

**Early Peoples Activity Sheet:**  
**Ancient Romans**

**1. Physical features and background**

**a) What is the name of the river that runs through the city of Rome?**

The Tiber River.

**b) When was the city of Rome founded?**

Legend says that the city was founded in 753 B.C. although evidence uncovered by archaeologists suggests that the city emerged around 600 B.C.

**c) Read the section on The Founding of Rome on page 5. Look at the bronze sculpture beneath it. Explain what the sculpture is depicting?**

The sculpture depicts the she-wolf who cared for the abandoned twins, Romulus and Remus, until they were rescued by a shepherd who brought them up as his own children.

**d) Looking at the dates the sculpture is thought to be made. Is this a primary or secondary source?**

Secondary.

**e) According to the legend of the founding of Rome, where does Rome get its name from?**

The founder of the city, Romulus.

**f) Look at the Timeline of Rome, also on page 5. When was the Roman Empire at its greatest size?**

Under the Emperor Trajan between A.D. 98-117.

**g) Name the several groups of people living on the Italian peninsula during the first millennium B.C.?**

To the East were the Sabines, to the South were the Samnites. The ancient Greeks had colonies along the coast of Southern Italy and in Sicily. People from Carthage had settled in northwest Sicily. To the north of the Italian peninsula were the Etruscans.

**h) Describe the landscape that early Rome was built on?**

Rome was founded on seven hills. The land between the Palatine Hill and another of Rome's hills, the Capitoline was marshy, which they drained to build a big public area.

**i) Using the Glossary, explain who the Etruscans were?**

The Etruscans were an ancient people who lived in Etruria, which is the present day regions of Tuscany, Umbria and Latium in modern day Italy. (Page 60).

**j) Tarquin the Proud, an Etruscan King who ruled the city was overthrown. What was set up instead of appointing another king?**

The Romans set up a new form of government, known as the Republic, which elected leaders, called consuls.

**k) How did Rome's expansion begin?**

Romans gradually gained control of rival communities and extended their control into other territories. When they had defeated the Greeks in Tarentum, Rome ruled most of the Italian peninsula.

**l) What were the Punic Wars and who were they fought against?**

The Punic Wars were against Carthage from North Africa. This group is also known as the Phoenicians, the original settlers of Carthage. Rome and Carthage fought three wars. It was in the third that Rome eventually defeated Carthage.

**m) How did Rome rule its overseas territories?**

Rome ruled its overseas territories as provinces. Each province had a Roman governor, whose job was to keep law and order and to oversee the collection of the taxes that provinces had to pay to Rome.

**2. Role of key groups and individuals in society**

**a) Who was Julius Caesar?**

Julius Caesar was a general in the Roman army who had many valuable victories for Rome. He was part of the Triumvirate which was an unofficial political alliance. After defeating Pompey, he became dictator of Rome.

**b) Why was Julius Caesar assassinated?**

Those in official positions were suspicious that Caesar would become a tyrant and destroy the Republic. He was murdered by a group of nobles.

**c) How did Julius Caesar's death result in the end of the Republic?**

Following Caesar's death, Octavian, Julius Caesar's adopted son went to war against his former ally, Mark Antony. After defeating Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium, Octavian became the first Roman emperor known as Augustus. As the emperor he effectively ended the Republic and after him Rome was ruled by emperors.

**d) Who was Octavian?**

Octavian was the adopted son of Julius Caesar. He became Emperor following the assassination of Julius Caesar. He changed his name to Augustus, meaning "revered one" when he became Emperor.

**e) What was the Pax Romana?**

The Pax Romana was the title given to the time of peace and stability in Rome that came after Augustus became Emperor.

**f) Who was the senate?**

The senate were a council of advisers. The Senate was made up of the heads of the leading families of Rome.

**g) Who were the consuls?**

When the monarchy was abolished, two elected heads of state, called consuls, took the place of the king.

**h) How did they prevent consuls from becoming too powerful?**

There were two consuls to prevent one person from having too much power. They were also only permitted to hold office for one year only.

**i) What was the duty of the consuls?**

The consuls headed the government, and they commanded the army in times of war. They were advised by the members of the Senate, who held office for life.

**j) In Imperial Rome, who held supreme authority?**

The Emperor.

**k) Patricians and Plebeians**

**i) What is the difference between Patricians and Plebeians?**

The Patricians were members of the wealthiest families in Rome, who had a great deal of power and influence. Plebeians are people of common birth.

**ii) What was the Conflict of Orders?**

The struggle between the patricians, who wanted to protect their power, and the plebeians, who wanted equal rights with the patricians.

**iii) Who were the Tribunes?**

The plebeians established their own assembly and elected officials called tribunes to represent them.

**iv) How did the plebeians gain the right to hold public and religious offices?**

The tribunes forced concessions from the patricians by withdrawing from the city – in effect, going on strike – several times over two centuries. However, the patricians continued to have significant power, but plebeians who became wealthy began to join patricians to create a new upper class in Roman society.

**v) Using the search tool or index to find the answer, what was the Law of the Twelve Tables?**

It is the first written law code for Romans which grew out of the ongoing struggle between patricians and plebeians. Prior to the code, patricians were the only ones who could interpret the law. The plebeians distrusted this practice and a council of 10 men drew up and inscribed 12 laws onto tablets that were displayed in the Roman Forum. (Page 22-23).

**l) Define these different social groups?**

**i) Citizens**

Residents of the city of Rome which was later extended to all free inhabitants of the Roman Empire (everyone except slaves). This included men, women and children. Citizens could become government officials

**ii) Non-citizens**

People from territories that were allied to or conquered by Rome

**iii) Slaves**

Unfree and property of their owners.

### m) Women

- i) **What was the role of women in society?**  
Women were mainly expected to be wives and mothers and to look after the household.
- ii) **What rights did women hold by the end of the Republic?**  
Married women were no longer considered property of their husband. Once married, women usually kept both their legal rights and property she had owned before her marriage.
- iii) **What type of work did women in lower classes perform?**  
Lower class women worked as midwives, shopkeepers and market traders, and craft workers; some women worked in agriculture. There were also many female slaves.
- iv) **Who were the Vestal Virgins?**  
The Vestal Virgins were six priestesses who tended the temple of Vesta. The Vestal Virgins often had considerable power and influence in Roman political life. They were required to serve for 30 years, however, during which time they had to remain unmarried.

### n) Slaves and freed slaves

- i) **Who were slaves?**  
Slaves were property of their owners. Most slaves were captured in wars and then brought back to the Roman Empire. Some were brought in by slave traders.
- ii) **How were slaves freed?**  
A child born to a slave mother was classified as a slave even if his or her father was a free born. As a free born, the father could free his child when he or she turned 16.  
A child born of a free mother and slave father was considered to be a freeborn.  
Slaves could buy or be given their freedom. Many owners paid their slaves as an incentive to make them work hard. By saving enough, slaves could gain freedom.  
Some owners chose to free their slaves for good service or so he could marry her.
- iii) **What was life like for a slave?**  
Conditions varied greatly. Household slaves were often treated well, and some came to be regarded as members of the family by their owners. However, slaves who worked the land, in mines, or as oarsmen on Roman galleys often endured terrible conditions.
- iv) **Who was Spartacus?**  
Spartacus was a slave who was trained as a gladiator and escaped along with other gladiators. Thousands of other runaways joined Spartacus and formed an army that took control of much of southern Italy. Spartacus' rebel army was eventually defeated and he was killed.
- v) **What evidence is there of slaves in ancient Rome? Give an example.**
  - Marble relief of slaves in Turkey
  - Mosaic of slave serving master

### 3. Warfare:

**a) What was the difference between the soldiers under the Republic and under the Emperors?**

During the Republic, Roman citizens were called up to serve in the army as the need arose. Non-citizens known as auxiliaries also contributed to the armed forces. Under the Emperors, the army became a permanent salaried career for soldiers.

**b) What was the *legion*?**

The legion formed the backbone of the army and contained about 5,000 foot soldiers or legionaries.

**c) What was a legionary required to carry during campaigns?**

A legionary carried a shield, two javelin with iron heads for throwing, and a short sword. Legions often marched great distances, carrying with them everything they needed to survive, including the tools for digging to make a camp at night, cooking pots, clothes, and rations.

**d) What armour was used by legionaries?**

A legionary in the imperial army wore armour to cover his chest, stomach, and shoulders. There were several types of armour, including chain mail and armour made from thin iron strips that were held together on the inside with leather straps.

### 4. Law:

**a) When did the Romans establish their first written law and what is it known as?**

The Law of the Twelve Tables was written in 450 B.C.

**b) What prompted the establishment of written law in Rome?**

Prior to 450 B.C., only those of the Patrician classes could interpret the law. Plebians distrusted this practice and so a council of 10 men drew up and inscribed 12 laws onto tablets that were displayed in the Roman Forum.

**c) Who enforced Roman law?**

Magistrates and governors of Rome's foreign territories.

**d) How did an offender's social status determine their punishment?**

Punishment for slaves was far harsher than those inflicted on free men and women. If an upper-class Roman citizen did face the death penalty, he or she was usually beheaded in private. Less important people were executed in public. Prisons were rarely used.

**e) What source tell us much of what we know about the Roman legal system?**

Emperor Justinian I of the East Roman Empire reorganised Roman law, and the law books written in his time provide much of our knowledge about the Roman legal system.

### 5. Religion:

**a) Who was the Roman's chief god?**

The sky god, Jupiter.

**b) What influence did Greek gods and goddesses have on Roman religion?**

Following the Roman conquest of Greece in the 100's B.C., the Romans became familiar with the Greek gods and eventually, the traits of the gods of Greece and Rome were often fused.

**c) Name one Roman god or goddess and explain what their role was and how they were similar to Greek gods/goddesses?**

- Jupiter – the sky god who was worshipped throughout the region on the summits of hills. He was the special protector of Rome and Rome's chief god. He was likened to the Greek god, Zeus.
- Juno – the goddess of women and childbirth. She was the sister and wife of Jupiter and was identified with the goddess Hera, the wife of Zeus.
- Minerva – the goddess of handicrafts and wisdom. She was closely associated with the Greek goddess of war and wisdom, Athena.
- Mars – considered an important deity to Romans and was considered the father of Romulus and Remus. Originally the god of farmland and fertility, he became the god of war after being associated with the Greek war god Ares.
- Diana – the Roman goddess of the moon was identified with the Greek goddess of hunting and wild animals, Artemis.

**d) Ancient Romans had many gods and goddesses they believed represented many different parts of life. Give an example of an everyday god?**

Janus was an important Roman god who had no Greek equivalent. He was depicted with two faces that looked in opposite directions. One of his functions was as the god of doorways, keeping watch over both comings and goings. Other important household gods were Lares, thought to be the spirits of ancestors and Penates thought to protect household supplies.

**e) Name the four main groups of priests.**

- a) Colleges
- b) Augurs
- c) Priesthood of 15
- d) Seven Feasters

**6. Everyday life:**

**a) Describe the houses ordinary Romans lived in.**

Ordinary people lived in tall tenement buildings – five to six stories high—that lined the narrow streets – some as narrow as 3 metres across. The bottoms of these buildings were stone or brick. The top floors, however, were usually made of wood.

**b) Name one activity Romans did for entertainment/leisure.**

- i) Baths – bath buildings had pools for swimming, areas for exercising or playing games, both warm and cold baths, and steam rooms. There were separate areas for men and for women.
- ii) Games or Chariot Racing – blood thirsty spectacles held at the Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheatre), or Chariot Racing at the Circus Maximus.

**c) Pompeii**

**What is the significance of Pompeii?**

Pompeii was a Roman city located near the Bay of Naples that was destroyed in AD 79 when Mount Vesuvius erupted. The ruins of the city, which have been gradually

uncovered, have provided huge amounts of information about how the Romans lived their daily lives.

**Define the Roman terms for sections of private houses excavated in Pompeii?**

**Domus:** Also known as the atrium is the entrance hall of a typical Roman house.

**Impluvium:** A shallow pool in the floor of the domus or atrium. The pool collected any rain that fell through the roof, which was open to the sky.

**Tablinum:** The living room which linked the atrium to the private living quarters of the house.

**Peristyle:** An open courtyard where the private rooms grouped around.

**Triclinium:** Dining room

**Describe the houses of the wealthy in Pompeii.**

The houses of the wealthy in Pompeii were large and beautifully decorated. For example, the House of the Faun had two atria (atriums) and four triclinia, decorated with beautiful mosaics.

**d) Explain the structure of a Roman family.**

The head of a Roman family was its oldest male member (the paterfamilias). He had control over his entire household, not only his wife and children, but also his slaves and often freedmen and women who were servants of the house. Under Roman Law, he had absolute authority. He could choose to sell, abandon, or disown his children – or even have them put to death. He chose marriage partners for his children.

**e) Whose consent was required before marriage?**

Consent was needed from the paterfamilias on both sides before a marriage could proceed.

**f) Explain education in Ancient Rome?**

From the age of about 7 until 11, boys could attend school, where they learned reading, writing, and mathematics. Very few girls attended school. Most boys who continued their education past the age of 11 came from wealthy Roman families. They studied mainly Latin and Greek grammar and literature, as well as mathematics and astronomy. Even fewer went to the next stage, where they studied the art of rhetoric.

**g) Clothing:**

**What was the basic garment worn by Roman men of all classes?**

The tunic

**What was the most common material for clothing?**

Undyed wool.

**What was the formal dress for Roman male citizens?**

The Toga, which was a large semicircular piece of cloth that was draped in folds over the top of the tunic. Most were made from wool.

**What did coloured togas indicate?**

Different coloured and patterned togas indicated status and rank.

**Who could not wear togas?**

Non-citizens. It was against the law.

**What do statues from Roman times tell us about Roman fashion?**

Statues allow us to follow the changing fashions in Roman dress. Fashion in men's hairstyles and beards changed dramatically.

**What was the women's version of the tunic?**

The stola, a long, loose garment that reached to the floor in folds, was worn by women. These were dyed into bright colours.

**h) What was the basic diet of ordinary Romans?**

The basic diet of ordinary Romans was based on more generous amounts of cereals, olive oil, and vegetables. As well as lentils, beans, radishes, celery, lettuce, cabbage, onion, and garlic. Honey was used as a sweetener. Garum was a sauce made of fish and olive oil. Meat was expensive. Pork was the common meat amongst ordinary Romans.

**i) List the types of foods imported into Rome and where they came from.**

Pepper, nutmeg, and cloves – Asia  
Pomegranates and dates – North Africa  
Wheat – Sicily, Egypt, North Africa

**j) What were the types of food Romans ate and what does where the food came from tell us about the Roman Empire?**

It shows the reach of the Roman Empire and influence the empire had on Roman culture and everyday life.