Geography and the Rise of Rome

The Big Idea
Rome’s location and government helped it become a major power in the ancient world.

Main Ideas
• The geography of Italy made land travel difficult but helped the Romans prosper.
• Ancient historians were very interested in Rome’s legendary history.
• Once a monarchy, the Romans then created a republic.
Main Idea 1: The geography of Italy made land travel difficult but helped the Romans prosper.

- Most of Italy is covered with hills. Italians built their cities on the hills for defense.
- Two major mountain ranges, the Alps and the Apennines, created rugged land that was hard to cross.
- Some of Italy’s mountains were volcanic. Their eruptions could devastate Roman towns.
- They also built cities near rivers for a source of fresh water. Rome lies on the Tiber River.
- Rome had a mild climate that led to a plentiful food supply and the city’s early growth.
Main Idea 2: Ancient historians were very interested in Rome’s legendary history.

- Little is known about Rome’s early history because no written records exist.
- Imagining the glorious past, people told legends, or stories.
Aeneas

- The Romans believed they could trace their history to a great Trojan leader named Aeneas.

- The Aeneid, an epic poem written by Virgil, tells about Aeneas’s trip to Italy. After the Greeks destroyed Troy, he fled to Italy and formed an alliance with the Latins.

- He became a ruler in Italy after marrying the daughter of the Latin king.
Romulus and Remus

• According to legend, the founders of Rome were orphaned twin brothers raised by wolves.
• Romulus killed Remus because he mocked one of Romulus’s ideas for a city they were planning.
• Romulus then built the city and named it Rome after himself.
Rome’s Early Kings

- Roman records list seven kings who ruled the city, some of whom were Etruscans.
- The Etruscans made contributions such as huge temples and Rome’s first sewer.
- Some think that Rome learned the alphabet and numbers from the Etruscans.
- The last Roman king was said to have been a cruel man, who had many people killed. A group of nobles rose up against him and overthrew him.
- The nobles no longer wanted a king, so they created a new government.
Main Idea 3: Once a monarchy, the Romans created a republic.

- The Romans created a republic in 509 BC in which elected officials ran the city.
- They protected against anyone staying in power for too long by limiting terms to one year.
Challenges from the Outside

- During difficult wars, the Romans chose dictators, rulers with almost absolute power, to lead the city.
- They could stay in power only six months, to avoid abusing their power.
- One of Rome’s famous dictators was Cininnatus.
- He quickly defeated his enemies, and returned to farming long before his six-month term was up.
Challenges within Rome

**Plebeians**
- The plebeians, or common people, were made up of peasants, craftspeople, traders, and other workers.
- They called for change in the government to give them more say in how things were run.
- They also formed a council and elected their own officials.

**Patricians**
- The patricians held almost all political power.
- Only patricians could be elected to office.
- Fearing that Rome would be split in two, they decided it was time to change the government.
Government and Society

The Big Idea

Rome’s tripartite government and written laws helped create a stable society.

Main Ideas

- Roman government was made up of three parts that worked together to run the city.
- Written laws helped keep order in Rome.
- The Roman Forum was the heart of Roman society.
Main Idea 1: Roman government was made up of three parts that worked together to run the city.

- When the plebeians complained about Rome’s government, the leaders knew they had to do something.
- As a result, they developed a tripartite, or three-part, government.
Magistrates

- The first part of the government was made up of elected officials, or magistrates.
- The two most powerful officials were called the consuls.
- Each magistrate was elected for one year and had his own duties and powers.
The second part of the government was the Roman Senate. This was a council of wealthy and powerful Romans that advised the city’s leaders. Members of the senate were elected for life.
Assemblies and Tribunes

- This part of the government protected the common people and had two branches.
- The first branch was made up of both plebeians and patricians. Their primary job was to elect the magistrates.
- The second branch was made up of tribunes who had the right to veto, or prohibit, actions by other officials. They were elected by the plebeians.
Civic Duty and Checks and Balances

- Rome’s government would not have worked without the participation of the people. People participated because they felt it was their duty to the city.
  - Citizens attended assembly meetings.
  - They also voted.
  - Wealthy and powerful citizens held public office.

- Checks and balances were created to ensure that no one part of the government had more power.

  - **Checks and balances** are methods to balance power. They keep one part of the government from becoming stronger or more influential than the others.
Main Idea 2: Written laws helped keep order in Rome.

- Many people were punished for breaking laws they did not even know existed.
- To prevent this, Rome’s first law code was written and displayed in the forum, Rome’s public meeting place.
Main Idea 3: The Roman Forum was the heart of Roman society.

The Roman Forum, where the Law of the Twelve Tables was kept, was the heart of the city.

It was the site of many important government buildings and temples.

It was also a popular meeting place for Roman citizens to shop, chat, and gossip.
The Late Republic

The Big Idea

The later period of the Roman Republic was marked by wars of expansion and political crises.

Main Ideas

- The late republic period saw the growth of territory and trade.
- Through wars, Rome grew beyond Italy.
- Several crises struck the republic in its later years.
Main Idea 1: The late republic period saw the growth of territory and trade.

- Roman territory grew as a result of outside threats.
- Gaul and many of Rome’s neighboring cities tried to attack and were defeated.
- Rome soon gained control of this territory.
Legions

- One reason for Roman success against invaders was the organization of the army into legions, or groups of up to 6,000 soldiers.
- This organization allowed the army to be flexible.

- Each legion was divided into centuries, or groups of 100 soldiers.
- The Roman army could fight as one large group or as several smaller ones.
Farming and Trade

- As the republic grew, many people left their farms to move to Rome.
- Wealthy farmers built large farms run by slaves in the countryside.
- Rome’s farmers could not grow enough food to support the population.
- As a result, merchants brought goods to Rome and increased trade.
Main Idea 2: Through wars, Rome grew beyond Italy.

- As Rome’s power grew, other countries came to see it as a threat to their own power and declared war.
- After defeating its opponents, Rome gained territory throughout the Mediterranean.
The Punic Wars

- Rome fought a series of wars called the Punic Wars against Carthage, a city in northern Africa.
- Rome first beat Carthage in Sicily, when Carthage invaded.
- Later, Hannibal tried to attack Rome itself but was defeated.
- Finally, Rome invaded Carthage, burned the city, and took control of northern Africa.
Later Expansion

• During the Punic Wars, Rome took control of Sicily, Corsica, Spain, and North Africa.

• The Romans went on to conquer parts of Gaul and Greece.

• Rome never took over Greece, but it adopted ideas about literature, art, philosophy, religion, and education from the Greeks.
Main Idea 3: Several crises struck the republic in its later years.

- As the Romans’ territory grew, problems arose in the republic.
- Rich citizens were getting richer, and many leaders feared that violence would erupt between rich and poor.
Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

- They both served as tribunes.
- The brothers tried to create farms for poor Romans to keep them happy and prevent rebellions.
- In two separate events, wealthy citizens opposed this idea and started riots, killing Tiberius and Gaius.
- From this point on people saw violence as a political weapon to use when they disagreed with leaders.
Marius and Sulla

- **Gaius Marius** encouraged poor people to join the army in order to make up for the shortage of troops.
- The loyalty of his army gave him great political power.
- Following this example, **Lucius Cornelius Sulla** sought his army’s support the same way Marius had.
- The two leaders started a civil war in which Sulla defeated Marius and became dictator.
Spartacus

- Thousands of slaves led by Spartacus rose up and demanded freedom.
- They defeated an army sent to stop them and took over most of southern Italy.
- Eventually Spartacus was killed in battle, and the revolt fell apart.

- 6,000 rebellious slaves were killed as an example to others who thought about rebelling.
This is the end of the chapter presentation of lecture notes. Click the HOME or EXIT button.
Print Slide Show

1. On the **File** menu, select **Print**
2. In the pop-up menu, select **Microsoft PowerPoint** If the dialog box does not include this pop-up, continue to step 4
3. In the **Print what** box, choose the presentation format you want to print: slides, notes, handouts, or outline
4. Click the **Print** button to print the PowerPoint presentation