

2 The Roman Empire Brings Change

TERMS & NAMES

- civil war
- Julius Caesar
- triumvirate
- absolute ruler
- Augustus
- *Pax Romana*
- gladiator

MAIN IDEA

The creation of the Roman Empire transformed Roman government, society, economy, and culture.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Roman Empire has served throughout history as a model of political organization and control.

SETTING THE STAGE Rome grew rapidly, and growth brought political, economic, and social changes. Some leaders attempted reforms, but the republican government was unable to deal with the problems caused by these changes.

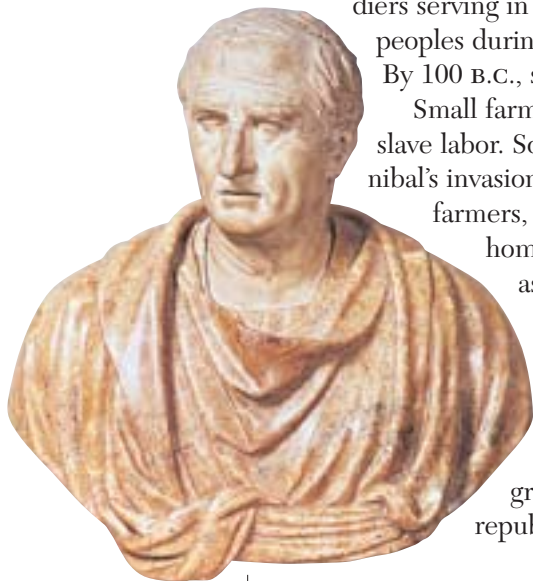
Expansion Creates Problems in the Republic

The Punic Wars and Rome's increasing wealth and expanding empire brought many problems. The most serious was the widening gap between rich and poor.

Rich landowners lived on huge estates called *latifundia*. Many of these estates had been created by occupying conquered lands and by taking farms left untended by soldiers serving in the army. Romans had made slaves of thousands of captured peoples during the wars. These slaves were made to work on the *latifundia*. By 100 B.C., slaves formed perhaps one-third of Rome's population.

Small farmers found it difficult to compete with the large estates run by slave labor. Some could not afford to repair the damage caused by Hannibal's invasion. They sold their lands to wealthy landowners. Many of these farmers, a large number of whom were returning soldiers, became homeless and jobless. Most stayed in the countryside and worked as seasonal migrant laborers. Some headed to Rome and other cities looking for work. The landless and unskilled in the cities found few jobs. They joined the ranks of the urban poor, a group that totaled about one-fourth of Roman society.

While wealthy Romans became corrupted by money and luxury, discontent arose among the slaves. Resentment also grew among the poor. Class tensions planted the seeds of the republic's collapse.



Cicero, Rome's greatest orator, was a strong defender of the republic. This marble bust is from the first century B.C.

The Republic Collapses

Two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (GRAK-us), attempted to help Rome's poor. As tribunes, they proposed reforms. The reforms included limiting the size of estates and giving land to the poor. Tiberius spoke eloquently about the plight of the landless former soldiers:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The savage beasts have their . . . dens . . . , but the men who bear arms and expose their lives for the safety of their country, enjoy . . . nothing more in it but the air and light . . . and wander from place to place with their wives and children.

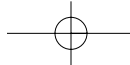
TIBERIUS GRACCHUS quoted in Plutarch, *The Lives of Noble Greeks and Romans*

The brothers were strongly opposed by senators who felt threatened by their ideas. Both met violent deaths—Tiberius in 133 B.C. and Gaius in 121 B.C. A period of **civil war**, or conflict between groups within the same country, followed their deaths.

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

A. Making

Inferences What problems did increasing wealth bring to Rome?



Changes in the character of the army had led to the rise of politically powerful military leaders. Generals began recruiting soldiers from the landless poor by promising them land. These soldiers fought for pay and owed allegiance only to their commander. They replaced the citizen-soldiers whose loyalty had been to the republic. It now was possible for a politician supported by his own troops to take over by force.

Two such generals were Gaius Marius and Lucius Cornelius Sulla. During 88–82 B.C., their supporters fought a bloody civil war. The war ended with Sulla being named dictator. Rivalries between generals continued to threaten the republic. Eventually an ambitious and daring leader, **Julius Caesar** (SEE-zuhr), emerged to bring order to Rome.

Julius Caesar Takes Control In 60 B.C., Julius Caesar joined forces with Crassus, a wealthy Roman, and Pompey, a popular general. With their help, Caesar was elected consul in 59 B.C. For the next ten years, these men dominated Rome as a **triumvirate**, a group of three rulers.

Caesar was a strong leader and a genius at military strategy. Abiding by tradition, he served only one year as consul. He then appointed himself governor of Gaul (now France). During 58–50 B.C., Caesar led his legions in a grueling but successful campaign to conquer all of Gaul. Because he shared fully in the hardships of war, he won his men's loyalty and devotion. Here he speaks of rallying his troops in battle:

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

I had no shield with me but I snatched one from a soldier in the rear ranks and went forward to the front line. Once there, I called to all the centurions by name and shouted encouragement to the rest of the men. . . . My arrival gave the troops fresh hope. . . .

JULIUS CAESAR, *Commentaries*

The reports of Caesar's successes in Gaul made him very popular with the people of Rome. Pompey, who had become his political rival, feared Caesar's ambitions. In 50 B.C., the senate, at Pompey's urgings, ordered Caesar to disband his legions and return home.

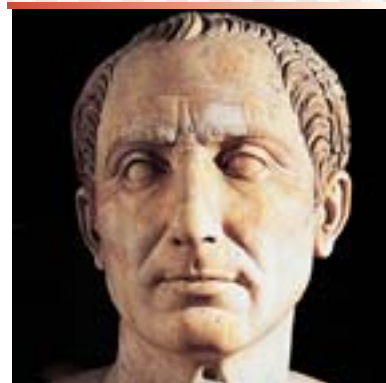
Caesar's next move led to civil war. He defied the senate's order. On the night of January 10, 49 B.C., he took his army across the Rubicon River in Italy, the southern limit of the area he commanded. He marched his army swiftly toward Rome, and Pompey fled. Caesar's troops defeated Pompey's armies in Greece, Asia, Spain, and Egypt. In 46 B.C., Caesar returned to Rome, where he had the support of the army and the masses. That same year, the senate appointed him dictator; in 44 B.C., he was named dictator for life.

Caesar's Reforms Caesar governed as an **absolute ruler**, one who has total power. He made sweeping changes. He granted Roman citizenship to many people in the provinces. He expanded the senate, adding friends and supporters from Italy and the provinces. Caesar helped the poor by creating jobs, especially through the construction of new public buildings. He started colonies where the landless could own land and increased pay for soldiers.

Many nobles and senators were troubled by Caesar's growing power, success, and popularity. Some feared losing their influence. Others considered him a tyrant. A number of important senators, led by Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius, plotted his assassination. On March 15, 44 B.C., they stabbed him to death in the senate chamber.

Beginning of the Empire After Caesar's death, civil war broke out again and destroyed what was left of the Roman Republic. Three of Caesar's supporters banded

HISTORYMAKERS



Julius Caesar
100–44 B.C.

In 44 B.C., on March 15 (known to Romans as the Ides of March), Caesar prepared to go to speak to the Senate, unaware that important senators plotted his death. According to legend, his wife, Calpurnia, begged him not to go. She said she had seen him in a dream dying in her arms of stab wounds. He earlier had been warned of danger by a soothsayer (fortune teller).

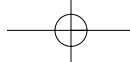
When Caesar arrived at the Senate chamber, he sat in his chair. Soon the plotters encircled him, took knives hidden in their togas, and stabbed him 23 times. They were led by Gaius Cassius and Caesar's friend Marcus Brutus. Caesar's last words were "Et tu, Brute?" ("You, too, Brutus?")

Background

All future Roman emperors would take the name "Caesar" as a title, and the word would be adopted in other languages: kaiser (German) and czar (Russian).

THINK THROUGH HISTORY B. Analyzing Motives

Why did Caesar's rivals feel they had to kill him?



Vocabulary

purge: a removal of people considered undesirable.

together to crush the assassins. Caesar's 18-year-old grand-nephew and adopted son Octavian (ahk-TAY-vee-uhn) joined with an experienced general named Mark Antony and a powerful politician named Lepidus. In 43 B.C., they took control of Rome and ruled for ten years as the Second Triumvirate. Among those killed in the Triumvirate's purge of Caesar's enemies was Cicero, a defender of the republic in the senate.

The Second Triumvirate ended in jealousy and violence. Octavian forced Lepidus to retire. He and Mark Antony then became rivals. While leading troops against Rome's enemies in Anatolia, Mark Antony met Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. He fell in love with her and followed her to Egypt. Octavian accused Antony of plotting to rule Rome from Egypt, and another civil war erupted. Octavian defeated the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra at the naval battle of Actium in 31 B.C. Later, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

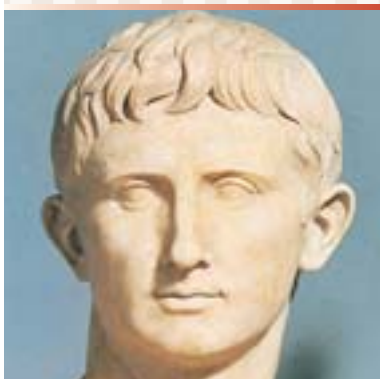
Octavian claimed he would restore the republic, and, in fact, did retain some of its forms and traditions.

The senate, for example, continued to meet, and Octavian consulted it on important matters. However, Octavian became the unchallenged ruler of Rome. Eventually he accepted the title of **Augustus** (aw-GUHS-tuhs), or "exalted one." He also kept the title *imperator*, or "supreme military commander," a term from which *emperor* is derived. Rome was now an empire ruled by one man.



Cleopatra, who appears here in a marble sculpture from the first century B.C., was Egypt's last queen. In her quest for power, she allied herself first with Julius Caesar and then with Mark Antony.

HISTORY MAKERS



Augustus
63 B.C.–A.D. 14

Augustus was the most powerful ruler of the mightiest empire of the ancient world. Yet, amid the pomp of imperial Rome, he lived a simple and frugal life. His home was modest by Roman standards. His favorite meal consisted of coarse bread, a few sardines, and a piece of cheese—the usual food of a common laborer.

Augustus was also a very religious and family-oriented man. He held to a strict moral code. He had his only child, Julia, exiled from Rome for not being faithful in her marriage.

As he neared death, he gathered his family, including Livia, his wife of 52 years, to his bedside. He asked them if he had done well in life. When they replied that he had, Augustus said, "Since well I've played my part, then, gentle people, pray applaud, and send me with your thanks on my way."

A Vast and Powerful Empire

Rome was at the peak of its power from the beginning of Augustus' rule in 27 B.C. to A.D. 180. For 207 years, peace reigned throughout the empire, except for some fighting with tribes along the borders. This period of peace and prosperity is known as the ***Pax Romana***—"Roman peace."

During this time, the Roman Empire included more than 3 million square miles. Its population numbered between 60 and 80 million people. About 1 million people lived in the city of Rome itself.

An Economy Based on Agriculture and Trade

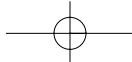
Agriculture was the most important industry in the empire. All else depended on it. About 90 percent of the people were engaged in farming. Most Romans survived on the produce from their local area. Additional foodstuffs (when needed) and luxury items for the rich were obtained through trade. In Augustus' time, a silver coin called a denarius was in use throughout the empire. Having common coinage made trade between different parts of the empire much easier.

Rome had a vast trading network. Ships from the east traveled the Mediterranean protected by the Roman navy. Cities such as Corinth in Greece, Ephesus in Anatolia, and Antioch on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean grew wealthy. Rome also traded with China and India.

A complex network of roads linked the empire to such far-flung places as Persia and southern Russia. These roads were originally built by the Roman army for military purposes. The most important of the roads were the Silk Roads, named for the overland routes on which silk from China came through Asia to the Romans. Other luxury goods traveled along the same routes. Trade also brought Roman ways to the provinces and beyond.

Background

The denarius and other Roman coins were more than currency. They were used for propaganda or public relations purposes. They often carried the likeness of the emperor or depicted a Roman achievement.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Movement** From what three continents did trade goods come to Rome?
- 2. Location** Which goods were supplied by all three areas?

Managing a Huge Empire The borders of the Roman Empire measured some 10,000 miles. By the second century A.D., the empire reached from Spain to Mesopotamia, from North Africa to Britain. Included in its provinces were people of many languages, cultures, and customs.

The Roman army drew upon the men of the provinces as auxiliary, or support, forces. They were not citizens of Rome. But they learned Roman customs and became citizens when they were discharged from military service. In this way, the army also spread the Roman way of life to the provinces and Roman rights to non-Romans.

A Sound Government Augustus was Rome’s ablest emperor. He stabilized the frontier, glorified Rome with splendid public buildings, and created a system of government that survived for centuries. He set up a civil service. That is, he paid workers to manage the affairs of government, such as the grain supply, tax collection, and the postal system. Although the senate still functioned, civil servants drawn from plebeians and even former slaves actually administered the empire.

After Augustus died in A.D. 14, the senate chose his adopted son Tiberius as his successor. During the *Pax Romana*, some of Rome’s emperors were able and intelligent. Some were cruel. Two, Caligula and Nero, were either insane or unstable. Yet the system of government set up by Augustus proved to be stable. This was due mainly to the effectiveness of the civil service in carrying out day-to-day operations.

The Emperors and Succession Rome’s peace and prosperity depended upon the orderly transfer of power. Because Rome had no written law for selecting a new emperor, a crisis or a civil war was always a possibility when an emperor died. The succession problem was temporarily solved by the leaders known as the Five Good Emperors. Beginning with Nerva in A.D. 96, each of them adopted as his heir a

THINK THROUGH HISTORY
C. Summarizing
 Summarize how Roman culture spread to the provinces.

Vocabulary
 civil service: persons employed in the civil administration of government



Roman Emperors A.D. 37–A.D. 180

Bad Emperors

Caligula

- 37–41
- Mentally disturbed
- Assassinated after short, brutal reign

Nero

- 54–68
- Good administrator but vicious
- Murdered many
- Persecuted Christians
- Committed suicide

Domitian

- 81–96
- Ruled dictatorially
- Feared treason everywhere and executed many
- Assassinated



Caligula

respected leader who had the support of both the army and the people to be the next emperor. The reign of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the five, ended in A.D. 180. His death marked the beginning of the empire's decline and the end of the *Pax Romana*.



Nero

Life in Imperial Rome

Merchants, soldiers, slaves, foreigners, and philosophers all shared the crowded, noisy streets of Rome. However, most people in the Roman Empire did not live in the cities and towns. They lived in the countryside and worked on farms. For all Romans, life changed as Rome moved from republic to empire.

Men and Women Throughout its history, Rome emphasized the values of discipline, strength, and loyalty. A person with these qualities was said to have the important virtue of *gravitas*. The Romans were a practical people. They honored strength more than beauty, power more than grace, and usefulness more than elegance.

At the heart of Roman society was the family. By law and custom, the eldest man, known as the *paterfamilias*, or “father of the family,” had power to rule the household. He controlled all property and had authority over all family members. He could disown newborn children, banish family members, or even sell them into slavery.

By the time of the empire's establishment, Roman women, both rich and poor, had become nearly the social equals of men. Upper-class women ran the household and were given authority and respect. They had more personal freedom than the women of Greece and than most women would have until the 19th century. Roman women could own property and testify in court. However, they could not vote. Officially they were expected to remain in the background. But they frequently attended the public baths (where most Romans went to bathe), plays, festivals, and games. Lower-class women could work at such jobs as spinners, weavers, shopkeepers, midwives, entertainers, and waitresses.

Children and Education Romans favored boy children over girls. Boys would become citizens with the right to vote and would carry on family traditions. Girls were not even given their own names. Daughters received the feminine form of the father's name, with “the elder” or “the younger” or a number added, such as Octavia II.

Few children went to school. Those who did were usually boys from noble or wealthy families. Their schooling continued until they officially became adults at 16. Girls from these families most

Vocabulary

gravitas: Latin for weightiness.

This Roman husband and wife from first-century Pompeii show their pride at being able to read and write. Their portrait includes writing implements and a scroll.





Good Emperors

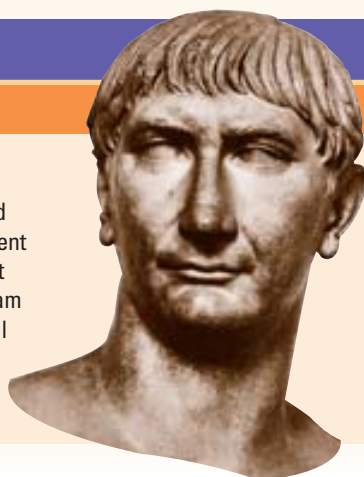
Nerva

- 96–98
- Began custom of adopting heir

Trajan

- 98–117
- Empire reached its greatest extent
- Undertook vast building program
- Enlarged social welfare

Trajan



Hadrian

- 117–138
- Consolidated earlier conquests
- Reorganized the bureaucracy

Antoninus Pius

- 138–161
- Reign largely a period of peace and prosperity

Marcus Aurelius

- 161–180
- Brought empire to height of economic prosperity
- Defeated invaders
- Wrote philosophy

THINK THROUGH HISTORY

D. Contrasting How did the lives of Roman girls differ from those of boys?

often were educated at home and were prepared for marriage and motherhood. They were usually married at the age of 12 to 15, to much older husbands.

Poor children, whether they lived in the city or on a farm, had to work. They did not go to school and generally remained illiterate.

Slaves and Captivity Slavery was a significant part of Roman life. It was widespread and important to the economy. The Romans made more use of slaves than any previous civilization. Numbers of slaves may have reached as high as one-third of the population.

Most slaves were conquered peoples brought back by victorious Roman armies and included men, women, and children. Children born to slaves also became slaves. Slaves could be bought and sold. According to Roman law, slaves were the property of their owner. They could be punished, rewarded, set free, or put to death as their master saw fit. Slaves worked both in the city and on the farm. Many were treated cruelly and worked at hard labor all day long. Some—strong, healthy males—were forced to become **gladiators**, or professional fighters, who fought to the death in public contests. Other slaves, particularly those who worked in wealthy households, were better treated.

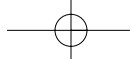
Occasionally, slaves would rebel. None of the slave revolts succeeded. More than a million slaves lost their lives attempting to gain their freedom.

Gods and Goddesses The earliest Romans worshipped powerful spirits or divine forces, called *numina*, that they thought resided in everything around them. Closely related to these spirits were the Lares (LAIR-eez), who were the guardian spirits of each family. After the Romans came into contact with Etruscans and Greeks, they began to think of these powerful spirits as having humanlike forms and individual personalities. They were given Roman names. Romans honored these powerful gods and goddesses through various rituals, hoping to gain favor and avoid misfortune.

In Rome, government and religion were linked. The deities were symbols of the state. Romans were expected to honor them not only in private rituals at shrines in their homes but also in public worship ceremonies conducted by priests in temples. Among the most important Roman gods and goddesses were Jupiter, father of the gods; Juno, his wife, who supposedly watched over women; and Minerva, goddess of wisdom and of the arts and crafts. During the empire, worship of the emperor also became part of the official religion of Rome.

By A.D. 100, many Romans had become interested in the religions of Asia. These religions had practices and beliefs that were more personal and emotional than the somber rituals connected with Rome's deities.

“Bread and Circuses”—Food and Entertainment By the time of the empire, wealth and social status had made huge differences in how people lived. Classes had little in common. The rich lived extravagantly. They spent large sums of money on homes, gardens, slaves, and luxuries. They gave banquets that lasted for many hours and included foods that were rare and costly, such as boiled ostrich and parrot-tongue pie.



Charioteers race their chariots in this ancient wall painting from Pompeii.

CONNECT to TODAY

Charioteers—Professional Athletes

Professional athletes are well-known personalities in the United States. In addition to the large salaries paid by their teams, athletes earn extra money endorsing products from athletic shoes to fast food. Some athletes even become actors; a few have become politicians.

Charioteers were popular athletes in ancient Rome. They were usually slaves or freed slaves. They raced for one of four "factions" (something like a modern team)—the whites, greens, reds, or blues. They competed for large cash prizes. When a charioteer won a big race, his portrait would appear on walls all over the city.

However, most people in Rome barely had the necessities of life. During the time of the empire, much of the city's population was unemployed. The government supported these people with daily rations of grain. In the shadow of Rome's great temples and public buildings, poor people crowded into rickety, sprawling tenements. Fire was a constant danger.

To distract and control the masses of Romans, the government provided free games, races, mock battles, and gladiator contests. By A.D. 250, there were 150 holidays a year. On these days of celebration, the Colosseum, a huge arena that could hold 50,000, would fill with the rich and the poor alike. The spectacles they watched combined bravery and cruelty, honor and violence. In the animal shows, wild creatures brought from distant lands, such as tigers, lions, and bears, fought to the death. In other contests, gladiators engaged in combat with animals or with each other, often until one of them was killed.

The *Pax Romana* had brought 200 years of peace and prosperity to Rome. During this time, a new religion called Christianity developed and began to spread throughout the empire.

Background

Many Roman cities had arenas similar to the Colosseum that were used for public entertainment.

Section 2 Assessment

1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- civil war
- Julius Caesar
- triumvirate
- absolute ruler
- Augustus
- *Pax Romana*
- gladiator

2. TAKING NOTES

Make a bulleted chart like the one below, showing how Rome changed during the *Pax Romana*.

| Changes in Rome |
|---|
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Which changes do you consider negative? Why?

3. ANALYZING CAUSES

What role did Julius Caesar play in the decline of the republic and the rise of the empire?

THINK ABOUT

- the problems facing the republic
- how Caesar helped restore order
- Caesar's defiance of the senate
- Caesar's rule as dictator

4. THEME ACTIVITY

Empire Building Role-play a discussion in the Roman Forum, in which various members of society comment on conditions in the Roman Empire during the *Pax Romana*. Participants might include a senator, a civil servant, a slave, a merchant, and a landless and jobless former soldier. Working in small teams, one for each participant, focus on the changes that have come with the rise of the empire.