

Lesson 2 The Roman Republic

MAIN IDEAS

Economics Early Roman society was divided into two unequal classes.

Government The Roman Republic had a government divided into three parts, similar to the U.S. government today.

Government To gain more land and wealth, Rome began to expand by conquering neighboring peoples.

Early Strengths of Roman Society

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How was Roman society structured?

Patricians and Plebeians

- Complex civilization developed, along with two unequal classes
 - **patricians**—upper-class landowners, held high government positions
 - **plebeians**—common farmers that could vote but not hold power
- Tension over patricians' power led to written constitution
 - around 450 B.C., Twelve Tables set forth citizens' rights, duties

REVIEW QUESTION

Why did the division of Roman society cause tension?

Republican Government

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How was the republican government organized?

Legislative and Judicial

- Roman government established tripartite, or three-branch, government
 - legislative makes law, executive enforces law, judicial interprets law
- Legislative branch included Senate, assemblies
 - **Senate**—300 members, mostly patricians, advised leaders
 - assemblies—mostly plebeian, protected plebeian rights
- Eight judges of judicial branch oversaw courts, governed provinces

Executive

- Two **consuls** led executive branch
 - commanded army, ran government for a year
 - each consul could veto the other
- In a crisis, consuls could choose dictator to rule for limited time
 - **Cincinnatus** was made dictator; legend says he ruled for one day

Legacy of Roman Law

- U.S. government adopted Roman Republic's tripartite system
 - checks and balances keeps one branch from getting too powerful
 - government based on written constitution
- Citizenship is important in republican government
 - citizens expected to perform civic duties
 - American citizens vote, pay taxes, serve on juries

REVIEW QUESTION

What made up the three branches of the Roman Republic?

The Republic Expands

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did Rome expand?

The Punic Wars

- Rome expanded, controlled entire Italian Peninsula by 275 B.C.
 - those conquered governed selves but gave taxes, soldiers to Rome
- Punic Wars began in 264 B.C. against Carthage (series of three wars)
- Roman general Scipio defeated Carthage general Hannibal in 202 B.C.
- Rome captured, destroyed Carthage at end of third war in 146 B.C.

Effects of Expansion

- After Punic Wars, Roman territory extended from Spain to Greece
 - conquerors brought back wealth, slaves; bought large estates
- Many small farmers couldn't compete, lost their farms
 - poverty and unemployment increased
- Gap increased between rich and poor
 - anger and tension grew between classes

REVIEW QUESTION

What was the result of Roman expansion?

Lesson Summary

- Early Rome was divided into two classes—patricians and plebeians.
- The Roman Republic was a tripartite system that provided a model for the U.S. government.
- Roman expansion brought new lands and great wealth for Rome.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Some of the most basic values and institutions of the United States, such as civic duty and a separate judicial branch, began in the Roman Republic.