History and Government
Rome is the capital of Italy. The city started about 3,000 years ago. It became a republic when the people of Rome overthrew their king. The republic of ancient Rome was one model for the government of the United States.

The Roman Empire
Roman soldiers conquered parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and Rome became an empire. The people of the Roman Empire made great achievements in architecture. The empire broke apart when it became too large to control. The government and architecture of the Romans still influence people today.

The Renaissance
After the Roman Empire ended, Italian cities became separate countries called city-states. During this time, many rulers paid artists to create works of art. This led to the Renaissance, a time when many changes took place in art and science.

Italy’s Growth
By 1861, most of Italy was ruled by one king. In 1946, Italians voted to become a republic.

Italy’s Government Today
Italy’s government has three branches. One branch makes laws. The president and the prime minister run another branch that carries out laws. Judges in the third branch make sure laws follow the constitution.

Before You Read
Find and underline each vocabulary word.
empire noun, a group of nations ruled by one government
architecture noun, the design of buildings and other structures
Renaissance noun, a time of major change in art and science across Europe
constitution noun, a written plan for a country’s government

After You Read
Which country’s government is modeled on the republic of ancient Rome? Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.
How many branches does Italy’s government have? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.