

NAME: _____

DATE: _____



1. Who became the first Roman emperor and created a strong central government?

- Julius Caesar
- Nero
- Octavian
- Constantine

2. Who held legislative power in the Roman Republic?

- the emperor
- the assembly of citizens
- the consuls
- the senate

3. What was the backbone of the Roman Empire's economy?

- manufacturing
- service industry
- agriculture
- tourism

4. What was the main religion of the Roman Empire for most of its history?

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Polytheism
- Buddhism

5. Who wrote the Roman literature that has stood the test of time?

- Maximus
- Julius Caesar
- Augustus
- Ovid

6. In which year did the Western Roman Empire fall?

- 476 BC
- 509 BC
- 27 AD
- 476 AD

Discuss these questions with a friend or classmate.

1. What information from this lecture did you find the most interesting? Why?
2. August is named after the Roman emperor Augustus. What other months have Roman origins?
3. How might the world have been different if the Roman empire hadn't fallen?
4. Why do some people like to study ancient history? What can it teach us?
5. What language did the ancient Romans speak?
6. What other ancient civilizations do you know about?

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Audio Script

Ancient Rome was one of the most powerful and influential civilizations in the world. The Roman Republic was established in 509 BC, after the Romans overthrew their Etruscan conquerors. The Republic was a complex system of government, with two consuls who held executive power, as well as an assembly of citizens who held legislative power. The Republic was notable for its military conquests and its system of law, which served as a model for many other societies.

The Roman Republic was eventually replaced by the Roman Empire in 27 BC, when the Roman general Octavian, also known as Augustus, became the first Roman emperor. Augustus established a strong central government and expanded the empire through military conquests, making it the dominant power in the Mediterranean world. He also initiated many social, economic, and administrative reforms which proved to be the foundation of the empire's stability and prosperity for centuries.

From the time of Augustus, all the Roman emperors were autocratic; they had absolute power over the government and the military. However, the emperors were supported by a complex bureaucracy. The empire was divided into provinces, each with a governor appointed by the emperor. The Roman legal system was also influential, and it served as a model for many other civilizations.

For much of its history, the empire was a polytheistic society and the state religion was based on the worship of the gods and goddesses of Rome. The empire also tolerated other religions and cults. This changed in the fourth century when Christianity became the dominant religion.

Rome was an economic powerhouse, with a complex system of trade and commerce. Its roads facilitated trade and communication and its merchants traded with many other civilizations, including the Chinese, Indian, and Parthian Empires. The empire also had a strong agricultural sector, which was the backbone of its economy.

The empire was famous for its great cultural achievements and contributions which are evident in its architecture, such as the Colosseum, the Forum and the Pantheon, all of which remain as marvels of engineering and design. Roman literature was also renowned and influential. The empire's poets, such as Virgil and Ovid, and its historians, such as Tacitus, wrote works that have stood the test of time. Much of Roman art and sculpture was also influential and has become iconic.

All this began to change, however, in the 3rd century AD as political instability, economic difficulties, and invasions by barbarian tribes began the empire's decline. The empire was eventually split into two halves, the Western Roman Empire (which fell in 476 AD) and the Eastern Roman Empire (which survived until 1453 AD).

ANSWER KEY

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|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Octavian | 4. Polytheism |
| 2. the assembly of citizens | 5. Ovid |
| 3. agriculture | 6. 476 AD |