

Rome

Roman Empire Achievements



The Rise of the Roman Empire

Decline of the Roman Empire

Roman Empire Achievements

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.



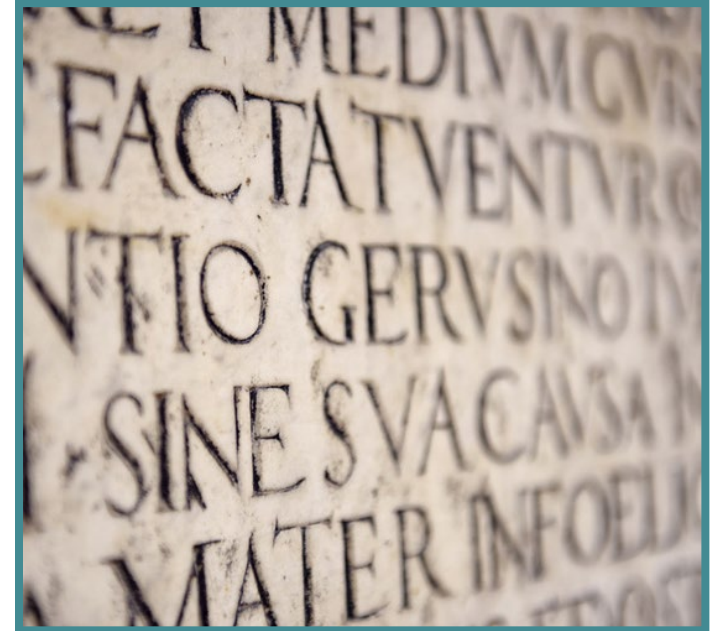


Roman geography



The Romans spoke and wrote in a language called **Latin**. We still use many Latin phrases today:

- *status quo* means “the existing state of things”
- *alibi* means “elsewhere,” and is used in legal trials
- *bona fide* means “in good faith,” and means that something is genuine or well-meant.



In the Middle Ages, Latin became the language of law and official documents. For example, the **Magna Carta** was originally written in medieval Latin.

Can you think of any other Latin phrases?

One of the most famous Roman writers was **Virgil**. He wrote an epic poem called the **Aeneid**, which draws on Greek myths to tell the story of how Rome was founded.

Much of what historians know about the Romans comes from written histories and biographies. These are valuable because they were written near the time of the events, but they can also exaggerate or be **biased**.

- **Plutarch** was a Greek historian who wrote detailed biographies of famous Romans including Julius Caesar.
- **Cicero** was a philosopher and author who wrote about politics and law.







One country where the Roman Empire had a lasting influence was **Britain**, which the Romans called Britannia.

They gave it a southern capital, called **Londinium**. Today, Londinium – now known as London – is still the capital of the United Kingdom.

All over Britain, there are ruins of Roman towns, barracks and villas. In the north, most of **Hadrian's Wall** still stands, and some of the roads used were originally built by Romans.

The Romans also introduced coins to Britain, replacing the **barter economy** with currency.



The Romans built about 50,000 miles of **roads**. They were crucial for allowing military legions to move quickly around the empire to wherever they were needed.

Roman roads were designed to be hardwearing and last a long time. They were built in layers of gravel or stone chips, sand and clay, with **paving stones** on top. They also had drainage ditches for rainwater.

This road network crisscrossed Europe and stretched from northern England to north Africa and west Asia.



What other advantages did the roads give the Romans?

The Romans based many of their ideas on the Greeks. Both civilizations used columns in buildings, but the Romans added their own innovations: **domes** and **arches**.

Greek columns in the Corinthian style can be seen in Roman temples such as the **Pantheon**. However, the Pantheon also contains a huge dome, which is made of Roman concrete.



Roman concrete was different to the modern substance, but also very strong and durable. It was poured into molds in order to make the dome, which weighs 4,535 metric tons.



Roman arches



The Romans mastered the art of building arches by using concrete and **keystones**. Arches improved the strength of Roman buildings and are the reason many still stand today.

One example of how the Romans used arches is the **Colosseum** in Rome, which is a huge **amphitheater**. It was used for gladiator fights, animal hunts and public displays.



The many arches meant that the Colosseum could be over three stories high and have several exits.

The Colosseum was completed in 80 AD and historians estimate that it could seat up to 50,000 people. It was in use as a venue for entertainment for over 400 years.





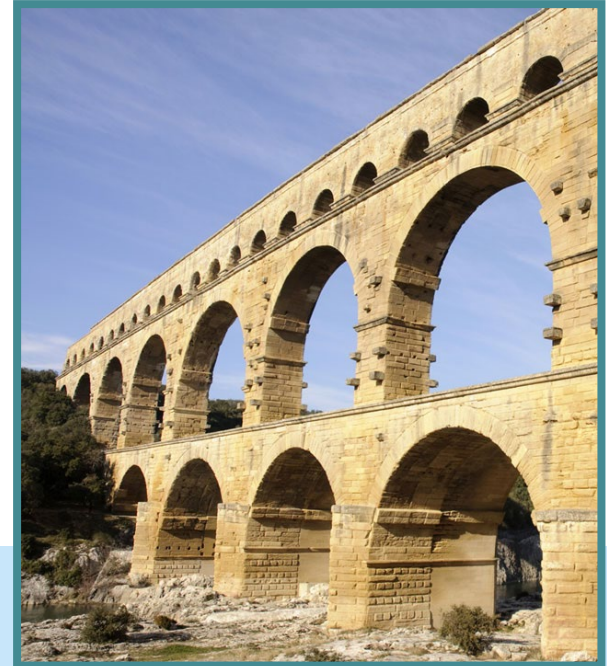
Roman cities were an integral part of the empire. They were centers of trade and **commerce** as well as being residential.

The Romans built huge, narrow bridges to supply their cities with fresh water. These were called **aqueducts**.

In the middle of the city, there would be a building called the **basilica**, which contained the law courts and town hall.

Nearby was the **forum**, which was a marketplace for trade to take place.

Merchants who traveled to the city would set up a stall in the forum to sell their produce to the people of the city.



Wealthy Romans lived in large, lavish houses called **villas**. Houses were a symbol of status, so they were often beautifully decorated with wall paintings and **mosaics**.



Mosaics are images and patterns made with tiny tiles called **tesserae**. They were used on floors and walls, and they often showed scenes from myths and legends, or daily life.

Some villas had their own form of underfloor heating, where hot air from fires flowed through passages underground to heat up the house. This system was called a **hypocaust**.

What does this mosaic show?

Inside a Roman house



While their legions conquered parts of Europe and Asia, the Romans learned about surgery and anatomy. Their army set up some of the first **hospitals**.

The Romans knew that fresh water was important for sanitation and public health. They built **bathhouses** where people could go to bathe, and underground sewers to carry away human waste.



However, most Romans believed illnesses were caused by the gods, the stars or even poisonous vapors. A Greek physician named **Galen** revived many of Hippocrates' ideas and became the doctor of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.





The fall of Rome marked the beginning of the **Middle Ages** in Europe. These are sometimes called the Dark Ages because of the lack of written documents from the period.

Roman cities in Europe began to fall into ruin. People began moving away from densely populated areas to avoid outbreaks of **plagues**, and trade declined as a result.

The tribes in Europe that had invaded Roman territory were not a united force. They fought amongst themselves and power often changed hands. This paved the way for the **feudal system** that dominated Europe for years after.



How do you think the fall of Rome affected Europe's peasant population?





During the Republic, the Romans developed earlier Greek ideas about democracy. They wrote the most important laws on stone tablets, which were known as the **Twelve Tables**.

Roman ideas about giving the people a voice still influence our governments today. We are represented by politicians, who vote on new laws and are chosen by the people.

We also base some of our ideas about free speech on the Romans. In the Roman **Forum**, male citizens were allowed to speak about their opinions and views.



How is this similar to the First Amendment?
How is it different?





When Constantine moved his capital to Constantinople in 330 AD, he wanted to encourage people to live in the city. He issued **bread tokens** to people who built houses there, which entitled them to free bread every day.

Citizens being entitled to free bread continued for 300 years, until grain shortages in the early 600s forced it to a halt.

After the fall of Rome, the Eastern Roman Empire continued to develop as the Byzantine Empire. Justinian's **law reforms** helped set the foundations for criminal and civil law today.

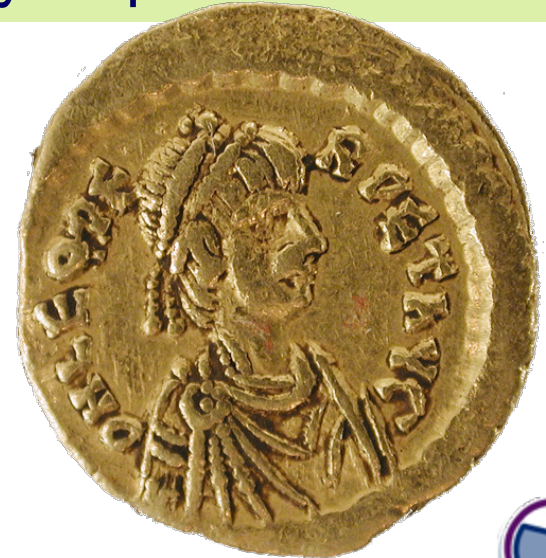
After years of Roman rule, its laws were contradictory and almost unusable. The **Justinian Code** standardized these decrees and opinions into a single body of written laws.



In the Byzantine Empire, one of the most important discoveries was a liquid called “**Greek fire**”. This was a secret mix of chemicals used by the Byzantines in warfare.

Once ignited, Greek fire could not be extinguished using water, so it was particularly valuable during battles at sea. Soldiers would use it to set fire to pieces of cloth and then use **catapults** to hurl them towards enemy ships.

The Byzantines were also accomplished traders. Their gold coins were called **nomisma**, and have been found as far away as India and France, showing the extent of their trade.



Keywords

