

ANCIENT ROME: THE GREATEST EMPIRE



Written by Robert E. Slavin, Alli Hoge, and Kimberly Sargeant





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Ancient Rome: The Greatest Empire

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INTRODUCTION

Salve and welcome to Rome! “Salve” is **Latin**. It’s pronounced sal-way. Many languages grew out of Latin, such as Spanish, French, and Italian. Much of English came from Latin too.

Fact: Many words in the English language have Latin roots.

Latin Root	Meaning	English Words
aqua	water	aquarium
astro	star	astronaut, astronomy
cent	one hundred	century, centimeter
multi	many	multiple, multiply
oct	eight	octagon, octopus





Fact: Romans used numerals to represent numbers. Roman numerals are still used today. Here are some Roman numerals that you may know:

Roman	Modern	Roman	Modern	Roman	Modern	Roman	Modern
I	1	V	5	IX	9	L	50
II	2	VI	6	X	10	C	100
III	3	VII	7	XV	15	D	500
IV	4	VIII	8	XX	20	M	1,000



The Romans were great thinkers. Many ideas that began in Rome are still important today. Our government is based on Roman ideas. Rome was the first **republic**. The Romans had a voice in how their city was led. **Citizens** could vote for senators to represent them, just as we do in the U.S. today.

You can see Roman influences all around you. For example, you can see Roman **architecture** in many public buildings.

Many libraries and courthouses are modeled after buildings in Rome.



U.S. Supreme Court



University of Virginia Rotunda

The Jefferson Memorial is in Washington, D.C.
It looks similar to the **Pantheon** in Rome. Both
buildings have columns and rounded tops.



Jefferson Memorial



Pantheon

Fact: The first newspaper was called *Acta Diurna*. It means "daily acts."

The Romans were the first to publish daily newspapers. Newspapers were written on stone or metal. They were posted in public for all to see.

The Romans also made books by stacking pages and binding them together. Before books, people read from scrolls or tablets.



Many books were kept in special rooms and buildings. These were

the first public libraries. People enjoyed visiting these places to read and share books.

We can say *gratias* to the Romans for many things. The Romans invented indoor heating and plumbing. They built the first shopping mall and the first highway system.

The Romans created the first true fire department. They invented elevators. They even invented socks.

Let's learn more about this historical city that has influenced our lives.



LAND AND PEOPLE

Rome began as a small village in the country we now call Italy.

The village was on the banks of the Tiber River. Over time, the village grew into a city. The city covered seven hills.



Fact: Rome's government was on a hill called Capitoline. Many American government buildings are in an area of Washington, D.C., called Capitol Hill.

The center of the city was called the **forum**. The forum was a marketplace. Townspeople went there to **barter**, or trade, for different goods. It was also a place to meet friends and talk. Major events such as elections and speeches happened at the forum. **Temples** and other buildings were built around the forum.





Much of the forum has been destroyed, but visitors today can see some of the columns and arches.

Fact: *Pater familias* means "father of the family."

Some Romans lived in apartments. Apartments were very small. The entire family lived in one room. Wealthier Romans lived in houses. Houses were built around open courtyards. Windows

and balconies faced the courtyard instead of the street. This was to keep burglars away.

Many **generations** of family lived together. The ruler of the family was

the oldest male. He was called the *pater familias*. In most houses, this was the father or grandfather.

The *pater familias* owned all the property. He also made all the

important decisions even when his children were adults. He was responsible for his family. He could be punished if his wife or child broke the law.

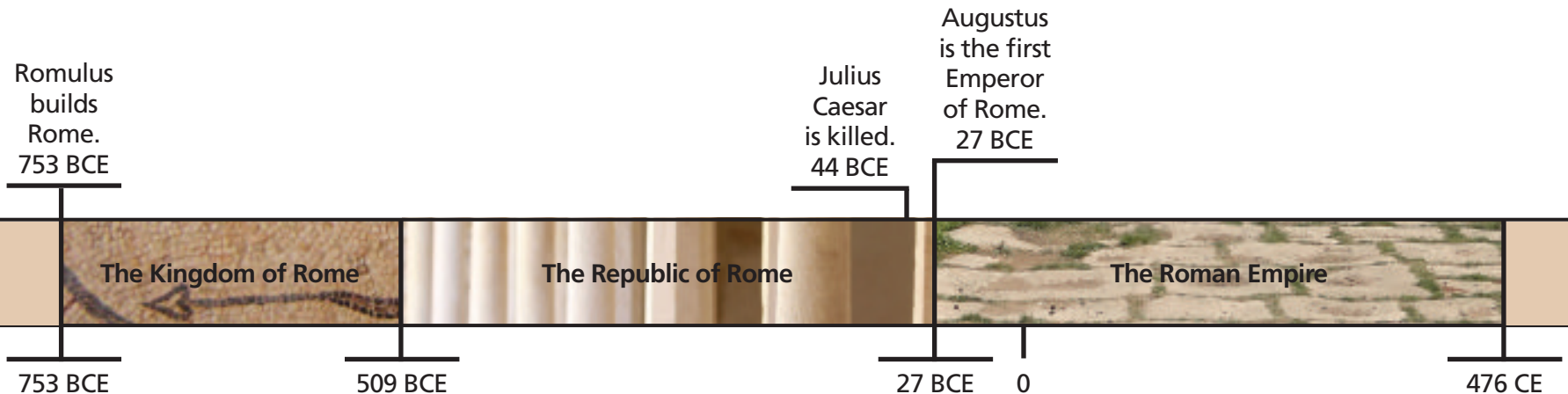


GOVERNMENT

The Romans believed a man named Romulus founded the city and named it for himself.

They thought Romulus was the son of a god. He was the first king of Rome. The city was ruled by kings for about two hundred years. Every time a king died, the Romans elected a new king.

In 509 BCE, Rome became the first republic. The Romans elected people to represent them in the government. All male citizens could vote, but women and slaves could not. **Representatives** formed the Roman **Senate**. Our government is based on the Republic of Rome.



Fact:

It was very important to be a Roman citizen. A citizen had many more rights than a non-citizen. These included:

- The right to vote
- The right to a fair trial
- The right to run for office
- The right to own property

Rome had a powerful army. The army was split into groups called **legions**.

Each legion had thousands of soldiers.

The army was important to the Romans.

All male citizens had to serve in the army for 25 years.



Fact: Roman soldiers wore armor to protect their bodies, but they wore sandals on their feet!



Worth your salt

Salt was very valuable to the Romans. Many parts of the empire did not have their own sources of salt. Soldiers were often paid in salt rather than money. They would then trade their salt for what they needed. The word *salary*, which means money paid to an employee, comes from the Latin word for *salt*.

Rome wanted to become a great power. Its army attacked many nations. The Romans took control of huge amounts of land. By 281 BCE, Rome controlled all of Italy. Soon after, Rome ruled most of the land that is now England, France, and Germany, along with parts of North Africa and the Middle East.

Julius Caesar was the last leader of the republic. He was a great leader, but some people thought he had too much power. He was killed in 44 BCE. This angered many people, and a war broke out.



Julius Caesar

Fact:

Julius Caesar introduced a new calendar. It had twelve months, and each month had about thirty days. The months had Latin names. March was named for Mars, the Roman god of war. June was named for Juno, the queen of the Roman gods. Caesar named July for himself. Later, the emperor Augustus named a month for himself too.

After the war, Rome became an **empire**. Some emperors, such as Augustus and Trajan, did good things for the people of Rome. But other emperors, such as Nero and Caligula, were cruel **tyrants**. They hurt the Roman Empire and its people.

Rome had great power for more than 1,200 years. Eventually, the empire got too big for the emperors to rule. It grew weak, so other nations attacked Roman cities. By 476 CE, Rome was destroyed by invaders, and the empire ended.



ROADS AND BUILDINGS

Have you ever heard the saying, "All roads lead to Rome"? In the Roman Empire, many roads did.

Each time they **conquered** a new city, the Romans built a road to connect the city to Rome. Roads were important because they let soldiers travel quickly between cities. They also helped cities trade with one another.

Romans built roads in straight lines because they knew it was faster to travel on a straight path than a curved path. They wanted the roads to last for a long time, so they built the roads with strong material. Some of the roads were so strong that they were used for thousands of years.



Hadrian's Wall



Roman road

Romans also wanted to protect their cities, so they built big walls around them. They built giant theaters, temples, and other buildings. We know a lot about Roman roads, walls, and buildings because they still exist today. They can be seen in Rome and in all of the countries that were once part of the Roman Empire.

Have you ever seen a dome or an arch? Roman builders used domes and arches frequently in their architecture.

Romans used arches to support bridges because arches can hold a lot of weight. They could build tall walls by building layers of arches on top of one another.

Columns could hold a lot of weight too. Romans used columns to support many buildings.

Fact:

The Pantheon is made of concrete and is one of the largest domes in the world. It was built to honor the Roman gods.



Pantheon, exterior



Pantheon, interior



Aqueduct of Segovia, Spain

AQUEDUCTS AND BATHS

As Rome got bigger, its people needed more water. The Tiber River's water could not be used for drinking. It was badly polluted because the public toilets in Rome dumped waste into the river. The water in the ground below Rome was not fit for drinking either. This created a problem for the Romans.

They built **aqueducts**, or channels, to carry fresh water from nearby mountains into the city. Water from springs traveled down the channels. The channels were built on a slope, which let water flow downhill. Some of the channels were fifty miles long or longer. Stone archways held up the aqueducts.

Fresh drinking water was important to the Romans. If you were very rich, water from an aqueduct might flow right into your house. If you were not rich, you would get drinking water from a **fountain**. Rome had hundreds of public fountains.

Most Romans did not have water in their homes, so they visited public bath houses, or **baths**. The bath houses had pools for people to wash themselves.

Many also had heated rooms, exercise rooms, and libraries. There were separate baths for men and women. The baths were a place to talk with friends.

Romans visited public bath houses, such as these.





Fresh water flowed out of street fountains like this one.

Fact:

Most Roman cities had at least one center of public bathing and socialization. Bathers would stay for several hours each day. Wealthy citizens would bring a slave with them to give them drinks and hold their towels.



LEARNING

In the early days of Rome, there were no schools. Parents taught their children at home. Children learned how to be good citizens. They learned about Roman history and laws.

The first schools opened when Rome became an empire. All boys went to primary school from ages 7 to 12. They learned to read, write, and do math. Paper was very expensive, so students used wax-covered boards instead. They could write by scratching words and numbers with a stick called a stylus. Then they could rub the wax smooth to erase what they wrote.

Only boys from rich families went to secondary school. They studied Latin and Greek and read important literature until they were 16. The boys from the richest families then went to another school, where they would learn to give great speeches. These young men became leaders in Rome.

Mothers taught girls how to cook, clean, and sew at home.

Fact: The word *orator* is a Latin word. It means public speaker.



Salve! My name is Lucius. I'm 10 years old, and I live in Rome. Most days, I go to school. Our teacher shows us how to write numbers and letters in Latin.

I have three sisters named Lucilia, Livia, and Lucretia. They don't go to school. They stay at home and learn from our mother how to take care of the family. While I am at school, they cook, take care of the garden, clean, and wash our clothing. Where we live is warm most of the time, so we usually wear sandals and **tunics**. Our tunics are white, loose, and wrap over one shoulder. When my sisters get older, they will marry. Then they will be like our mother and will have a home and children of their own.

My father is a farmer, and he is teaching me. I will be a farmer just like my father, and I will teach my son how to grow grain, olives, and grapes.

I also hope to be in the Roman Imperial Army. My father says that I am very fast and strong, and that I could be a great military leader like Julius Caesar.

Thank you for visiting me in Rome!



🇩🇪 A DAY IN ROME

The Romans woke very early each day. They began each day with breakfast, usually bread and water or milk. Wealthy Romans might have cheese and fruit as well.

Work and school began before sunrise. During the morning, adults would go to the baths or the forum. They would also visit the temple. Around midday, everyone went home for lunch.

They had a small lunch of bread, salad, olives, cheese, fruit, nuts, and any cold meat left over from the night before. Then they rested for a couple of hours.





After lunch, kids returned to school. The adults went to the forum or the baths if they had not gone during the morning.

Romans ate vegetables, fish, bread, olives, and wine for dinner. Those who could afford it had a bigger meal with meat. Rich men would lie on couches during dinner while slaves fed them.

After dinner, Romans attended plays, shows, and other events.



ENTERTAINMENT

Romans loved to be entertained! They gathered in huge numbers to watch live events. Rich families often paid for these events. Much of the entertainment in Rome was free for people to enjoy.

Stages were set up in the forum for actors to put on plays. All the actors were men. Men even played the female characters.

Plays were so popular that the Romans built **theaters**. The outdoor theaters were big semi-circles with an open space in the middle. Stone benches faced the theater's stage.

The Romans built huge **amphitheaters**, which are like theaters but shaped as

a full circle or oval. The most famous Roman amphitheater is the **Coliseum**. It was made out of stone and concrete. It could hold 50,000 people.

Gladiator tournaments were popular events at the Coliseum. Gladiators were trained fighters who fought with shields, swords, or knives. They were often former slaves. Gladiators wore special armor and helmets. Sometimes they were killed during fights.



The Coliseum is the largest Roman amphitheater. Some of it has fallen, but much of it still stands today.



Romans also enjoyed watching sporting events. They built a huge stadium called the **Circus Maximus**. Races of all types were held there. Thousands of people could sit in the stands around the track.

Chariot races were a favorite event. Chariots were small carts with two wheels. A man stood on the deck of the cart to steer it. Galloping horses pulled the cart around the large oval track of the Circus Maximus. Chariot races were very dangerous. Horses would sometimes fall during the seven laps of the race, and drivers could be hurt or killed.



ROMAN RELIGION

The Romans thought that there were many gods.

They thought each god controlled something in the world. Jupiter, god of the sky, was their most important god. People believed that Jupiter threw thunderbolts when he was angry.

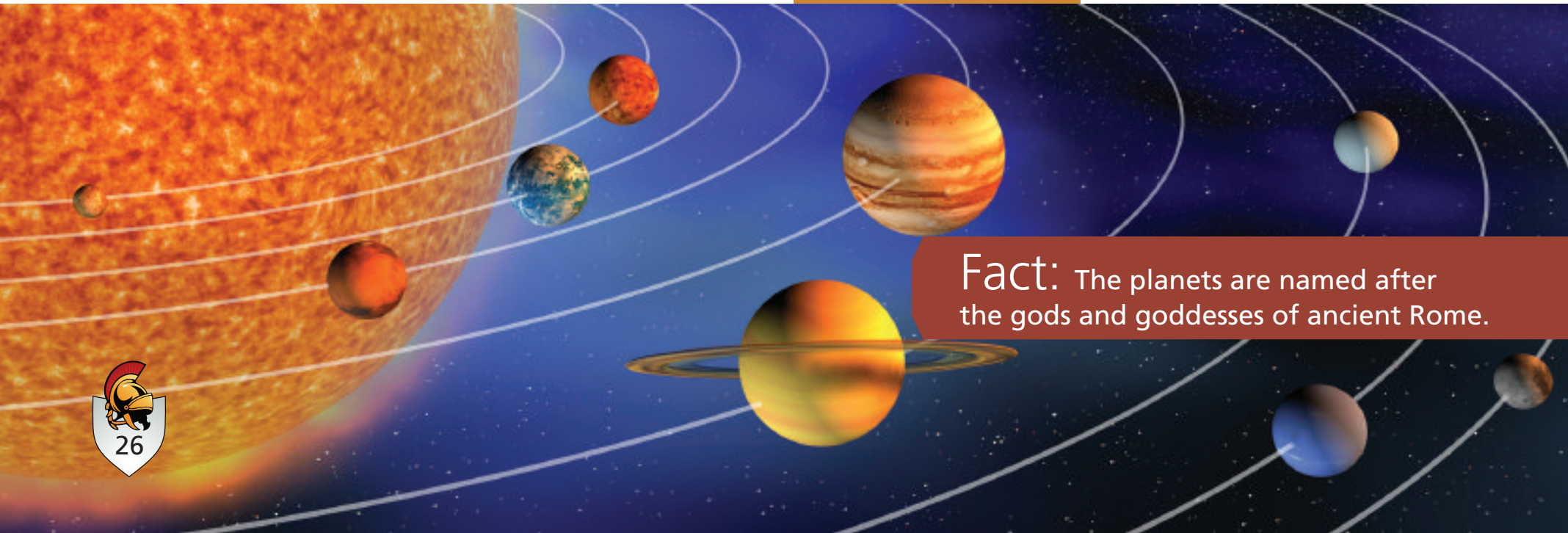
Jupiter was very similar to the Greek god Zeus. Many of the Roman gods and goddesses were similar to the Greek **deities**.



Jupiter

Fact:

The Romans had great respect for Greek culture. Romans studied Greek language, art, writing, and science. Roman buildings were greatly influenced by Greek styles.



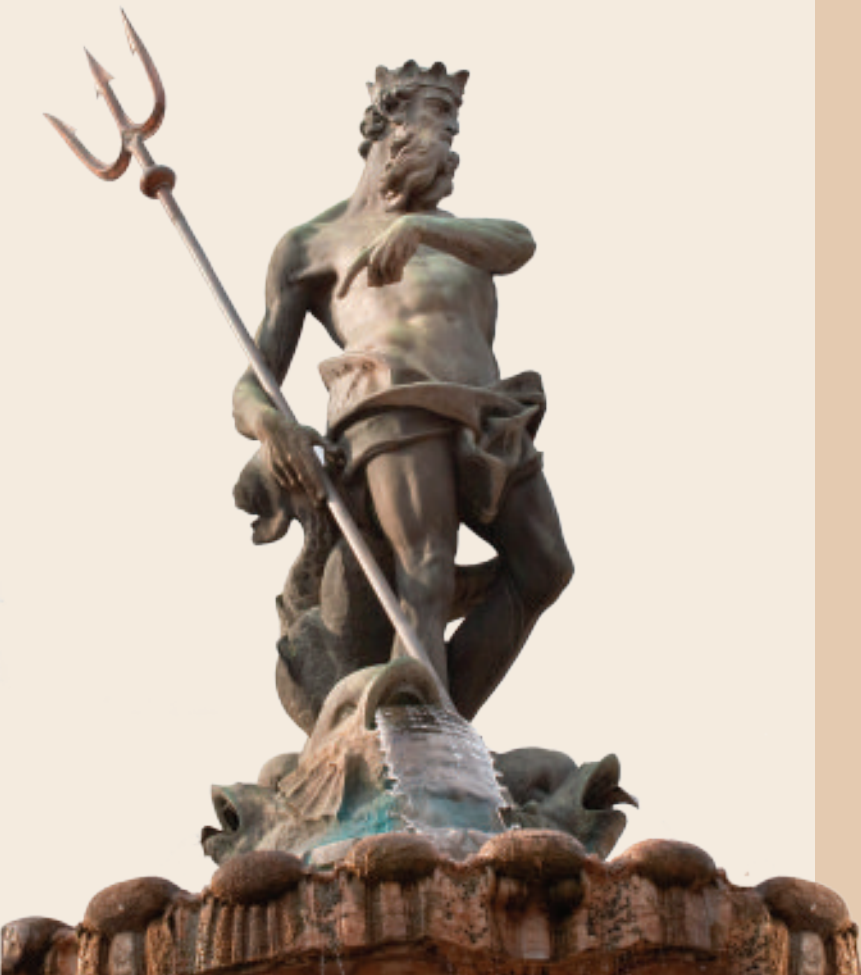
Fact: The planets are named after the gods and goddesses of ancient Rome.

Each of the gods controlled something in the world.

Romans believed that gods lived everywhere. Each home had its own god that protected it. People prayed to their home's god before they ate.

Neptune

Neptune was the god of the sea. He controlled the oceans.



Mars

Mars was the god of war. Soldiers would pray to Mars for victory and safety in a battle.



Venus

Venus was the goddess of love. She was the most beautiful of all the goddesses.



Romans built temples to honor their gods and goddesses. These temples were made of stone or concrete, and they had marble fronts. Romans also built statues of the gods and goddesses, and they placed them outside temples or public buildings.

In 313 CE, the Emperor Constantine became a Christian and decided that all Romans had to be Christian too. He made new rules about worship. Christians believed in one god, so he told people to stop worshiping the gods and goddesses.

Christianity quickly spread throughout Europe. It also spread into parts of Asia and North Africa. Many of the statues and temples dedicated to the Roman gods were destroyed.





ROME TODAY

Rome is no longer an empire. It is the capital of Italy and one of the biggest cities in Europe.

Religion is still important in Rome. Most people in Rome today are Roman Catholics. The leader of the Roman Catholic Church lives in a place called the **Vatican**. The Vatican is a small city inside Rome. It has a huge church and a famous museum. Paintings by important artists such as Michelangelo and Raphael are inside the museum. People come from all over the world to visit the Vatican each year.



Many ruins of ancient Rome still exist. Some of the original roads are used today. A number of aqueducts and bridges still stand. People can take tours of the Coliseum and other amphitheaters.

Water still flows out of many of the public water fountains. Bigger fountains have also been built. These fountains celebrate ancient Rome.

The **Trevi Fountain** is one of the largest. It has statues of several Roman gods and goddesses. It also has columns and the famous Roman arch.

Fact:

A legend says that if you throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain, you are sure to return to Rome one day. Tourists throw nearly one million dollars' worth of coins into the fountain each year.





Millions of people visit Rome each year. Tourists explore the ruins of the ancient forums and theaters. They also visit the Spanish Steps, a big outdoor staircase leading to a church built in 1495. They gather in

open spaces called piazzas to talk, eat, and marvel at the buildings. There is always something to do and see in Rome!

Fact:

Rome and Italy are famous for foods such as pizza, pasta, and a soft ice cream called gelato. The Latin word *gelatus* means "frozen."





amphitheater: Outdoor stadium.

aqueducts: Bridges and pipes that carry water over a long distance.

architecture: Style of building.

barter: Trade.

baths: Public buildings where Romans went to bathe and meet with friends.

chariot: A cart with two wheels and pulled by horses.

Circus Maximus: Large stadium where races were held.

citizens: People with full rights in a country; not a slave.

Coliseum: The largest Roman amphitheater.

conquered: Defeated in war.

deities: Gods and goddesses.

empire: Group of territories ruled by one country that conquered the others.

fountain: Structure that water flows from.

forum: Central place in Roman cities.

generations: Groups of people born around the same time period. For example, grandparents, parents, and children are three different generations.

gladiator: Roman who fought with others to entertain spectators.

Latin: Language of ancient Rome.

legions: Groups of Roman soldiers.

Pantheon: A temple for all the Roman gods.

representatives: People who speak for a group.

republic: A government in which people have representatives, such as senators.

Senate: People elected by citizens to make laws.

temples: Places where gods or goddesses are worshipped.

theaters: Places where plays are performed.

tourists: People who visit a city or country for fun.

Trevi Fountain: Large fountain in Rome.

tunics: Articles of clothing similar to a large T-shirt that hang to the knees or ground.

tyrants: Harsh rulers.

Vatican: City in Rome where the leader of the Catholic Church lives.



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