</p>	<p>19 B.C. Virgil used the <i>Odyssey</i> to guide his <i>Aeneid</i>.</p>
<p>1600s England became a constitutional monarchy.</p>	<p>1781 Philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote that Aristotle's theories on logic were still valid.</p>	<p>1922 James Joyce patterned his epic, <i>Ulysses</i>, after Homer's work.</p>
<p>1776 The United States declared independence from England and began building the republican democracy we know today.</p>	<p>Present Scholars still hold conferences focusing on questions Aristotle raised.</p>	<p>2000 The Coen brothers' film <i>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</i> brought a very different adaptation of the <i>Odyssey</i> to the big screen.</p>

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

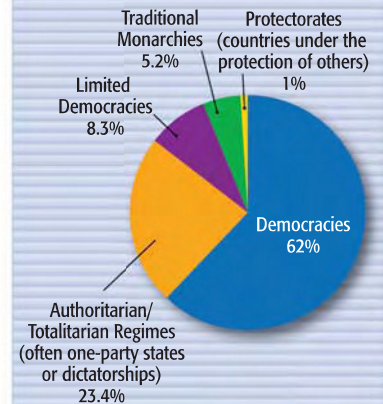
RESEARCH LINKS For more on Western civilization, go to classzone.com

> DATA FILE

DEMOCRACY

- Theoretically, 40,000 people could attend the Greek Assembly—in practice, about 6,000 people attended.
- In 1215, King John of England granted the Magna Carta, which largely influenced subsequent democratic thought.
- In the 1970s, there were 40 democratic governments worldwide.
- In 2002, over 120 established and emerging democracies met to discuss their common issues.

Current Forms of World Governments



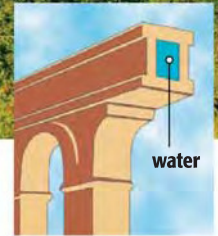
Source: adapted from *Democracy's Century*, Freedom House online (2003)

Connect to Today

1. Hypothesizing Why do you think ancient Greek and Roman cultures have had such a lasting influence on Western civilization?

See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R15.

2. Comparing and Contrasting From what you know of ancient Greece and Rome, what is another element of either culture that can still be seen today? Provide an example.



▲ This Roman aqueduct in modern France has survived the centuries. The cross section indicates how the water moved within the aqueduct.

The Romans also wrote excellent prose, especially history. Livy compiled a multivolume history of Rome from its origins to 9 B.C. He used legends freely, creating more of a national myth of Rome than a true history. **Tacitus** (TAS•ih•tuhs), another Roman historian, is notable among ancient historians because he presented the facts accurately. He also was concerned about the Romans' lack of morality. In his *Annals* and *Histories*, he wrote about the good and bad of imperial Rome.

Here, Tacitus shows his disgust with the actions of the Emperor Nero, who many consider to be one of Rome's cruelest rulers.

PRIMARY SOURCE

While Nero was frequently visiting the show, even amid his pleasures there was no cessation to his crimes. For during the very same period Torquatus Silanus was forced to die, because over and above his illustrious rank as one of the Junian family he claimed to be the great grandson of Augustus. Accusers were ordered to charge him with prodigality [wastefulness] in lavishing gifts, and with having no hope but in revolution. . . . Then the most intimate of his freedmen were put in chains and torn from him, till, knowing the doom which impended, Torquatus divided the arteries in his arms. A speech from Nero followed, as usual, which stated that though he was guilty and with good reason distrusted his defense, he would have lived, had he awaited the clemency of the judge.

TACITUS, *Annals*

The Legacy of Rome

The presence of Rome is still felt daily in the languages, the institutions, and the thought of the Western world.

The Latin Language Latin, the language of the Romans, remained the language of learning in the West long after the fall of Rome. It was the official language of the Roman Catholic Church into the 20th century.

Latin was adopted by different peoples and developed into French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian. These languages are called Romance languages because of their common Roman heritage. Latin also influenced other languages. For example, more than half the words in English have a basis in Latin. **A**

Master Builders Visitors from all over the empire marveled at the architecture of Rome. The arch, the dome, and concrete were combined to build spectacular structures, such as the Colosseum.

Arches also supported bridges and **aqueducts**. Aqueducts were designed by Roman engineers to bring water into cities and towns. When the water channel spanned a river or ravine, the aqueduct was lifted high up on arches.

MAIN IDEA

Clarifying

A What impact did the Romans have on our English language?

INTERACTIVE

The Colosseum

The Colosseum was one of the greatest feats of Roman engineering and a model for the ages. The name comes from the Latin word *colossus*, meaning “gigantic.” Its construction was started by the Emperor Vespasian and was completed by his sons, emperors Titus and Domitian. For centuries after its opening in A.D. 80, spectators, both rich and poor, cheered a variety of free, bloody spectacles—from gladiator fights to animal hunts.



▲ The Colosseum in Rome as it appears today

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more information on the Colosseum, go to classzone.com

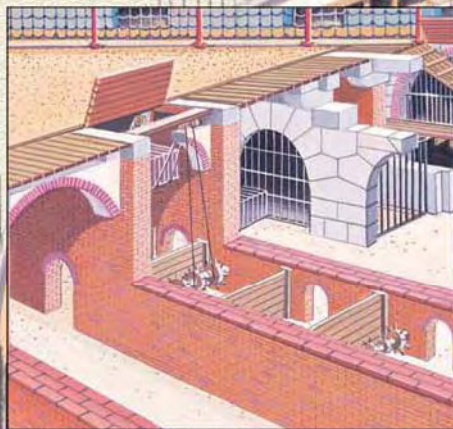
Elevators and ramps led from the cells and animal cages in the Colosseum basement to trapdoors concealed in the arena floor.

exits—giant staircases that allowed the building to be emptied in minutes

arena—central area where spectacles took place

passageways—walkways that led to seats

velarium—a retractable canvas awning that shielded spectators from sun and rain



Facts About the Colosseum

- Built—A.D. 72–81
- Capacity—45,000–50,000
- Materials—stone and concrete
- Size—157 feet high, 620 feet long
- Arena—287 feet long, 180 feet wide

entrances—80 in all

Connect to Today

1. Comparing The Colosseum has been the model for sports stadiums worldwide. How is the design of modern stadiums patterned after that of the Colosseum? What are the similarities?

 See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R7.

2. Drawing Conclusions What do the kind of spectacles the Romans watched tell us about them as a people and about their leaders?

Because Roman architectural forms were so practical, they have remained popular. Thomas Jefferson began a Roman revival in the United States in the 18th century. Many large public buildings, such as the U.S. Capitol and numerous state capitols, include Roman features.

Roman roads were also technological marvels. The army built a vast network of roads constructed of stone, concrete, and sand that connected Rome to all parts of the empire. Many lasted into the Middle Ages; some are still used.

Roman System of Law Rome's most lasting and widespread contribution was its law. Early Roman law dealt mostly with strengthening the rights of Roman citizens. As the empire grew, however, the Romans came to believe that laws should be fair and apply equally to all people, rich and poor. Slowly, judges began to recognize certain standards of justice. These standards were influenced largely by the teachings of Stoic philosophers and were based on common sense and practical ideas. Some of the most important principles of Roman law were:

- All persons had the right to equal treatment under the law.
- A person was considered innocent until proven guilty.
- The burden of proof rested with the accuser rather than the accused.
- A person should be punished only for actions, not thoughts.
- Any law that seemed unreasonable or grossly unfair could be set aside.

The principles of Roman law endured to form the basis of legal systems in many European countries and of places influenced by Europe, including the United States of America. **B**

Rome's Enduring Influence By preserving and adding to Greek civilization, Rome strengthened the Western cultural tradition. The world would be a very different place had Rome not existed. Historian R. H. Barrow has stated that Rome never fell because it turned into something even greater—an idea—and achieved immortality.

As mighty as the Roman Empire had been, however, it was not the only great civilization of its time. Around the same period that Rome was developing its enduring culture, different but equally complex empires were emerging farther east. In India, the Mauryan and Gupta empires dominated the land, while the Han Empire ruled over China.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Issues

B How did Roman law protect those accused of crimes?

SECTION

5

ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Greco-Roman culture
- Pompeii
- Virgil
- Tacitus
- aqueduct

USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which accomplishment do you consider most important? Why?

Fine Arts	Literature
Law	Engineering

MAIN IDEAS

3. What is Greco-Roman culture?
4. In what way did Roman art differ from Greek art?
5. What influence did Latin have on the development of Western languages?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** Which principle of law do you think has been Rome's greatest contribution to modern legal systems?
7. **FORMING AND SUPPORTING OPINIONS** Do you agree with Horace's claim on page 178 that when it came to culture, Greece in essence conquered Rome? Explain.
8. **HYPOTHESIZING** Describe how the world might be different if Rome had not existed.
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **POWER AND AUTHORITY** Imagine you are a historian. Write an **expository essay** describing the importance of Rome's legacy.

CONNECT TO TODAY **PRESENTING A REPORT**

Locate several Latin phrases still in use today. Use the necessary materials to help translate those phrases, and then explain in a brief **report** the meaning and intent of those phrases.