



Lesson Series

1. Locating Ancient Rome
2. Monarchy, Republic, Empire: Rome's different governments
3. Pompeii
4. A day in the life of Ancient Rome
5. Latin: A Roman legacy
6. Assessment

National Curriculum Coverage

Pupils should be taught about:

- The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain

What you need to know

- Ancient Roman civilization was based in modern day Italy, and included the entire Mediterranean, France, most of Britain and parts of the Middle East.
- Rome was founded around 750 BCE, and for 250 years was a monarchy. After the last king was driven out in 509 BCE, Rome became a republic – meaning a government of the people. This changed after the death of Julius Caesar, when Augustus became the first Roman emperor.
- The Roman Republic was controlled by a group of several hundred wealthy, powerful men, called senators. From these senators, two consuls were elected each year. These were roughly equivalent to a modern president.
- The rest of Roman society was split into patricians (landowners), plebeians (working Romans) and slaves, who were not Roman.
- Pompeii was a rich town, south of Rome. In 79 CE it was completely destroyed by an eruption from the volcano Vesuvius. Although it destroyed the town, the eruption preserved the town perfectly. Today Pompeii is one of the richest sources of information about Roman society and daily life.
- The forum was the centre of Roman public life, where people would buy food, meet friends, do business and make political speeches.
- For their leisure time, Romans might go to the public baths, watch plays at the theatre, attend chariot races at the circus, or gladiator fights at the amphitheatre.
- For hundreds of years, Latin was the language used in all international relations, politics, religion and scholarship. English today is heavily influenced by the Latin language, as are the languages: Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian.
- The Roman Empire also gave Europe the idea of a single government, and even up to the 20th Century, kings in Russia and Germany used the title of Caesar.



Teacher Knowledge

The Roman Empire was one of the most powerful and influential empires ever to have existed. Its influence is still felt today in everything from language, to culture, to the location of cities such as London. It is said Rome was founded by the mythical brothers Romulus and Remus, around 750 BCE. The city grew in power over the centuries, reaching its height in the 2nd Century CE, before falling to the Goths in the 5th Century. Its location in the centre of the Mediterranean gave it a powerful position from which to dominate the surrounding countries and remain safe for hundreds of years from migrating tribes and armies.

Knowledge Objective

To know Ancient Rome was a powerful empire

Knowledge Goals

Ancient Rome was one of the most powerful empires in history

The Romans told stories about Romulus and Remus who were said to have founded Rome

Rome's position in the Mediterranean gave the Romans a strong location from which to trade and conquer

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: Share the Knowledge Organiser. Explain that previously, we have learned about the Romans in Britain (Year 2), Ancient Egypt (Year 3), Ancient Greece (Year 4) and now we will learn about Ancient Rome. *What is a civilisation? What do you already know about Rome/Romans?*

Vocabulary: orally rehearse the key words. Explain ancient is a synonym for old. *What is an empire?* (a group of countries ruled by a single monarch or ruler).

Teach: Show children a map of the world. Explain that the Roman Empire began as a city in central Italy, but grew over time to become the most powerful force in the Western world for over 700 years. It was said to have been founded by the brothers Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a she-wolf. Romulus killed Remus in a fight over the name of a new city, which is why Rome is called 'Rome'. Some geographical factors led to Rome becoming powerful: located in the centre of the Mediterranean region, protected by the Alps mountains in the winter which were too snowy to cross, fertile land near to the rivers Po and Tiber which provided food for growing armies such as olives and grains, the Apennines run down from north to southern Italy providing protection and proximity to Mediterranean sea for trade and exploration. You may wish to show the image of Mediterranean Europe from the Y4 Geography knowledge organiser.

Partner Talk Task: Examine Rome's position on a map. *Why do you think Rome's position might have helped the Romans conquer so much land?*

Task: Locate Rome on a map, shade in an area showing the empire. Write a short explanation of how Rome's position helped the Empire to be successful.

Partner teach/Plenary: Look at own maps of the Roman Empire with a partner, discuss the countries that would have been part of the Empire, using prior knowledge of European Geography.

Vocabulary

- Empire
- Rome
- Romulus
- Remus
- Mediterranean
- century
- trade
- conquer

Suggested Resources

Map of the Mediterranean, Atlases, Maps



Teacher Knowledge

For the first 250 years of its existence, Rome was ruled by kings. The last king, Tarquin, was so proud that the people drove him out. After this, Rome was run as a republic – meaning a ‘thing of the people’. This was where the wealthy and landowning classes held certain elected positions. There were two positions of ‘consul’ which was roughly equivalent to a modern president, in which the position lasted for one year. Other wealthy men became senators and held this post for life. There were up to three hundred senators in the senate, and they advised the consuls. Beneath the senators were patricians: men of land and money. The ordinary people of Rome were called plebeians, who frequently did not own property. Beneath them was a vast underclass of slaves, who undertook most of the manual work of the empire, and upon which the empire was heavily economically dependent.

Knowledge Objective

To understand Roman society during the Roman Republic

Knowledge Goals

Rome had three distinct phases of government: monarchy (led by Kings), republic (led by people) and empire (led by an emperor)

Rome started as an absolute monarchy and became a republic

Patricians were wealthy Romans who often owned land ; Plebeians were Roman citizens, but were poor; and Slaves were owned and had no rights

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: Locate Rome on a map of Europe. *What do you know about Ancient Rome?*

Vocabulary: Orally rehearse vocabulary. Explain that a society is a group of people that live together within an area, often sharing a common culture. Explain a republic, from the Latin *res*, meaning ‘thing’ and *publica*, meaning people. So a republic is a ‘thing of the people’ not led by a King or Queen. Dependant on your class needs, you may wish to also include child-friendly definitions for the rest of the key words.

Teach: Explain that Rome began as an absolute monarchy, but after Tarquin the Proud was driven out in 509 BCE, Rome became a republic. In theory all the people decided how Rome should be run. In reality, a small group of aristocratic families controlled Roman politics. These families became the patrician class of wealthy landowners. From this class, senators were drawn, who were rather like modern British MPs. Each year the senators elected two consuls, who acted rather like a modern president, and took counsel from the senate. The working classes of Rome fell into two categories: poor Roman citizens, known as plebeians; and slaves, who were owned like property.

Partner Talk Task: Think about what you have learnt about democracy in Britain (e.g. from the unit on Parliament and Prime Ministers, YR2). *How do you think the Roman Republic compared? Was anything better or worse?*

Task: Draw a societal diagram showing the different members of Roman society. Include: Consul, Senate, Patrician, Plebeian, Slave

Step for Depth: What is the same/different between Roman society and British society today?

Partner teach/Plenary: *Everyone was treated equally in the Roman Republic. True or False?*

Vocabulary

- society
- monarchy
- Republic
- empire
- Consul
- Senate
- Senator
- Patrician
- Plebeian
- slave

Suggested Resources



Teacher Knowledge

Pompeii was a wealthy town on the Italian coast, near modern day Naples. On the afternoon of the 24th August 79 CE, the nearby mountain of Vesuvius began to pour out plumes of black smoke. These quickly increased in volume and the volcano began erupting gas, stones and lava. As the pressure built up in the clouds from the volcano, they collapsed into a pyroclastic flow: a searing hot wall of ash and stone that travelled down the mountain at hundreds of miles an hour. This buried the town so swiftly and completely, that when the ruins were excavated in 1748, the bodies of people were found frozen in the moments of their deaths. Alongside the thousands of objects discovered, many buildings had been preserved, which we still study.

Knowledge Objective

To know Pompeii was a town buried after the eruption of Vesuvius.

Knowledge Goals

The destruction of Pompeii was a major event in Roman history.

The events were well recorded by the writer Pliny the Younger

The preserved ruins have given archaeologists a great deal of information about the both the destruction, and everyday life in a Roman town.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: Refresh knowledge about the different stages of Rome. Explain that the events they will study today happened in the time of the empire. Look at the knowledge organiser

Vocabulary: This lesson combines elements of geography with history. Check if the children have heard of the words relating to volcanoes before and explain what they mean, using images.

Teach: Pompeii is one of the richest sources of archaeological evidence for life in Ancient Rome. The destruction of Pompeii was a dramatic historical event. The events were recorded by the writer- Pliny the Younger. Teach that in 79 CE, the mountain of Vesuvius began leaking dark smoke. This built up through the day, as ash, stones and lava began erupting too. Some people fled with their possessions but many stayed. The pressure in the ash cloud built up over the day, until at last it collapsed as a fast-moving, blazing hot pyroclastic flow – an avalanche of ash. Pompeii was buried and the people killed. The flow hit the town so fast that people were ‘frozen’ in the ash. This meant that Pompeii was perfectly preserved for two thousand years before it was dug up. Show the children different examples of the people and items found preserved.

Partner Talk Task: *What can we learn about Pompeii from the remains that archaeologists have found?*

Task: You are an archaeologist discovering the ruins of Pompeii. Use the pictures to describe what you find. *What could they tell you about life in Pompeii?*

Step for Depth: Using the key words, write a description about what happened at Pompeii and why it is so significant to historians?

Partner teach/Plenary: *How did the eruption of Vesuvius help historians/archaeologists learn more about the Romans?*

Vocabulary

- Pompeii
- volcano
- Vesuvius
- pyroclastic flow
- ash
- casts
- preserved
- archaeologist
- artefact

Suggested Resources

Pictures of Pompeii objects/ people, video clip: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0170brg> , <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/pompeii/videos>



Teacher Knowledge

Daily life for a wealthy Roman might have included many different activities: a visit to the forum would have been likely. The forum was the centre of Roman public life, with market stalls set up, merchants and traders doing business and politicians speaking to large crowds of listeners. Romans would also go to the baths to meet friends, exercise and clean themselves by moving through a series of baths of different temperatures. On special days such as festivals and the coronation of a new emperor, there would be games held. The militaristic Romans valued blood sports involving immense danger. One of the most popular sports were gladiator fights, where teams of trained slaves were pitted against each other in fights to the death. People also enjoyed chariot racing, involving four chariots racing around a track. Gladiators fought in amphitheatres whilst chariots raced in circuses. The Romans also had more peaceful interests, such as poetry and the theatre.

Knowledge Objective

To know about some of the leisure activities that took place in Ancient Rome

Knowledge Goals

The forum was the centre of political, religious and commercial life

The baths were a social leisure activity

The gladiatorial games were often used by emperors to keep the huge crowds of poorer Romans content

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: Pompeii provided lots of details about everyday Roman life. *What can you remember about life in Pompeii?*

Vocabulary: Orally rehearse key vocabulary, showing images. Explain that an 'amphitheatre' comes from the Greek, meaning a theatre on 'both sides'. Traditionally a theatre was a semi-circle. Show an image of the Colosseum.

Teach: Explore the different daily activities of Roman life. The forum was the centre of any Roman town, and most important business would have been done in, or around it; including trade, finance and politics. Most Romans would visit the public baths frequently, where they would exercise and clean themselves in different rooms, beginning with the cold plunge and ending with a room that was hotter than a sauna. On holidays and festivals, many Roman people would visit the amphitheatres to see bloody fights between gladiators. The largest amphitheatre was the Colosseum in Rome, which could hold up to 50,000 people. The Romans also enjoyed watching chariot racing, in race tracks called *circuses*. *The Circus Maximus in Rome could hold 250,000 spectators! In the evenings wealthier Romans might host feasts for guests, with many courses and entertainment.*

Partner Talk Task: Discuss with your partner how you would have felt as a spectator at the gladiatorial games. *Would you be excited? Nervous? What would you see/ hear?*

Task: Write an explanation of what life was like in Ancient Rome. *What activities might they take part in?*

Step for Depth: What is similar/different between life in the Roman times and life today?

Partner teach/Plenary: Share explanations as a class. Review what we have learned about life in Ancient Rome. You may wish to do a knowledge quiz.

Vocabulary

- forum
- gladiator
- amphitheatre
- theatre
- chariot race
- circus
- Circus Maximus
- Colosseum

Suggested Resources



Teacher Knowledge

The Roman Empire stands out in the history of Europe and the Near East, not just due to its longevity, but because of the immense influence it had on the history, culture, language and politics of the region for centuries after. The Latin language formed the basis of the modern 'Romance' languages: Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, and heavily influenced the English language, to the point where tens of thousands of English words come from Latin roots. Latin also became the language of scholarship for centuries after the fall of Rome. Until the 17th century, almost all works of science, religion and politics were written in Latin. Rome also left behind an idea of a politically unified and harmonious Europe. Many kings claimed some kind of legitimacy from Roman roots, and several attempts were made to recreate some kind of unified political entity over the years; for example, the Holy Roman Empire.

Knowledge Objective

To know that many words we use today come from the Ancient Roman language, Latin.

Knowledge Goals

The Latin language formed the basis of many languages including Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese

Many English words come from Latin roots

Until the 17th century, most works of science, religion and politics were written in Latin

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: *What did you learn last lesson? What language would the Roman people have spoken? Have the children heard of the Latin language before? Where might it be spoken?* Lead into vocabulary.

Vocabulary: Explain in lots of our lessons we look at what words mean, often we find words in our language are from Latin. Give some examples (link below provides some). Explain that the study of the origins of words is called etymology. An etymologist is a person who studies the origin and history of words.

Teach: Explain that we need to speak the same language to communicate in detail with another person. Ruling over such a huge area, with many different people and languages, the Romans found it easier to use one language across the entire empire. This language was Latin. Even for hundreds of years after the Roman Empire had fallen, Latin was the common language for people in the church, as well as kings and princes to use to communicate with each other. Several modern European languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian) have come directly from Latin, which is why they are all quite similar. Even a language like English, which is mainly taken from German, has many Latin words in it.

Partner Talk Task: Show a picture of Roman letters chiselled into stone (see link below). *Can the children recognize any of the letters or words?*

Task: Show a selection of Latin words and their translations. Discuss what English words might have come from the Latin. For example, the word *dens* means tooth, but we also take the English word 'dentist' from it.

Step for Depth: Why do you think language changes over time?

Partner teach/Plenary: *Can you think of any English words which might have a Latin origin?* Share these words as a class

Vocabulary

- Latin
- Roman language
- root words
- etymology
- etymologist

Suggested Resources

Roman tomb inscription: http://www.teachinghistory100.org/objects/about_the_object/tombstone_of_a_roman_cavalryman [Teaching History with 100 Objects - Tombstone of a Roman cavalryman \(teachinghistory100.org\)](#)



Assessment Outcome

To know about life in Ancient Rome

Specific Knowledge Goals:

- Romans believed that Romulus and Remus founded Rome
- Ancient Rome was a powerful empire
- Rome's location, in the centre of the Mediterranean, gave it a powerful position
- Rome began as an absolute monarchy and later became a republic
- Roman society varied vastly during the Roman Republic
- Pompeii, a wealthy town on the Italian coast, was destroyed by a volcano
- Archaeologist used the preserved ruins from Pompeii to learn about life in Ancient Rome
- Roman leisure activities included baths, the forum, chariot races and gladiator fights
- Romans spoke in Latin and Latin formed the basis of many other European languages
- Until the 17th Century, most works of science, religion and politics were written in Latin

Suggested Assessment Tasks

Knowledge Organiser: Blank out sections of the knowledge organiser for children to fill in. For example, leave a key word but blank out the definition and vice versa.

Multiple Choice Quiz: Children complete the MCQ and mark their own immediately afterwards to provide instant feedback.

Extended Writing Task:

Option A: To write a non-chronological report about life in Ancient Rome. Children must include:

1. An introduction to the Roman Empire
2. A paragraph about Roman government and society
3. A paragraph about Pompeii
4. A paragraph about Roman leisure activities

Option B: What was the same/different between life in Ancient Rome and life today OR between the lives of different people living in Ancient Rome?

Suggested Resources

Knowledge organiser, MCQ, structure strips to scaffold writing,