

II. Roman Europe

In this unit you will

- learn about the Romans and the way they changed Europe

1) Read the text, think about it and write down your own ideas.

Check your dictionary:

found	conquer	destroy	republic
rule a country	expand	Empire	

The ancient Romans – Timeline

Rome was founded in 753 BC.

Legend says that Rome was founded by twins called Romulus and Remus. As babies they were left in the woods and were brought up by a she-wolf.

But Rome was actually built by the Etruscans, a northern people who were in Italy in 700 BC. Rome was ruled by Etruscan kings.

Rome was ruled by Etruscan kings until 509 BC. Then the Romans drove the last king out of the city and Rome became a Republic. A republic is a country without a king/monarch. Over the next years all the mid-Italian towns fell under Rome's power.

By 274 BC Rome controlled all of Italy.

The Romans built up one of the greatest armies in the ancient world. In 146 BC they destroyed the city of Carthage in North Africa and took control of the Carthagian Empire. This included lands in Sicily, North Africa and Spain. The Romans continued to expand both north and east.

753 BC

509 BC

274 BC

146 BC

2) Now think about these questions. Write down your own ideas and then discuss them in class.

**Why did the Romans build up a great army?
Why did the Romans conquer other countries? What were the reasons?**

My ideas:

In the year 117 AD the empire had reached its greatest size. It was one of the richest, most successful empires the world had ever seen. It stretched 4,000 kilometres from east to west, about 3,600 kilometres from north to south and had a population of about 60 million people. It was connected by a network of roads and controlled by a powerful army. Two languages held the Empire together. In the west, people learned to speak Latin and in the east they spoke Greek.

100 AD

**What is an Empire? Explain in English.
Not even Rome could last forever. Why?**

My ideas:

In AD 455 Rome was destroyed.
In AD 476 the Western Roman Empire came to an end.

AD 455
AD 476

The Empire during the second Century AD.



3) Use your atlas and look at the map of the Roman Empire.

- (1) Colour the Roman Empire red.
- (2) Which rivers, oceans and deserts are natural boundaries between the Roman Empire and other countries?
- (3) Look at the names of the provinces. What language did the Romans speak?
- (4) What are the countries called nowadays?
- (5) Where are you from? Were the Romans in your country too?
- (6) The Mediterranean Sea was called "Our Sea" by the Romans. Why?

4) Draw your own timeline. Mark in all the important dates.

5) Now look at the mini-texts below. Which texts go with which dates? Write the correct texts underneath the dates of your timeline.

(1) The Roman Empire came to an end.

(2) The Romans ruled Italy.

(3) The Empire had reached its greatest size.

(4) Rome was destroyed.

(5) The Romans took control of the Carthagian Empire.

(6) Rome was founded.

(7) Rome became a republic.

Empire in danger

Historians do not think there was only one reason for the fall of the Empire. Some of their ideas are listed below:

1. The Barbarians attacked the Empire.
2. Roman emperors were weak and selfish.
3. The Empire was too big.
4. Economic problems/the army got weaker.

6) Read the texts below. Which text goes with which reason? Write the correct number in the circle next to the text.

- More and more soldiers were needed to defend the long Roman frontier. The Romans could not make the army bigger because men were needed to work on farms. Barbarians were allowed to be in the Roman army. They fought for money. So much money was needed to pay for the soldiers. There were more and more taxes to pay. The rich did not pay taxes, so the poor had to. But they did not want to. Some of them were against the Empire and helped the Barbarians.
- A big problem for the Romans were the attacks from Barbarians. The Romans called them Barbarians but they were not "wild". Foreigners who could not speak Latin or Greek were called Barbarians because their language sounded to Romans like "bar-bar". The Romans found it harder and harder to stop the Barbarians. They could no longer defend their long frontiers.
- Between AD 96 and AD 180 there were five strong emperors who ruled the Empire. But later on there were selfish emperors. The emperors were more interested in getting rich and living a good life than ruling the Empire well. Many emperors were killed. Between AD 211 and 284 there were 23 emperors and 20 of them were murdered.
- The Empire was so big that it was no longer possible for one person to rule it. So it was divided. The Roman Empire was ruled by two emperors. The east was ruled from Constantinople, the west was ruled from Rome.

7) Test yourself.

- (1) Why did the Roman army get weaker?
- (2) Explain the words "defend" and "frontier".
- (3) What are taxes?
- (4) Who were the Barbarians? Why was it so difficult to stop their attacks?
- (5) Why do you think it was not good to divide the Empire?
- (6) What was a selfish emperor like?