

Lesson 3 Rome Becomes an Empire

MAIN IDEAS

Government Angry poor people, power-hungry generals, and ambitious politicians threatened the Roman Republic.

Government Julius Caesar gained absolute control of the republic but did not rule long.

Government After Caesar was assassinated, Augustus founded an empire that enjoyed peace and prosperity for about 200 years.

Conflicts at Home

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What led to conflict in Rome?

Reform Fails

- As Rome expanded, many wealthy Romans neglected civic duties
 - only wanted to gain more wealth, power
- Differences increased between rich, poor; threat of uprisings grew
- Reformers wanted to break up estates, give land to poor
 - Senate's wealthy landowners opposed reform, had reformers killed

Civil War

- Generals who had conquered other lands wanted power at home
 - hired poor farmers as soldiers who became loyal to generals
- Generals began **civil war**—war between groups within same country
 - a general named Marius fought for the plebeians
 - a general named Sulla fought for the patricians
- Patricians won in 82 B.C.; Sulla became dictator

REVIEW QUESTION

Who fought in the civil war?

Julius Caesar

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Who was Julius Caesar?

An Ambitious General

- After Sulla's death, other generals rose to power
- One was **Julius Caesar**—born around 100 B.C. into old, noble family

Military Leader

- Caesar fought in Asia Minor and Spain
- He proved himself a great general in a military campaign against Gaul
 - Caesar's conquest of Gaul brought him fame, fortune

Dictator for Life

- Caesar was a great politician, reformer; was popular with plebeians
- Many powerful Romans, including patrician senators, opposed Caesar
 - **Cicero**—consul, speaker—supported republic, distrusted Caesar
- After returning from Gaul, Senate ordered Caesar to disband army
 - Caesar instead led army to Italy, fought for control; won in 46 B.C.
- Senate appointed him ruler; was named dictator for life in 44 B.C.

Caesar's Reforms

- Caesar was an absolute ruler, but started some reforms
 - expanded Senate, enforced laws, created jobs
- Some feared he would become king, have descendants rule after him

Assassination and Legacy

- Caesar assassinated in 44 B.C. by group of senators
 - groups' leaders were eventually killed or committed suicide
- Reformer or tyrant, Caesar's rule and death would end republic

REVIEW QUESTION

Why was Caesar killed?

Emperors Rule Rome

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What happened to Rome after Caesar's death?

Augustus

- After Caesar's death, civil war destroyed what was left of republic
 - his nephew and adopted son, Octavian, became ruler in 27 B.C.
- Octavian took name **Augustus**, meaning "exalted one"

Augustus Rebuilds Rome

- Augustus became Rome's first emperor; used title "first citizen"
 - controlled provinces, strengthened defenses, began civil service
 - beautified Rome by building temples, theaters, monuments

The Roman Peace

- Augustus' reign began **Pax Romana**—long period of peace and stability
 - empire grew to greatest size, 2 million square miles
- Roman army of 300,000 men became greatest fighting force in world
 - army guarded frontiers, built roads; navy patrolled Mediterranean

A Strong Economy

- Pax Romana continued after Augustus' death in A.D. 14
 - empire thrived under government begun by Augustus

Agriculture and Trade

- Romans produced pottery, metal goods, glass, wine, olive oil
- Land and sea trade routes aided economic growth
 - Romans traded with Spain, Africa, western Asia, Gaul
- Traders brought back grain, ivory, silk, spices, gold, silver

Currency

- Roman economy united by common currency, making trade easier
- Expanding economy made the rich richer, deepened division with poor

REVIEW QUESTION

What were the contributions of the first Roman emperor?

Lesson Summary

- The results of Roman expansion produced social conflict and civil war.
- Julius Caesar gained power and became a dictator but was then assassinated.
- The reign of Augustus began a long period of imperial rule and peace in the Roman Empire.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Rome faced the problems of how to maintain peace, law, and order. Modern governments face similar problems.