## Classical Rome

### Geography

**How did geography impact Roman culture?**

- Geographical features allowed Rome to create a **unified empire**
- Low rolling hills made for easy travel and communication
- Fertile plains allowed for farming to support large population
- Access to Mediterranean Sea led to trade and travel
- Alps Mountains to the North offered protection and made Rome easy to defend

### Government

**What type of government did the Romans have and how did it function?**

- 509 BCE the Romans established a Republic
  - *“res publica”* or *“public affairs”*
  - Citizens (Assembly) voted to elect their leaders
  - Roman Republic governed by 2 Consuls and 300 Senators
- During a crisis Rome would replace the republic for 6 months with a temporary dictator
  - Given total control of the military and law making process

### Social Classes

**What social classes existed in Rome and how were the lower classes treated?**

- Rome had two social classes
  - **Patricians**: Upper class
  - **Plebeians**: Lower class
- The Twelve Tables were Rome’s written laws which gave equal protection to all Romans
- The **Tribunes** were an assembly of plebeians that represent the lower class in the government
  - Tribunes had the power to veto Consuls and Senators

### Julius Caesar

**How did Caesar rise to power in Rome?**

- Rome’s empire expanded beyond Italy after defeating Carthage in the Punic Wars
- The larger empire required professional soldiers to replace the citizen soldiers
- Julius Caesar emerged as Rome’s most popular and successful general
  - Strong, smart, brave, ambitious
- Caesar defeated his rival Pompey in a Civil War and returned to Rome a conquering hero
- Romans named Caesar **dictator** for life in 46 BCE
### Assassination of Caesar and start of the Pax Romana

**Why was Caesar assassinated and what was the Pax Romana?**

- Caesar began many reforms in Rome which made him very popular with the Roman people
  - Gave people citizenship, jobs, land, and more money to soldiers
- Roman senators became jealous of Caesar’s power and popularity and assassinated him hoping to bring back the Republic
- Caesar’s nephew Octavian (Augustus) replaced Julius Caesar and became Rome’s first emperor
- Augustus began the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace), Rome’s *Golden Age* which lasted from 27 BCE – 180 CE

### Art

**What contributions did the Romans make in art?**

- Roman art was realistic, practical, and educational depicting Rome’s history
- Bas-relief sculpture
  - Carved into background to create a three-dimensional image
- Frescoes
  - Water based paints on wet plaster
- Mosaics
  - Created with small pieces of colored stones, glass, or tiles

### Philosophy

**What contributions did the Romans make in philosophy?**

- Roman philosophers Cicero, Seneca, and Emperor Marcus Aurelius were influenced by the Greeks
- Romans invented the philosophy known as stoicism
  - Purpose of life is happiness
  - Emphasize virtue, duty, moderation, and endurance
  - Show very little emotion

### Literature and Language

**What contributions did the Romans make in literature and language?**

- Epic poems written by Virgil
  - *Aeneid* tells the story of the Trojan Prince who built Rome
- History recorded by Tacitus
  - Accurate reporting of facts to record the good and bad of the Roman Empire
- Latin Language
  - Used as the official language of the Catholic church
  - Basis for the romance languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian)
  - Basis for half of English words

### Architecture

**What contributions did the Romans make in architecture?**

- Arches capable of withstanding much heavier weights than beams
- Domes which allowed for the creation of large and well defined interior spaces
- Concrete incorporating volcanic ash making it the most durable form of cement
- Roman Colosseum
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| • Arch Bridges connected Roman cities, ports, and mines | • Roman laws contained many of the legal principles found in modern day law  
  o Equal treatment under the law  
  o Innocent until proven guilty  
  o Burden of proof lies with the accuser not the accused  
  o Only actions – not thoughts – are punishable  
  o Unreasonable laws set aside | • Economic problems due to inflation  
  o Coins made with less silver decreasing their value  
 • Agriculture problems led to food shortage  
  o Land was either overworked, destroyed in war, or abandoned by farmers to avoid taxes  
 • Military problems with loss of loyalty to the Roman Empire  
  o Soldiers only loyal to their generals  
  o Mercenaries fight only for money  
 • Political problems and loss of patriotism  
  o Corruption and expenses leave most Romans unwilling or unable to serve  
 • End of expansion meant no new sources of wealth or slave labor |