The civilisation based in Ancient Rome began in about 500 BCE. What was life like before the city of Rome was established? How was society in Rome organised? How were the Romans ruled?

The founding of Rome

The Romans were one tribe of people who lived on the Italian Peninsula. They decided to live together and establish a city. No-one is really sure when this happened, but it is traditional to say that the city of Rome was founded in 753 BCE.

A Roman kingdom

To begin with, the Romans were ruled by kings from the Etruscan tribe who lived in lands nearby. In 509 BCE, the Romans rebelled against these kings. Rome became a republic. Instead of having one ruler, the people started to elect their leaders.

Who were the people of Rome?

Men and women who were not slaves in the Roman Republic were citizens. Citizens were divided into two groups. Patricians came from wealthy families and owned land and property. Common people were called plebeians or ‘plebs’. Slaves were also part of Roman society. They could not be citizens and had no power.

How was the Roman Republic governed?

A government is a group of people who make the rules for a city or country. The government of the Roman Republic had three main parts:

- **Magistrates and consuls**
  Magistrates were leaders elected by the people. Every year two of the magistrates were elected to become consuls. The two consuls were in charge of Rome for one year. One consul led the government. The other consul was responsible for the army.

- **Senators**
  The senators formed a group called the Senate. Senators advised the consuls and approved or rejected laws. Senators decided how to spend public money and advised on Rome’s relationships with other countries.

- **Tribunes and assemblies**
  The tribunes were a group of citizens who represented the common people of Rome (the plebeians) within the government. The assemblies were made up of plebeians. The assemblies elected officials, such as the tribunes, and voted on laws.

Glossary words

- citizen
- elect
- founded
- patrician
- peninsula
- plebeian
- Senate

Activities

1. Why do you think the Roman people rebelled against the Etruscan kings? Write a brief explanation.
2. Draw a simple diagram that explains the three levels of society in the Roman Republic.

Challenge

The Romans displayed their most important laws on metal tablets called the Twelve Tables. Find out and write down three of these laws.
3.2 The Roman Empire begins

Some individuals in the Roman Republic wanted more power for themselves. Who were these people? How did they change the way in which Rome was ruled? Who founded the Roman Empire?

**Roman power grows**

By 290 BCE, the Romans controlled the whole Italian Peninsula.

Expansion into Sicily brought the Romans into conflict with the Carthaginian Empire. In 146 BCE, after 100 years of competition and three long wars, the Romans beat the Carthaginians. They took control of lands and trade around the Mediterranean.

**How did the Roman Empire begin?**

Rome was very powerful because of its strong army. The army generals sometimes fought with the Senate.

Julius Caesar was a powerful Roman general. He took control of Rome in 49 BCE. Some senators did not want a king-like ruler and so they killed him in 44 BCE.

Julius Caesar’s grand-nephew Octavian later seized power for himself and his name became Caesar Augustus. Augustus ended the Roman Republic and founded the Roman Empire in 27 BCE.

Augustus established a period known as the Pax Romana (which means Roman Peace) that lasted for 200 years. He also established a dynasty of rulers. The four emperors who came after him were Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

**Why did the Romans expand their empire?**

Roman emperors wanted to show their power. The Romans also wanted the valuable resources from the lands they conquered.

People in conquered lands had to pay taxes to Rome. This money helped to pay for the Roman army and for managing the empire.

**How far did Roman territories reach?**

The Roman Empire was at its largest in 117 CE. The estimated population of the Roman Empire at that time was at least 60 million. This number was about one quarter of the world population at the time. The size of the empire meant that Roman culture had a huge influence across the world. The Roman Empire lasted until 476 CE.

**Glossary word**

**culture**

**Activities**

1. Write a brief explanation of why the Romans wanted to expand their empire.
2. Work in a group. Find out some facts about the first five emperors of the Roman Empire. Include when they ruled and why they are famous. Make a class poster that brings together all the information.

**Did you know?**

When the Emperor Claudius invaded England in 43 CE, he had a group of war elephants in his army. The Britons had never seen elephants before and were probably terrified!

**Challenge**

Use books and the Internet to find out about the road network built by the Romans. Write a report of between 100 and 200 words.
### 3.3 Ancient Roman towns and cities

Cities were centres of activity in Ancient Rome. What was city housing like? Where did people get their drinking water? What did people do for work and pleasure?

#### What was housing like for different people?

Poorer people lived in two-roomed apartments in blocks called insulae. Each apartment block housed between 30 and 50 people. Insulae were built of mud bricks and timber, and had shops at street level.

Wealthier people lived in private homes. These houses had rooms arranged around an open area called an atrium. There were rooms for dining and sleeping and a garden at the rear.

#### How did people in towns and cities get water?

To bring clean water to towns for drinking and washing, Roman engineers developed the aqueduct. Aqueducts carried water to a town from a water source that could be many kilometres away. Aqueducts passed through tunnels under hills and over aqueduct bridges across valleys.

Water went through pipes to different parts of the town or city. Water was available in public fountains and was supplied to some private homes.

The water also carried away waste in sewers.

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**Glossary words**

- aqueduct
- gladiator
- chariot
- sewers

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**Did you know?**

- The Aqua Appia was the first Roman aqueduct. It was built in 312 BCE and covered a distance of 16.4 kilometres from its source to the city of Rome.

**Challenge**

- Use books and the Internet to find out about the nearest Roman ruins to where you live. Write a report of between 100 and 200 words that describes what archaeologists have found there and why the Romans were there.
3.4 Everyday life in the Roman Empire

Family was an important part of life for Ancient Romans. The amount of money that a family had affected many things, from education to clothes and food.

What was life like for all the different people in the Roman Empire?

What were families like in Ancient Rome?
The man was the head of the Roman family. Women managed the household, did chores and raised their children. Wealthy women had slaves to help them do these tasks and so they had more leisure time.

Rich children went to school. Education was mostly for boys, but some girls from wealthy families did go to school.

Many girls married when they were young teenagers.

Children of poorer families did not attend school. They had to help the adults in the family with work and daily chores.

What was food like in Ancient Rome?
Most people ate simple foods such as porridge, beans, bread, vegetables, fish and fruit.

Richer people had more variety in their diet and more meat. Their food was often flavoured with exotic spices such as pepper, cloves and nutmeg.

Food varied across the Roman Empire depending on what was available locally.

What did Ancient Romans wear?
Basic clothes were made from linen for the summer and wool for the winter.

Women wore a dress called a stola and a cloak called a palla when they went outside.

Rich women wore jewelled brooches and pins, earrings, rings and necklaces.

Slaves and workmen wore a simple tunic made of a rough material.

Men and women both wore a simple tunic under other clothes.

Richer men wore a toga. This was a large piece of cloth wrapped around the body, with one arm free.

The most common footwear was leather sandals.

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What was it like to live in the country?
Most people across the Roman Empire worked on small farms. A farming family lived in a small house and may have had some slaves to help them.

Rich people owned large estates and lived in villas.

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Activities
1. Write to invite some friends to an evening banquet. In your invitation, tell your friends what food you will offer and what entertainment there will be.
2. Write a brief description of how life was different for rich and poor people in Ancient Rome. Think about housing, food, education and work.

Challenge
Carry out research and write about all the work done by slaves in Ancient Rome.
The Romans produced art and buildings across the whole of their huge empire. Roman authors produced writings that have been read for thousands of years. What was special about Roman art, architecture and literature?

What can we learn from Roman art?
Roman art included paintings, mosaics and images on pottery. The art often showed scenes from everyday life. Some images were records of important events.

Another popular form of art in Roman times was relief carving. Reliefs are images carved into stone. They are found on buildings and special objects such as a sarcophagus.

The Romans liked sculptures in the Greek style. There were sculptures in homes, places of work, public spaces and public buildings.

What are the features of Roman architecture?
Roman architects used ideas from Ancient Greece, including columns to support large roofs. The Romans developed the arch and also the dome. Arches allowed the Romans to build huge structures including amphitheatres and aqueduct bridges.

Roman architecture has inspired architects around the world. Many architects use Roman features in their buildings.

Literature
The Romans wrote in a language called Latin. Important pieces of Roman literature include poems, speeches, histories and works of philosophy.

People continued to use Latin for important documents for centuries after Ancient Roman times. Languages such as English, French and Italian were all influenced by Latin.

Activities
1 Work in a group. Prepare a presentation about what Roman art, jewellery and literature tell us about Ancient Roman culture.
2 Work in a group. Discuss what the Ludovisi Battle sarcophagus can tell us about the Roman army and what Romans thought about war.

Challenge
Use the Internet and other sources to find out the history of how domes have been used in architecture throughout the world.

Be a good historian
Good historians know that not all historical documents simply present the facts. Some are written to show events or people in a certain way. What other evidence might a historian use to find out how accurate a document is?

Did you know?
The Pantheon is a building in Rome that is almost 2000 years old. The Pantheon has a dome that measures 43 metres across. A blue whale, which is 30 metres long, would comfortably fit inside!

Glossary words
arch sarcophagus
dome sculpture
dome philosophy
### Answer these questions in your notebook.

**Choose the best answer from the choices given. Write a, b or c as your answer.**

1. Wealthy citizens of Ancient Rome were called:
   - a patricians
   - b plebeians
   - c patriarchs

2. The first emperor of the Roman Empire was:
   - a Julius Caesar
   - b Claudius
   - c Caesar Augustus

3. The Roman Empire reached its greatest extent in:
   - a 117 CE
   - b 14 CE
   - c 44 BCE

4. Insulae were:
   - a public baths
   - b apartment buildings for poorer people
   - c large houses for wealthy citizens

5. The channel bringing water into a Roman town is called:
   - a a viaduct
   - b an amphitheatre
   - c an aqueduct

6. Artists made mosaics by:
   - a painting onto pieces of pottery
   - b painting onto a wall
   - c using small pieces of coloured glass or stone

### Now complete these tasks.

7. Look at this map. In your notebook, write the names of the three cities marked. The first letters have been given to help you.

8. In your notebook, complete the key for the map to show who controlled the area shaded green.

### Rewrite these two sentences so that they are correct.

9. People and goods travelled between Roman cities along aqueducts.

10. All boys in Ancient Rome went to school.

### Look at the timeline that shows the period covered by Ancient Rome.

11. Write the name of a civilisation that started before the Ancient Roman civilisation.

12. Write the name of a different civilisation that may have traded with the Ancient Romans.

13. Make a simple timeline that shows the changes in the way the Roman people were ruled over time.

Include the dates for:
- the beginning of Rome
- when the Roman Republic was founded
- when Julius Caesar took power
- when Caesar Augustus became emperor
- the death of Caesar Augustus.

14. The mosaic floor shown below is in a 1st century Roman villa in the town of Vaison-la-Romaine in France. What can we learn from this mosaic? Write an archaelogist's report describing everything the mosaic tells you. Think about:
   - what the image shows
   - the technique used to create the mosaic
   - the type of people who lived in the villa
   - why the villa is in France.

15. ‘The rulers of the Roman Empire were only interested in using force to conquer new lands.’ Do you agree with this statement?