

- Assign students to research the legends of the founding and early history of Rome, such as the legends of Romulus and Remus and Hercules and Cacus. Roman legends are not stories about gods, but of Roman people who exemplify what Roman citizens should or should not be. Students may discuss the details of their legends and describe which ancient Roman beliefs and values are represented. As a creative writing exercise, ask students to develop their own modern legends to embody what they believe are important beliefs, virtues and values.
- Students may evaluate the reign of Augustus and analyze its significance in the change from Roman Republic to imperial government. Ask students to compare the administration of the Roman Empire with the government under the Roman Republic and discuss the relative merits of the two types of systems. As a follow-up, students may write an essay evaluating how democratic the government was under the Roman Republic.
- Ask students to write accounts of the so-called barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire in the 5th century CE, including information obtained from primary sources such as historians Orosius, Tacitus, Ammianus Marcellinus and Priscus, and from secondary sources. Students may discuss to what extent these invasions served to weaken the Roman Empire and identify other key political, military, social and economic causes, trends or events that led to its decline. As a follow-up, ask students to develop a chart that analyzes the relative significance of all of these factors.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.dalton.org/groups/rome/RMAPS.html](http://www.dalton.org/groups/rome/RMAPS.html)  
The Dalton School in New York provides an extensive selection of maps associated with the history of the Roman Empire, including those of historical expansion, the ancient Mediterranean world and important trade routes.
- [www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/roem/hd\\_roem.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/roem/hd_roem.htm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers a detailed time line of the Roman Empire, supplemented with representative samples of art from the period.
- [www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gibbon-fall.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/gibbon-fall.html)  
Fordham University's "Medieval Sourcebook" has excerpts and footnotes from chapter 38 of Edward Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Holland, Tom. *Rubicon: The Last Years of the Roman Republic*. Doubleday, New York, NY; 2003.
- Morgan, Julian. *Constantine: Ruler of Christian Rome*. Rosen Publishing Group, New York, NY; 2003.
- Moulton, Carroll, ed. *Ancient Greece and Rome: An Encyclopedia for Students*. Scribner, New York, NY; 1998.
- Nardo, Don. *The End of Ancient Rome*. Greenhaven Press, San Diego, CA; 2001.



## THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Grades 9–12

In the coastal areas along the Mediterranean Sea emerged the cultures and great powers of the ancient world. Understanding the rise and fall of these early civilizations and empires provides us with unique and valuable historical insight, and is basic for an understanding of civilization today. In *The Fall of Great Empires*, students will learn about the clash of ideas, the legendary struggles for imperial power and the insatiable drive for great wealth that characterized the ancient world. Students will discover how these vast and influential societies declined and left a deep and lasting imprint on the history of Western civilization.

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Jeffrey W. Litzke, M.Ed.  
Curriculum Specialist, Schlessinger Media

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### TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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- THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE
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## Program Summary

According to legend, in 753 BCE the abandoned twins Romulus and Remus founded the city of Rome. With its development of theaters, markets, festivals and extensive commercial networks, Rome flourished. Roads were the backbone of the Empire's military might, securing Rome's power over its provinces. Following the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, Egypt was conquered, and Imperial Rome emerged. In less than three hundred years, the Empire's generals waged successful wars of expansion and conquered the whole of the Mediterranean region and much of Europe.

However, Rome's attempts to extend its rule sparked unexpectedly strong reprisals by "barbarian" peoples of the North. The great wealth of the Roman Empire played a role in its undoing, as northern tribes trekked toward the South in hopes of obtaining a better life. The Roman Empire was not prepared for the consequences of mass migration. In addition, corruption, bribery and tax evasion had weakened Rome's economy and the imperial authority was declining. In 476 CE, the last of the Roman emperors was deposed. Although the empire fell, traces of its rich and diverse culture still exist in Europe today. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire continues to inspire great interest and scholarship.

## Time Line

**753 BCE** — In tradition, when Romulus and Remus founded the city of Rome.

**510 BCE** — The Roman Republic is established.

**241 BCE** — Sicily becomes the first Roman province.

**45 BCE** — Julius Caesar becomes the dictator of Rome.

**44 BCE** — Julius Caesar is assassinated; civil war begins.

**31 BCE** — The Battle of Actium takes place, signaling the beginning of the era of Imperial Rome.

**64 CE** — Rome, under Emperor Nero, burns.

**79 CE** — Mount Vesuvius erupts, burying Pompeii and killing thousands.

**200 CE** — Barbarians from the North attack the Roman Empire.

**285 CE** — Emperor Diocletian begins to reorganize the Roman Empire.

**330 CE** — Emperor Constantine builds a new Roman capital in the East at Constantinople.

**380 CE** — Christianity is declared the sole religion of the Roman Empire.

**410 CE** — Roman rule in Britain collapses.

**451 CE** — Attila the Hun invades Gaul and Italy.

**476 CE** — The end of the Roman Empire.

## Vocabulary

**Roman Empire** — An ancient empire founded in 31 BCE that was centered in the city of Rome. At its peak, the empire included most of Western Europe, North Africa and the Near East. It fell to German invaders in 476 CE.

**Romulus and Remus** — The legendary twin brothers (and sons of Mars, the Roman god of war) who founded Rome.

**Huns** — A nomadic, fierce warrior people who invaded Europe around 370 CE.

**Constantinople** — A city in present-day Turkey (now called Istanbul) which Emperor Constantine I made the seat of the Roman Empire. It remained the capital of the Byzantine Empire, or the Eastern Roman Empire, until it fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453 CE.

**barbarians** — A term used by Romans to describe people outside their empire whom they deemed to be uncivilized.

**Julius Caesar** — A popular Roman general who declared himself dictator for life; he was assassinated by members of the Roman Senate in 44 BCE.

**Gaul** — An ancient region in Europe that fought in numerous battles against, and was later conquered by, Rome.

**Romance languages** — A group of languages derived from Latin, such as French, Spanish and Italian.

**lingua franca** — A shared language, such as English or French, that is used to conduct business or political negotiations by groups which have their own native languages.

**Vesuvius** — An active volcano in Italy that destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 CE.

**Nero** — The Emperor of Rome from 54-68 CE; his rule was most noted for its excesses and a devastating fire that destroyed much of Rome.

**Hannibal** — One of the great military leaders in world history who fought battles against Rome, such as the second Punic War. He was finally defeated in 190 BCE.

**Nile** — The longest river in the world. It stretches over 4,000 miles from Central Africa to the Mediterranean.

**Pharaoh** — A ruler in ancient Egypt who was worshiped as a god.

**Cleopatra VII** — Known as Egypt's last Pharaoh, since Egypt became a province of Rome after her death in 30 BCE.

## Pre-viewing Discussion

- Discuss the saying, "all roads lead to Rome." Inform students that the saying was largely true for nearly a thousand years of European history. What is the significance of the Roman Empire in world history?
- Who was Julius Caesar? Why is he remembered as an important figure in world history?

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- Ask students to speculate about the factors that might contribute to the decline of a powerful empire.

## Follow-up Discussion

- The Roman Empire was one of the most wealthy, powerful and far-reaching realms in world history. Ask students to describe why it is said that Rome's wealth proved to be its undoing.
- Rome's extensive road system enabled it to trade widely, and maintain firm military control over its empire. Ask students to speculate how this transportation network may have helped spread Roman culture throughout the empire.
- Did the Roman Empire actually collapse? In what ways did it continue to exist? Ask students to discuss the transition of the Roman Empire from the West to the East.

## Follow-up Activities

- Assign students to develop short biographies and sketches of famous Romans such as Cicero, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Nero, Marcus Aurelius and Constantine. As a follow-up, students may role-play a political roundtable of these famous Romans and field questions from news journalists about their beliefs and plans for the future of Rome.
- Rome was a patriarchal society, with the oldest living male as absolute ruler in the family. If children displeased their father, they could be sold into slavery, disowned or even killed. Although women were very important to the family unit, they were not allowed to vote, hold office or be involved in the military. Ask students to research more about the family structure, wedding customs and marriage and divorce laws under the Roman Empire and prepare a debate between Roman women and children within different classes discussing with Roman men their positions in society.
- The Battle of Actium, a sea battle off the west coast of Greece in 31 BCE, forever changed the course of Roman and world history. The battle between the forces of Octavian and Marc Antony decided who would rule the Roman world. Ask students to research the battle, describe its impact and develop profiles of the major players involved. Before and after the battle, Roman intellectuals and artists such as the poet Virgil wrote that Rome was entering a new golden age. Share with students relevant excerpts from Virgil's works, such as the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and *Aeneid*, and ask them to interpret his vision of Roman life and the Roman Empire and its unique place in world history.
- At its height, the Roman Empire extended throughout Western Europe, North Africa and the Near East. Ask students to develop sets of maps to outline the major phases of Roman expansion.

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