

History Level 8

Chapter 3 — The ancient world, 10 000 BCE – 600 CE

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Attribution: Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

Curriculum codes refer to the *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0*, published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Classbasics is not affiliated with the VCAA; the VCAA does not endorse this resource and makes no warranties regarding it.

Distribution note: this document may be distributed, and whole pages may be removed from it, provided only WHOLE pages are removed (never part of a page). This allows teachers to remove tests, exams and subtopics they do not want to issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to admin@vwx.au with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

Contents

Section	Page
How the physical environment shaped an ancient society	2
Inside an ancient society: groups, roles and points of view	16
What an ancient society believed and did: everyday life, worldviews, war, death and burial	28
Turning points: events that changed an ancient society	42
When societies met and clashed: conquest, growing trade, peace treaties	55
One person or group that changed an ancient society	68
Why an ancient society or person mattered: interpretations and legacies	80

How the physical environment shaped an ancient society

Curriculum focus — VC2HH8K12 (Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 7 and 8). This code asks how the physical environment shaped an ancient society. This section teaches the content description through the ancient society set as the Chapter 3 default: **Rome** (example set .E09–.E11). The other example sets remain open as alternative paths: China (.E01–.E02), Egypt (.E03–.E04), Greece (.E05–.E06), India (.E07–.E08). Draws on, for question-bank and coverage linkage: .E01–.E11.

Teaching sequence

Key words for this section

History uses some big abstract words. This section fixes what each one means here, so every task can be answered on the same footing.

- **Ancient society.** In this unit, an *ancient society* is a group of people in the distant past who shared a way of life — the same land, rules, beliefs and work. The unit covers the years from about 10 000 BCE to 600 CE. Our case study is the society of **Rome**.
- **Physical environment.** The *physical environment* is the natural world around a society: its land, rivers, seas, hills, climate, soil, plants and animals. It does **not** include things people build, such as roads or temples — although, as you will see, what people build is often an answer to what nature gives them.
- **Development.** The curriculum uses the word *development* but does not define it, and the word can mean different things. This section therefore treats *development* as **how Rome grew and changed over time**: its size, its wealth, the number of people in it, and the way it organised food, water and trade. Every question in this section can be answered on that meaning alone.
- **Surplus.** A *surplus* is simply **more than is needed**. If a farm family grows enough wheat to feed itself with plenty left over, the leftover wheat is a surplus.

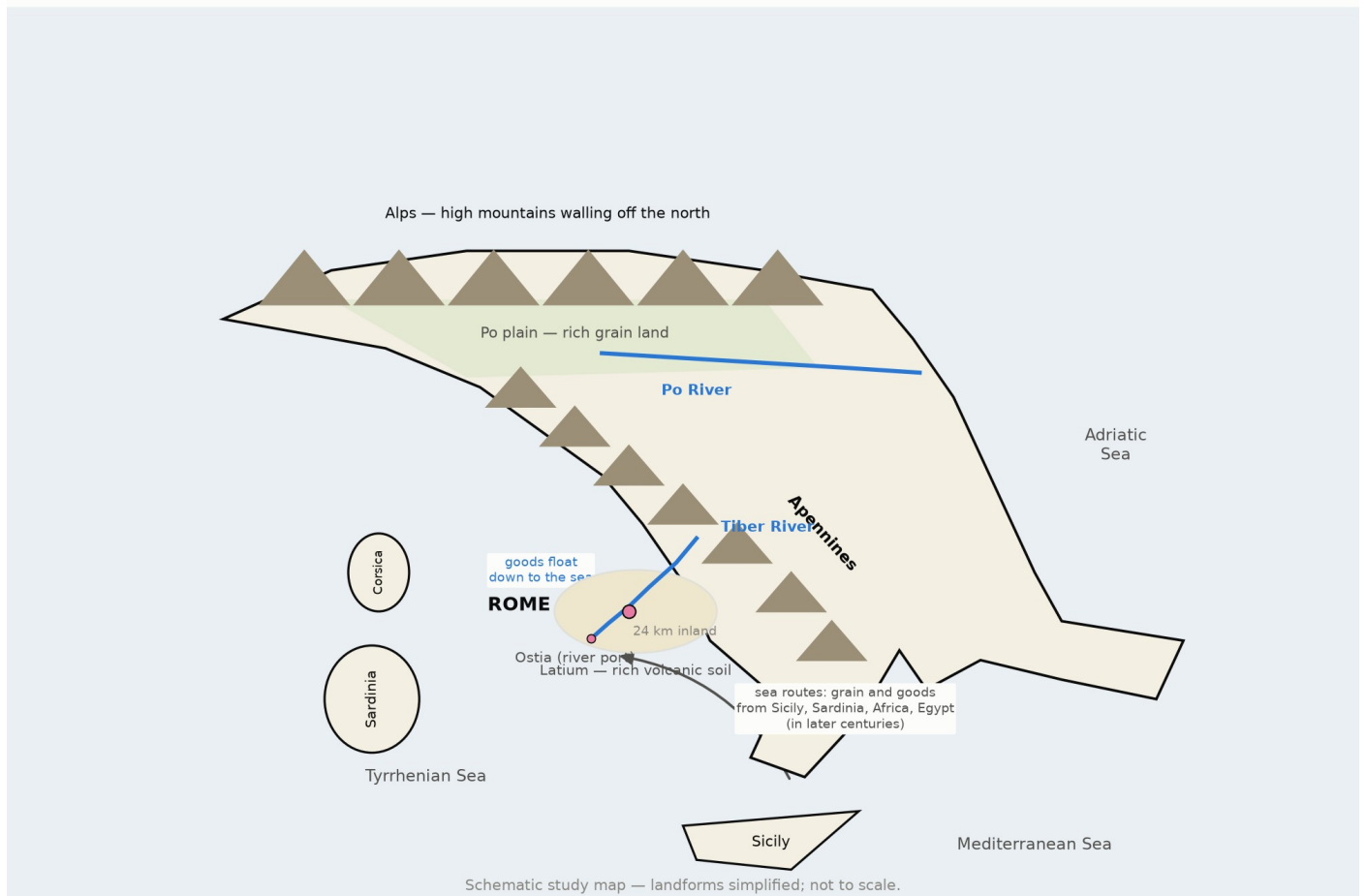
1. Italy: the land Rome grew in

Rome sits in the middle of **Italy**, a long, boot-shaped peninsula reaching into the Mediterranean Sea. Three big physical facts shaped what could happen there:

- **The Alps** wall off the north. These high, cold mountains made large armies hard to move into Italy from the rest of Europe — a natural line of defence.
- **The Apennines** run down the middle of the peninsula like a spine. They split Italy into west and east, and they fed the rivers with snow and rain.
- **Two great river regions** supplied food. In the north, the **Po** spreads out into a wide, fertile plain — the biggest river region in Italy. In the centre-west, the **Tiber** runs through the region the Romans called **Latium**, down to the sea.

The sea itself was a road, not a wall. Ships could carry grain, oil and wine between Italy, the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, and the wider Mediterranean world far more easily than carts could drag them over land.

Italy — the land Rome grew in



Map of Italy showing the Alps in the north, the Apennine mountains running down the centre, the Po River in the north and the Tiber River in the centre-west, with the city of Rome, its river port Ostia, and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia

2. Why this spot? The Tiber and the seven hills

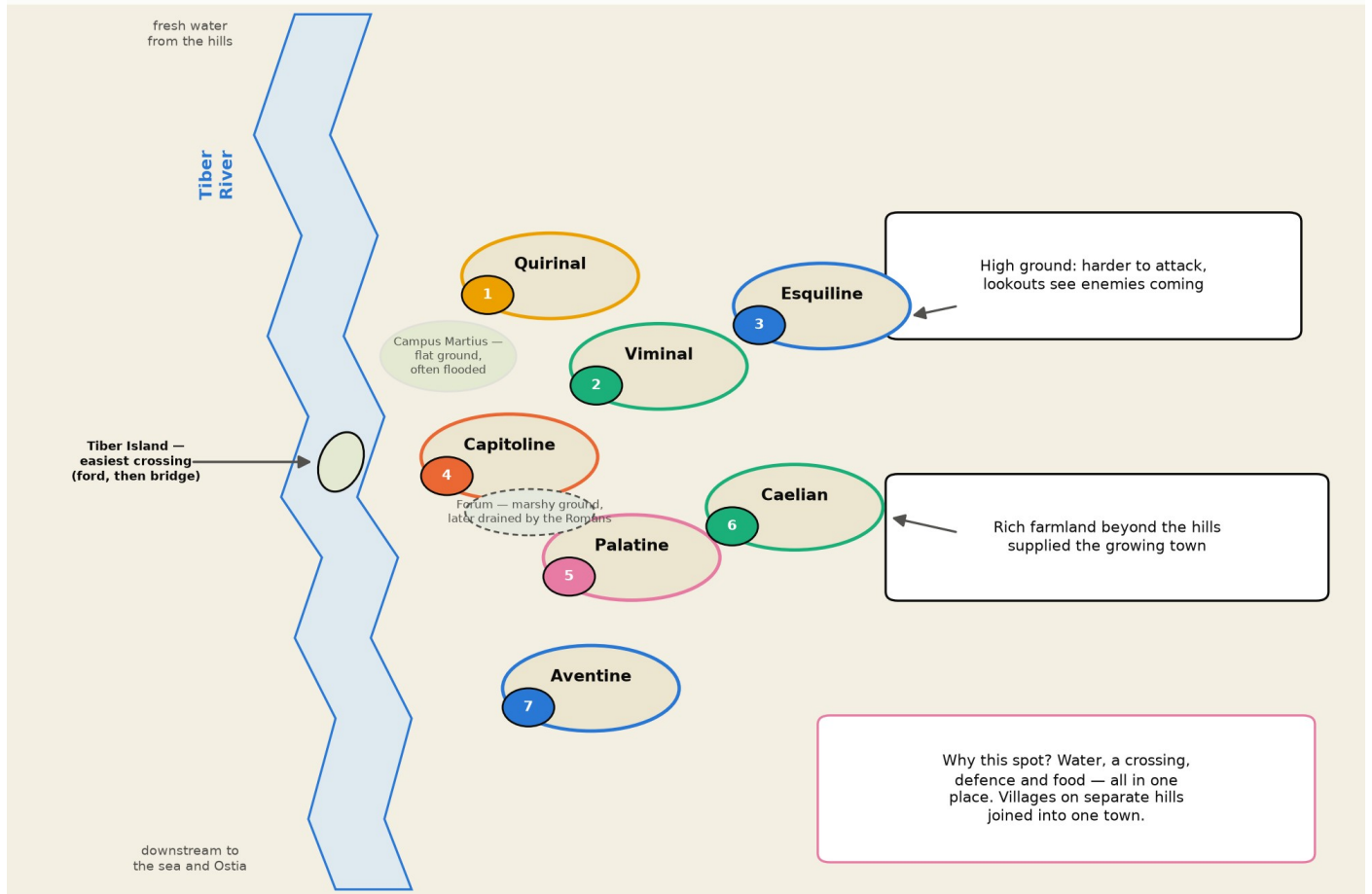
The city of Rome began at one particular place on the Tiber, about 24 kilometres inland from the coast. That choice of spot is the heart of this section.

The river gave five things at once.

1. **Fresh water** for people and animals, every day of the year.
2. **A crossing.** Near Rome the river splits around a small island (today called Tiber Island). The island made the river easier to cross — first by ford, then by bridge. People and goods moving along the west coast of Italy had to cross the Tiber somewhere, and here was the easiest place. A crossing is a natural spot for a market, and a market grows into a town.
3. **A trade route.** The Tiber runs from the hills to the sea. Goods from inland farms could float down to the coast; goods from the sea could come up. Rome's river port, **Ostia**, grew where the river meets the sea.
4. **Food.** The plain of Latium beside the river has rich soil, much of it made from volcanic ash spread by nearby hills that were once volcanoes. Volcanic soil holds water and feeds crops well.
5. **Some safety from the sea.** Raiders coming by ship could strike a coastal town in hours. A town 24 kilometres up a river can see trouble coming and has time to respond — yet it still keeps all the benefits of sea trade.

The hills did the rest. Rome grew on and around **seven hills** beside the river — the Palatine, Capitoline, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Quirinal and Viminal. Hills are natural strong points: it is far harder to attack men fighting uphill than men on flat ground, and from a hilltop lookouts can see enemies coming. In winter the hills also sat above the cold, wet air of the low ground. Between the hills the land was low and marshy; the Romans later drained that marsh to make their main public square, the Forum.

Early Rome — the Tiber and the seven hills



Schematic study diagram — positions simplified; the seven hills are numbered 1–7.

Diagram of early Rome showing the Tiber River, Tiber Island and the seven hills — Palatine, Capitoline, Aventine, Caelian, Esquiline, Quirinal and Viminal — with the marshy Forum valley between them

The table below sums up the site — each row is a gift of the physical environment and the part it played in Rome's development.

What the site of Rome offered

What the site offered	The land and water behind it	Why it helped Rome develop
Defence	seven steep hills; the river itself	hard to attack; lookouts saw enemies coming
Fresh water	the Tiber, flowing all year	people, animals and workshops could settle for good
A crossing point	Tiber Island and the ford beside it	people and goods had to cross at Rome — trade came to the town
Food	the fertile volcanic plain of Latium	farms could grow more than the farmers needed
A trade route	the river running to the sea	farm goods went down to the coast at Ostia; sea goods came up
Sea access with safety	the city sat about 24 km inland	sea trade reached Rome, but raiders by ship could not strike quickly

Each row names a gift of the physical environment and the part it played in Rome's development.

Table of what the site of Rome offered: defence from the seven steep hills and the river itself; fresh water from the Tiber, flowing all year; a crossing point at Tiber Island and the ford beside it; food from the fertile volcanic plain of Latium; a trade route down the river to the sea at Ostia; and sea access with safety, because the city sat 24 km inland

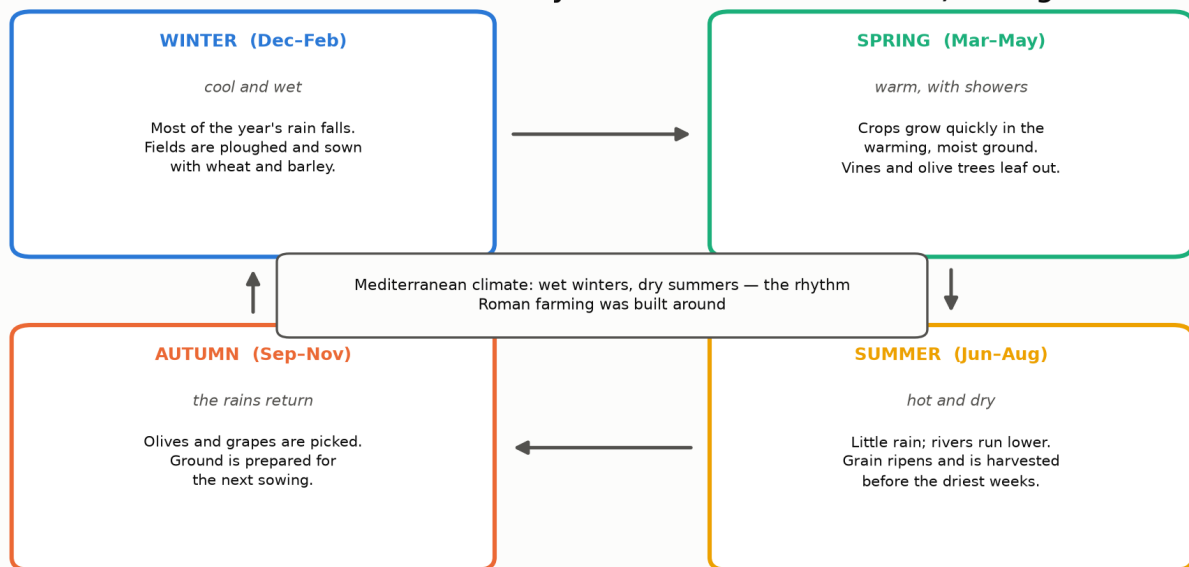
By tradition, Rome was founded in **753 BCE**, and the old story says a prince named **Romulus** marked out the first city boundary on the Palatine hill after a fight with his twin brother, Remus. Archaeology — the study of the past through the things people left behind, such as buildings, tools and graves — tells a quieter story: small farming villages of hut-and-clay stood on the hilltops from about **1000 BCE**, and over centuries the villages on separate hills joined together into one town. The legend is still a useful source — it shows what later Romans *believed* about their own beginning — but it is a story told long after the events, not a record of them.

3. Rich soil, spare food, new trade

A city cannot grow unless its farmers grow more food than they eat themselves. In that sense, the development of Rome began in the soil.

The climate helped. Italy has a **Mediterranean climate**: winters are cool and wet, summers are hot and dry. Most rain falls between autumn and spring, which suits crops that grow through the cool months and ripen before the summer heat: **wheat and barley** for bread, **olives** for oil, and **grapes** for wine. These three became the backbone of Roman farming.

The Mediterranean climate year — when the rain comes, what grows



The three backbone crops — wheat and barley, olives, and grapes — all suit this wet-then-dry pattern.

Seasonal cycle diagram of a Mediterranean climate showing cool wet winters for ploughing and sowing, spring growth, hot dry summers for the grain harvest, and autumn for the olive and grape harvest

Fertile soil turned good weather into surplus. In Latium, the volcanic soil gave strong yields of wheat. In the north, the Po plain — fed by Alpine snowmelt and spread wide and flat — became one of the richest grain lands in the whole Mediterranean. When a farm family harvested more than it needed, the spare grain became something to sell, swap or tax.

That surplus set off a chain of causes and consequences:

From fertile soil to a growing city — one chain of causes



Each arrow is at once the consequence of the step before it and the cause of the step after it.

The surplus chain — read from left to right (E10).

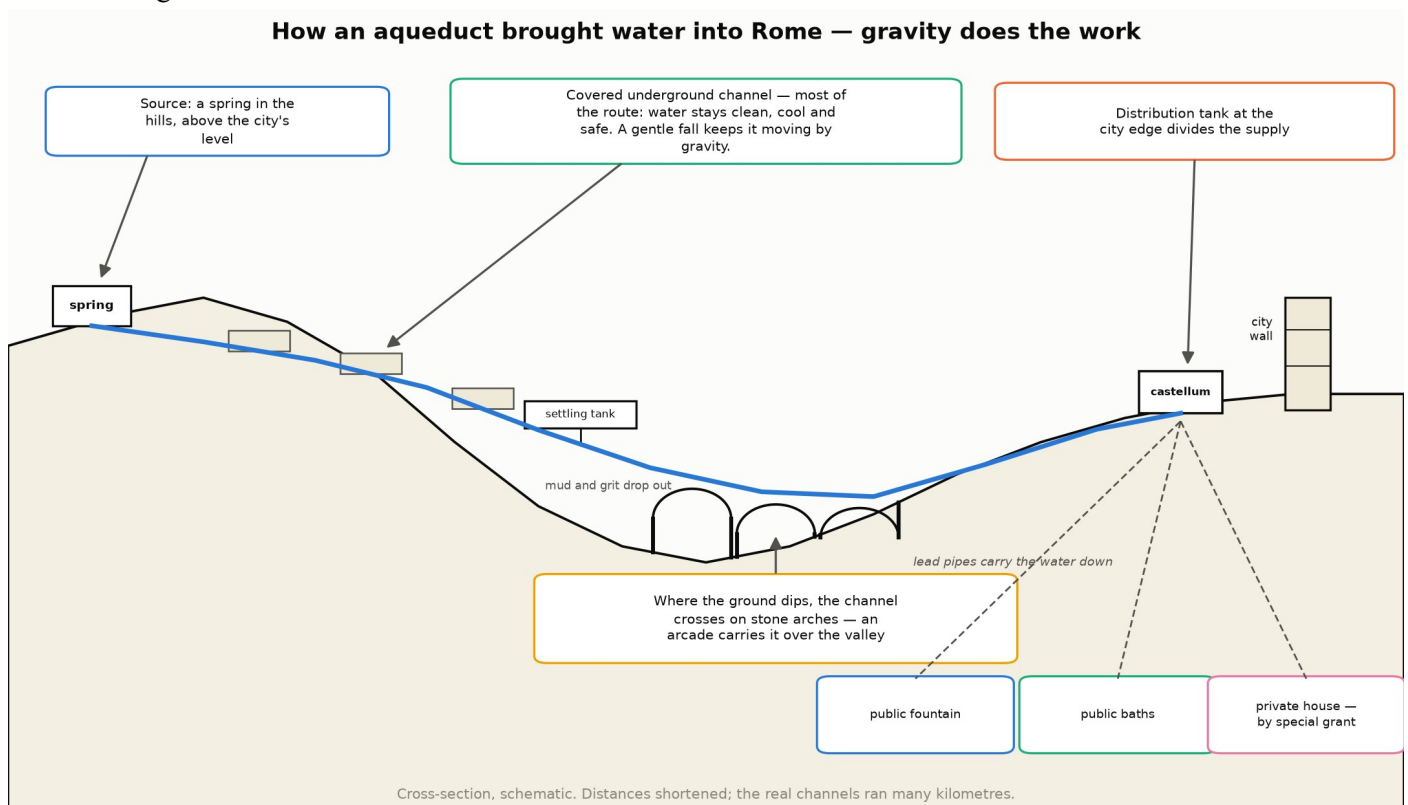
Causal chain diagram: fertile soil and a mild wet climate lead to a food surplus, the surplus feeds a growing city population, the surplus and other goods move down the Tiber and out to sea as trade, and trade brings wealth and power that enlarge the city further

Read the chain from left to right and you can name each link as a **cause** or a **consequence**. Fertile soil was a *cause* of the food surplus; the surplus was a *cause* of population growth in the town; growth was a *cause* of more trade on the river. Notice also what stayed the same (continuity) and what changed: for centuries the crops stayed the same and farming stayed the backbone of life — **continuity** — while the size of the town, the amount of trade, and the reach of Rome's power all grew — **change**.

4. Managing the environment: aqueducts and plumbing

Here is the key move in Rome's development: **a society is not stuck with the environment it is given — it can manage it**. As Rome grew, the Tiber and the local springs could not supply enough clean water for hundreds of thousands of people, and the low ground between the hills flooded. The Romans answered with engineering.

- **Drains first.** From about **600 BCE** the Romans dug a great stone drain, the **Cloaca Maxima**, to dry out the marsh between the hills. The drained ground became the Forum, the centre of public life.
- **Then the aqueducts.** An *aqueduct* is a built channel that carries fresh water into a city over a long distance. Rome's first, the **Aqua Appia**, was built in **312 BCE**. Engineers took water from springs in the hills and led it gently downhill — the whole way, gravity did the work. Most of the channel ran **underground**, where the water stayed clean, cool and safe. Where the ground dipped into a valley, the channel crossed on stone arches.
- **Then the pipes.** At the city edge the water collected in a distribution tank, then ran through lead pipes to public fountains, public baths, and — by special grant — to private houses. A city officer kept the system running and decided who received how much.



Cross-section diagram of a Roman aqueduct system showing water from a hilltop spring flowing through a covered underground channel, crossing a valley on stone arches, and arriving at a distribution tank inside the city, from which lead pipes feed a public fountain and a bath house

The system grew for five hundred years. Each new aqueduct let the city support more people, more fountains and more baths — the environment was being reshaped to carry the city's growth.

The aqueducts of Rome, as recorded by Frontinus

Aqueduct	Built	Notes
Aqua Appia	312 BCE	the first; almost all of it ran underground
Anio Vetus	272 BCE	took water from the Anio valley
Aqua Marcia	144 BCE	a long route; praised for cool, clean water
Aqua Tepula	125 BCE	a small supply
Aqua Julia	33 BCE	built by Agrippa, who served the emperor Augustus
Aqua Virgo	19 BCE	built by Agrippa; its water still reaches fountains in Rome today
Aqua Alsietina	2 BCE	for water shows and gardens — not for drinking
Aqua Claudia	52 CE	a large supply; its arches still stand near Rome
Anio Novus	52 CE	the highest channel; a very large flow

Two more aqueducts were built after Frontinus' day; by about 226 CE, eleven supplied the city.

Dates follow Frontinus' own account, *De Aquaeductu*, written about 97–100 CE.

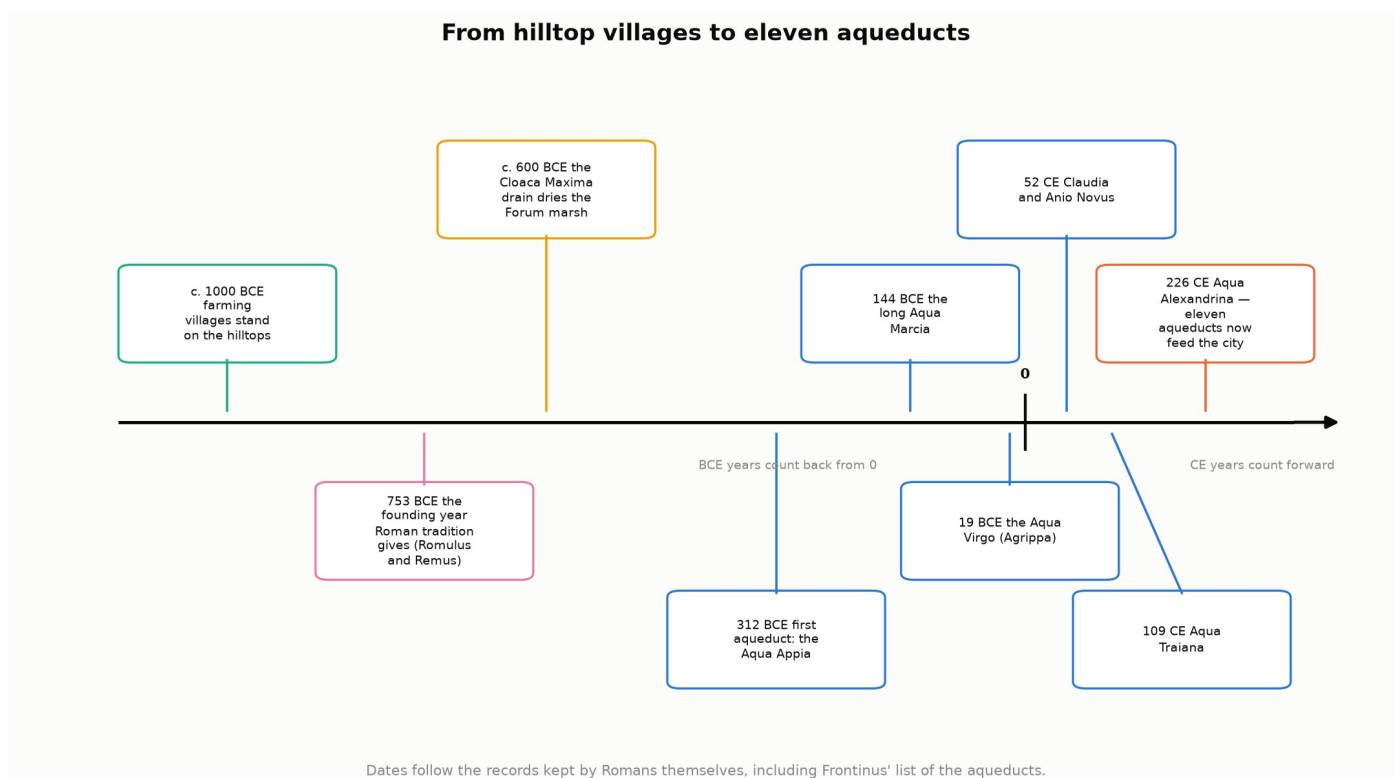
Table of Rome's nine main aqueducts as listed by Frontinus, showing the name of each aqueduct and the year it was built, from the Aqua Appia in 312 BCE to the Claudia and Anio Novus in 52 CE

5. A city outgrows its river: continuity and change

By the first century CE, Rome had grown far beyond what the Latium plain alone could feed. The government organised grain ships from Sicily, Sardinia, North Africa and Egypt to keep the city supplied, and the Tiber carried that grain up from Ostia to the city's storehouses. The pattern is worth naming, because it is the whole section in miniature:

- **Continuity:** from hilltop village to giant capital, Rome always depended on the same basic gifts of its physical environment — fresh water, fertile soil, a river route and a near-but-not-too-near sea.
- **Change:** what those gifts had to do kept growing. First the Tiber watered a few villages. Then it carried the trade of one town. Then, through aqueducts, drains, ports and grain fleets, it helped support the largest city the western world had yet seen. When the local environment reached its limit, Roman engineering and Roman sea routes stretched the environment's reach instead.

The timeline below tracks that change — from hilltop villages to a city fed by eleven aqueducts.



Timeline from about 1000 BCE to 226 CE showing farming villages on the hilltops, the traditional founding year 753 BCE, the Cloaca Maxima drain drying the Forum marsh about 600 BCE, and the aqueducts that followed: the Aqua Appia in 312 BCE, the Aqua Marcia in 144 BCE, the Aqua Virgo in 19 BCE, the Claudia and Anio Novus in 52 CE, the Aqua Traiana in 109 CE and the Aqua Alexandrina in 226 CE, when eleven aqueducts fed the city

Source studies — worked readings

Source study 1 (primary source): *Livy on why Rome chose its site*

A **primary source** comes from the time being studied, or from someone writing about it using material from that time. A **secondary source** is a later account that studies and explains the past. This first reading is from a primary source — with a catch you must keep in mind.

The source. The Roman historian **Livy** (Titus Livius) wrote his great history of Rome, *Ab Urbe Condita* (“From the Founding of the City”), around **27–25 BCE**. In Book 5, chapter 54, he gives a speech to **Camillus**, a Roman leader of the early fourth century BCE. In the story, Rome has just been sacked by invading Gauls, and some citizens want to abandon the ruined city and move to a nearby town. Camillus argues against leaving. In the translation of Rev. Canon Roberts (1905), he says:

“Not without reason did gods and men choose this spot for the site of our city — the healthful hills in the midst of a region that is unhealthy; a river also that carries boats, by which the produce of inland places may be easily brought down, and supplies from the sea received; the sea too near at hand for every useful purpose, yet not exposed, because so near, to sudden danger from foreign fleets; a district besides lying in the very centre of Italy, and in a remarkable manner adapted for the growth of a city.”

Worked reading — what the source gives us.

1. Sort Camillus’ points into environment types, and you get the whole section in one quote: **hills** (defence and health), **river** (inland trade), **sea** (sea trade, at a safe distance) and **position** (central Italy).
2. Each point is a claim about a *cause*: this feature of the physical environment *caused* an advantage for the city’s development. You could list the claims and test each one against a map.
3. Notice the final claim — the site was chosen “by gods and men”. That is not geography; it is a belief. A careful reader separates the map-making from the pride.

Worked reading — what we must question. Livy wrote roughly **four hundred years** after the speech he reports. Nobody had a written copy of Camillus' words. So the extract is evidence for two things at once: what Romans of Livy's own day believed about *why their city succeeded*, and the proud, patriotic **perspective** of a writer living when Rome ruled the Mediterranean. It is a primary source for Roman *attitudes* about the environment; it is not a recording of what a man said in the 300s BCE. When you use this source in a task, say exactly which of those you are using it for.

Source study 2 (primary source): Frontinus, the man who ran Rome's water

Our second primary source is not a story — it is a working report. In **97 CE** the emperor Nerva appointed **Sextus Julius Frontinus** as Rome's water commissioner, the officer in charge of the aqueducts. Soon afterwards Frontinus wrote *De Aquaeductu* ("On the Water Supply of the City of Rome") to record how the system worked. He lists each aqueduct, when it was built, how long it runs, and how its water is shared out between public fountains, the baths and private grants.

Then, in chapter 16, he steps back and compares Rome's waterworks with the most famous buildings on earth. In the translation of C. E. Bennett (Loeb Classical Library, 1925):

"Compare, if you will, so many structures of so many aqueducts, carrying so much water, with the idle Pyramids, or the useless, though far-famed, works of the Greeks."

Worked reading.

1. **What kind of source is this?** An official's report, written by the man in the job. For the *facts* of the water system — names, dates, routes, rules — there is no better witness.
2. **What is Frontinus' perspective?** He is proud of useful public work. To him, a work is great because it *does* something: it carries water to a million-person city. The pyramids look "idle" to him because they serve no daily need. That is a Roman official's values speaking — practical service over show.
3. **Where must we be careful?** Frontinus wants the system to look well run, because it was *his* job. A report written by the man in charge is strong evidence for how the system was meant to work, and weaker evidence for how well it always worked in practice.
4. **Link to the section question.** Frontinus' book is proof of the big idea: Rome did not simply receive its environment — it measured it, channelled it and managed it.

Source study 3 (secondary source interpretation): how many people lived in Rome?

Here the question turns to a **secondary** debate — modern historians studying the evidence and disagreeing. The question matters for this section, because the number of people decides how much food and water the environment had to supply.

The disagreement. Rome's population in the first century CE cannot be counted directly — no full head-count survives. Historians must estimate it from records that survive: grain distributions, lists of city buildings, and census figures — and they read those records in different ways.

A living debate: how many people lived in first-century Rome?

The city held about ONE MILLION people

The city held FAR FEWER — perhaps about half a million

defended by Elio Lo Cascio (1994). Their strongest point: Roman records speak of hundreds of thousands of citizens receiving free grain; building lists describe whole districts packed with blocks of flats. The size of the aqueducts and grain fleets only makes sense for a very large city. Karl Julius Beloch set out this high estimate in 1886, and Elio Lo Cascio defended it in 1994 by re-reading the census figures.

Both sides read the SAME Roman records — grain handouts, building lists and census figures — and reach different conclusions. Both sides agree Rome was enormous for its time. The answer is found by weighing evidence, not by picking a side.

Why it matters here: the number of people decides how much food and water the environment had to supply.

Two-column diagram presenting the two main positions in the debate over Rome's population, with the case for about one million people on one side and the case for a much smaller figure on the other, each with its evidence listed

Steelman each side. Presenting a position in its strongest honest form is a rule of good historical argument — you will meet this again in Section 6F.

- **The strongest case for about a million:** Roman records speak of hundreds of thousands of citizens receiving free grain; building lists describe whole districts packed with blocks of flats; and the scale of the aqueducts and grain fleets only makes sense for a very large city. Karl Julius Beloch set out this high estimate in **1886**, and Elio Lo Cascio defended it in **1994** by re-reading the census figures.
- **The strongest case for far fewer — perhaps about half a million:** the ships and wagons of the age could only move so much grain, the aqueducts could only carry so much water, and the flat counts may crowd more people into each building than is realistic. Glenn Storey pressed this lower reading in **1997**.

What both sides agree on: Rome was enormous by the standards of the ancient world, and feeding it was one of the biggest tasks any government of the time faced. The debate is about scale, not about whether Rome was great. Notice how the two sides use the *same* evidence and reach different conclusions — that is what makes this a genuine **interpretation** question, and it is decided by weighing evidence, not by picking the answer you like.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. Look at the map of Italy in this section. (a) Name the mountain range that runs down the centre of the peninsula. (b) Name the two river regions that supplied food. (c) Draw two arrows on a copy of the map: one for grain moving down the Tiber to the sea, one for ships moving between Sicily and Rome's coast.

Q2. The seven hills helped Rome develop. Complete the sentence for each hill advantage: "Hills helped because ..." — give one reason about **attack**, one about **seeing enemies coming**, and one about **low ground and flooding**.

Q3. Use the site-advantages table to answer in full sentences: (a) Which physical feature made Rome a natural crossing point? (b) Why was it an advantage for Rome to sit about 24 kilometres inland rather than right on the coast? Give one benefit and one safety reason.

Q4. The surplus chain has four links. (a) Copy the chain and label each arrow with the word *cause* or *consequence* (hint: each arrow is both at once — explain how). (b) Name one thing in the chain that shows **continuity** and one that shows **change**.

Q5. Read the Livy extract in Source study 1 again. Sort Camillus' points into a table with four rows — **hills, river, sea, position** — and one column: "advantage claimed".

Q6. Frontinus wrote that Rome's aqueducts beat the pyramids because they were *useful*. (a) Give two pieces of evidence from this section that the aqueducts really were useful to daily life. (b) Give one reason to be careful about believing everything Frontinus says about his own system.

Un scaffolded

Q7. "Rome grew where it grew because of the Tiber." Using this section, give three reasons that support this claim and one limit of the claim (something else that also mattered).

Q8. Explain how the Mediterranean climate shaped Roman farming. In your answer, name the three main crops and say why the pattern of rain and heat suited them.

Q9. In your own words, explain how the Romans *managed* their physical environment as the city grew. Use at least three examples (for instance: drainage, aqueducts, pipes, grain ships) and say which problem each one answered.

Q10. A historian says: "The environment decided Rome's success." Using what you have read about the site of Rome, the surplus chain and the aqueducts, write one paragraph for and one paragraph against this claim. You may reach either conclusion; marks go to the reasoning and the evidence, not to the side you choose.

Answers

Q1. (a) The Apennines. (b) The Po region in the north and the Tiber region (Latium) in the centre-west. (c) Arrow 1 points downstream along the Tiber from Rome to Ostia; arrow 2 points from Sicily across the sea toward the coast near Rome.

Q2. Example answers — attack: hills are hard to charge up, so a small force can hold off a bigger one; seeing enemies: lookouts on hilltops spot attackers while they are still far away; low ground: the hills stand above the marshy, flood-prone ground between them, so homes on the hills stay dry and healthier.

Q3. (a) Tiber Island, where the river was easier to cross by ford and later by bridge. (b) Benefit: sea trade could still reach Rome up the river, and the city stayed connected to the wider Mediterranean. Safety: raiders arriving by ship had to row 24 kilometres up the river, so Rome had warning and time to prepare.

Q4. (a) Each arrow is a consequence of what comes before it and a cause of what comes after it — for example, the surplus is the consequence of fertile soil, and the cause of population growth. (b) Continuity: farming the same crops on the same soil for centuries. Change: the size of the town, the volume of trade, and the reach of Rome's power all grew.

Q5. Hills: defence, and healthy air above the unhealthy low ground. River: a route that boats could use, bringing inland produce down to the city. Sea: near enough for supplies and trade, far enough for safety from enemy fleets. Position: central in Italy, suited to a city's growth.

Q6. (a) Any two of: aqueducts brought enough fresh water for a huge city; water fed public fountains and baths; most of the channel ran underground, keeping water clean; the system let the city grow past what local springs and the river could supply. (b) Frontinus was the man in charge of the system, so he had a reason to present it as well run; his report tells us how the system was meant to work better than how it always worked.

Q7. Suggested support: (1) the river gave fresh water all year, letting people settle for good; (2) the island ford made Rome the natural crossing on the coastal route, so trade and travel came to the town; (3) the river carried farm goods down to the sea and sea goods up, feeding growth. Suggested limit: the Tiber alone does not explain Rome — the seven hills gave defence, the volcanic soil of Latium gave the food surplus, and the inland position gave safety from sea raids.

Q8. The Mediterranean climate brings cool, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Rain falls mostly in the cool months, so crops planted in autumn grow through winter and spring, then ripen and are harvested before the summer drought. Wheat and barley ripen early enough to escape the dry season; olives and grapes grow on the drier slopes and are picked in autumn. The climate's wet-then-dry rhythm is exactly what these three crops need.

Q9. Suggested answer: as Rome grew, its people reshaped the environment to solve the problems growth brought. (1) The Cloaca Maxima drained the marsh between the hills from about 600 BCE, making dry, healthy ground for the Forum. (2) Aqueducts, from the Aqua Appia in 312 BCE, carried clean water many kilometres from hill springs into the city, solving the shortage of clean water as the population grew. (3) Lead pipes and distribution tanks shared that water between fountains, baths and houses. (Later, grain fleets from the islands, Africa and Egypt solved the food shortage the local soil could no longer meet.) Each example names a problem the environment set, and a Roman answer to it.

Q10. Suggested points — *for*: the site gave defence, water, a crossing, fertile soil and a trade route all at once, and Livy's speech shows Romans themselves credited the site; without those gifts there would have been no village, let alone a city. *Against*: the environment set the chances, but people took them — engineers drained the marsh, built the aqueducts and organised the grain fleets when the local environment reached its limit; other settlements had rivers and hills and never grew as Rome did. A strong paragraph on each side, with evidence named, earns the mark whichever conclusion is reached.

Fully-worked solutions

Each solution below shows the working — where the evidence lives and the moves that turn it into an answer. Compare with the Answers above.

Q1. Step 1: read the map labels — the range running down the centre is named the Apennines. Step 2: find the two river labels — the Po in the north, the Tiber in the centre-west. Step 3: arrows follow the water — grain moves *down* the Tiber toward Ostia and the sea; the sea route runs between Sicily and the coast near Rome.

Q2. Step 1: take the three prompts one at a time (attack / seeing enemies / low ground). Step 2: match each to one sentence in part 2 of the teaching sequence. Step 3: finish the sentence each time — e.g. “Hills helped because attackers had to charge uphill.”

Q3. Step 1: in the site table, the crossing-point row names Tiber Island and the ford. Step 2: the last row gives the inland distance — 24 km. Step 3: split the second answer into benefit (sea trade still reached Rome up the river) and safety (raiders coming by ship had to row a long way, giving warning time).

Q4. Step 1: put *consequence* on an arrow when the next link is true **because of** the link before it; put *cause* on the same arrow when it makes the next link true — so every arrow carries both words, read from different ends. Step 2: test it — the surplus is the consequence of fertile soil and the cause of a bigger town. Step 3: continuity = what stayed the same (the crops, farming as the backbone); change = what grew (town size, trade, power).

Q5. Step 1: re-read the speech and underline each place Camillus names the hills, the river, the sea or the position. Step 2: copy only the advantage he *claims* for each — e.g. hills: defence and healthy air above the unhealthy low ground. Step 3: check every row is in your own words, not a copy of the translation.

Q6. Step 1: “useful” means a change in daily life — pick two from part 4 (water for fountains and baths; a city able to grow past its local springs). Step 2: run the source check — who wrote this, and what was his job? Frontinus was the officer in charge of the water, so his report shows the system at its best, as meant, not always as it was.

Q7. Step 1: collect the river’s gifts from parts 2 and 3 — water all year, the island crossing, the trade route. Step 2: ask what the claim leaves out — the hills (defence), the volcanic soil (surplus), the inland position (safety). Step 3: state the limit in one sentence: the Tiber was one gift of several.

Q8. Step 1: name the pattern — cool wet winters, hot dry summers. Step 2: match each crop — wheat and barley ripen before the drought; olives and grapes stand the dry slopes and are picked in autumn. Step 3: join pattern to crops with cause language: the rain timing is *why* these three crops became the backbone.

Q9. Step 1: list the problems growth brought — the flooded marsh, the clean-water shortage, the food shortage. Step 2: match each to a Roman answer — the Cloaca Maxima, the aqueducts and pipes, the grain ships. Step 3: check each example names a problem *and* an answer; that pairing is the “managed the environment” move.

Q10. Step 1: for-paragraph — set out the site’s gifts as causes (defence, water, crossing, soil, trade route) and note that Romans themselves credited the site (Livy). Step 2: against-paragraph — set out the human answers (drains, aqueducts, grain fleets) and note that other places had rivers and hills without growing as Rome did. Step 3: check each paragraph uses at least two named pieces of evidence; the mark goes to the reasoning.

Where this section leads

Section 3B takes the same society and asks what it was like inside: its groups, their roles and perspectives. The skills of weighing sources and judging claims made in Source study 3 return in Sections 6C–6F and 7A–7D, where the chapter’s evidence-based extended response is set.

Sources used in this section

Primary sources

- Livy (Titus Livius), *Ab Urbe Condita (From the Founding of the City)*, Book 5, chapter 54 (the speech of Camillus), written about 27–25 BCE; English translation by Rev. Canon Roberts (J. M. Dent & Sons, 1905).
- Sextus Julius Frontinus, *De Aquaeductu (On the Water Supply of the City of Rome)*, written about 97–100 CE; the aqueduct dates and the comparison with the pyramids (chapter 16) are drawn from this text; English translation by C. E. Bennett, Loeb Classical Library (1925).

Secondary sources

- Beloch, K. J., *Die Bevölkerung der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1886) — the classic high estimate of Rome's population.
- Lo Cascio, E., "The Size of the Roman Population: Beloch and the Meaning of the Augustan Census Figures", *Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994), pp. 23–40 — defence of the high estimate through a re-reading of census records.
- Storey, G. R., "The Population of Ancient Rome", *Antiquity* 71 (1997), pp. 641–660 — the case for a much lower figure.

Inside an ancient society: groups, roles and points of view

Chapter 3 — The ancient world, 10 000 BCE – 600 CE · Section 3B · History 8

Content description VC2HH8K13 (Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Levels 7 and 8).

Draws on (elaboration ids of VC2HH8K13, verbatim from the VCAA export):

id	topic	what the elaboration asks for
.E01	China	a diagram of each level of Chinese society
.E02	China	women's roles in marriage, home, work and schooling
.E03	Egypt	women's rights by class, in art and tomb texts
.E04	Egypt	Egypt's ranked social order, from slaves to Pharaoh
.E05	Greece	evidence of social groups in Athens and Sparta
.E06	Greece	Athenian citizens' rights, duties, and what freedom meant
.E07	India	the social order: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras
.E08	Rome	Roman slavery: war captives, gladiators, workers, freedmen
.E09	Rome	how objects and images show each Roman group's role

This book's default case study for Chapter 3 is **Rome** (VC2HH8K13 .E08–.E09), so this section is taught through Rome. The other four societies stay in the table above as the paths a teacher may choose instead. Every question here is answerable from the Rome material.

1 · The shape of Roman society

Rome in the years about 200–50 BCE was a large and busy state on the Italian peninsula, ruled (at that time) without a king. Like every society, it sorted its people into groups. A **social group** is a set of people who share a legal or customary place in society. The whole pattern of groups, with some above others, is the **social structure**; when the pattern is ranked top-to-bottom we call it a **social hierarchy**.

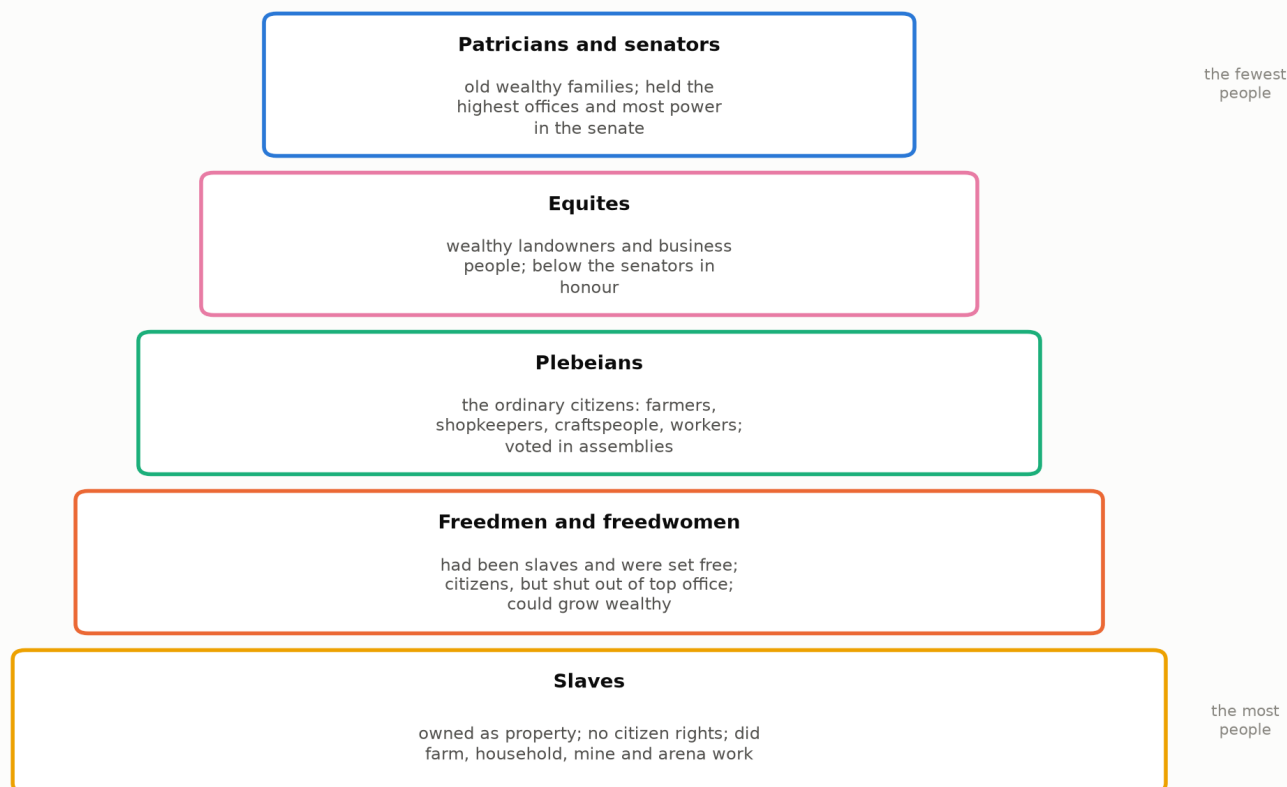
The five big groups are shown in the diagram below. Four of the names are subject terms you will keep using all year, so they are defined here at first use:

- **patrician** — a member of Rome's old noble families, who claimed descent from the city's first senators;
- **plebeian** — an ordinary Roman citizen who was not a patrician: farmers, shopkeepers, craftspeople, workers, and also some rich families;

- **freedman / freedwoman** — a person who had been a slave and had been set free;
- **equites** — wealthy landowners and business people who ranked below the senators in honour.

The social ladder of the late Roman Republic (about 200-50 BCE)

Status was usually inherited. Money could still matter: a rich freedman might own more than a poor plebeian.



A model of the main social groups. Real life was messier: wealth, family ties and favour all mattered too.

A labelled diagram showing the five main social groups of the late Roman Republic as a ladder, from slaves at the bottom (the most people) to patricians and senators at the top (the fewest people), with a short role note for each group.

Figure 1 — the social ladder of the late Roman Republic. A model, not a census: wealth and family connections moved people about inside it.

Who counted as a citizen? Patricians, plebeians and equites were citizens by birth; freedmen became citizens when freed, but could not stand for high office; women of all these groups were citizens in a limited sense (their legal affairs were usually managed by a male guardian, and they could not vote or hold office); enslaved people had no citizen rights at all and were owned as property. Inside a Roman household the oldest living father, the **paterfamilias**, held legal power over everyone under his roof, including grown children.

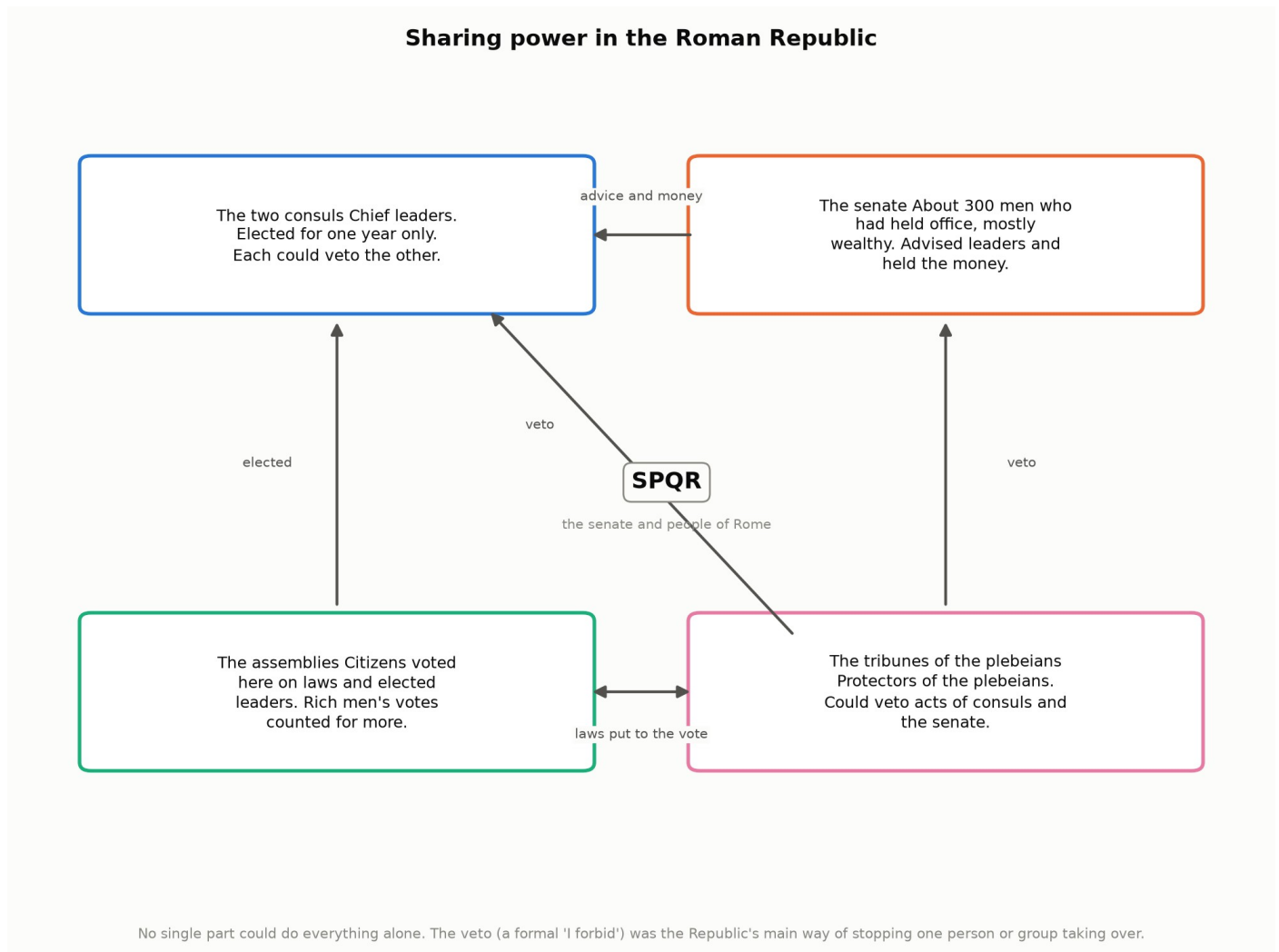
Checkpoint 1. In your own words, say what the difference was between a plebeian and a freedman. (Both were “ordinary” in some sense — the legal gap matters.)

2 · How the Republic worked

Contested term — *republic*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the terms *republic* and *republicanism* but does not define them (elaboration VC2HH8K13 . E09 points to how republicanism actually worked in Rome).

This section therefore treats a *republic* as a system in which leaders hold office for a set time and are chosen by at least some citizens, instead of a king inheriting a throne, and every question is answerable on that definition alone. (Other meanings exist — for example, the loose modern sense of “any state without a king” — and are not the same thing.)

From 509 BCE, when the last king was driven out, until 27 BCE, when Augustus took the title of first emperor, Rome called itself a republic. Its power was shared between four parts, and no single part could run the state alone:



A labelled diagram of the four power-sharing parts of the Roman Republic - two consuls, the senate, the assemblies and the tribunes of the plebeians - joined by arrows showing who elected, advised and could veto whom, with SPQR at the centre.

Figure 2 — sharing power in the Republic. The veto, a formal “I forbid”, was the main brake.

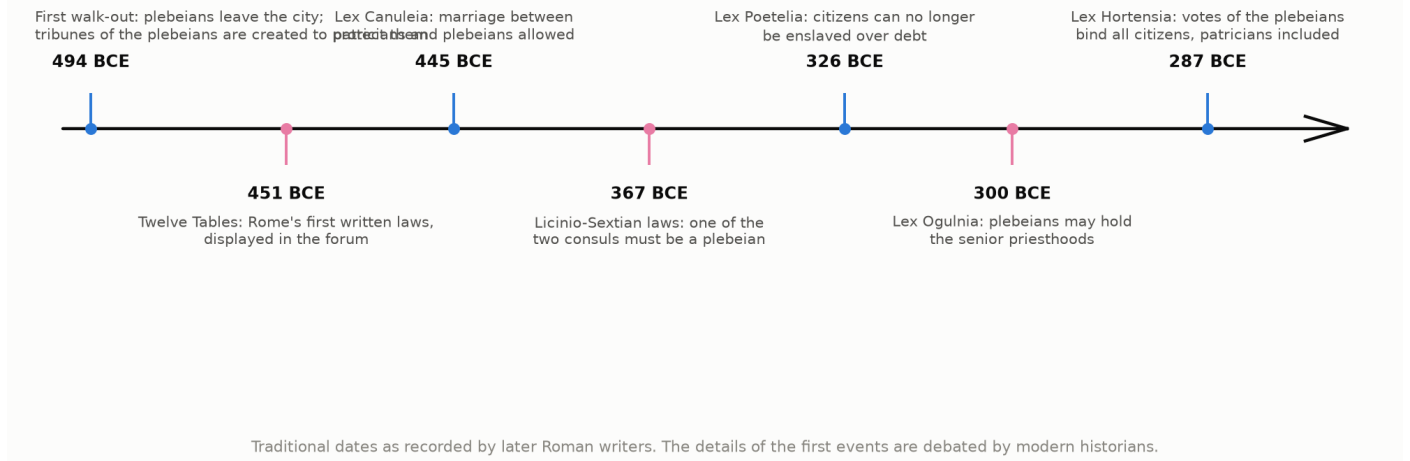
Two habits made this system run. First, **short terms**: a consul held power for one year only. Second, **the veto**: a tribune could stop an act that harmed plebeians, and each consul could stop the other. The senate also showed its power directly: in 186 BCE it issued a decree (the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*) limiting the worship of the god Bacchus across Italy. The decree survives as a bronze tablet found at Tiriolo in southern Italy, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna — a physical object showing the senate giving orders to the whole peninsula.

Note whose voice is missing. The assemblies voted, but only men who were citizens could take part, and the voting blocks were arranged so that the rich voted first and usually decided the result. Women, slaves and (until late in this period) most people of Italy had no vote at all. A “society of shared power” still left most of its people outside the room.

3 · The Conflict of the Orders: perspectives in action

For about two centuries (494–287 BCE) patricians and plebeians argued, in law and in protest, over land, debt and who could hold office. Historians call this the **Conflict of the Orders** (an *order* being a ranked social group). The traditional story, as later Roman writers tell it, runs like this:

The Conflict of the Orders: plebeians win a share of power, 494-287 BCE



A horizontal timeline from 494 BCE to 287 BCE marking seven traditional steps in the Conflict of the Orders: the first walk-out and the creation of tribunes; the Twelve Tables; the Lex Canuleia; the Licinio-Sextian laws; the Lex Poetelia ending debt-slavery for citizens; the Lex Ogulnia; and the Lex Hortensia.

Figure 3 — the Conflict of the Orders. Traditional dates from later Roman writers.

Primary source close study — two sources from the Conflict of the Orders.

Source 1 — a story told to strikers. In 494 BCE, so the story goes, the plebeians marched out of the city and camped on a hill, refusing to work or fight until their grievances were heard. The senate sent Menenius Agrippa, who told them a fable:

The fable of the belly and the limbs (after Livy, Ab Urbe Condita 2.32)

In 494 BCE the plebeians walked out of Rome and camped on a hill. The senate sent Menenius Agrippa to talk them home.

The limbs grew angry: 'We work all day to feed the belly, and it does nothing but enjoy our food.' They agreed to stop feeding it.

Soon the whole body weakened. The limbs saw that the belly was not idle: it sent the food back out, feeding every part in turn.

Agrippa's point to the plebeians: the senate is the belly; patricians and plebeians need each other. The plebeians came back, and tribunes were created.

This story was told by a patrician to strikers. It ends with everyone accepting their place. Whose interests does the story serve? Who is asked to give way? Retell the same events from a plebeian's point of view - what changes?

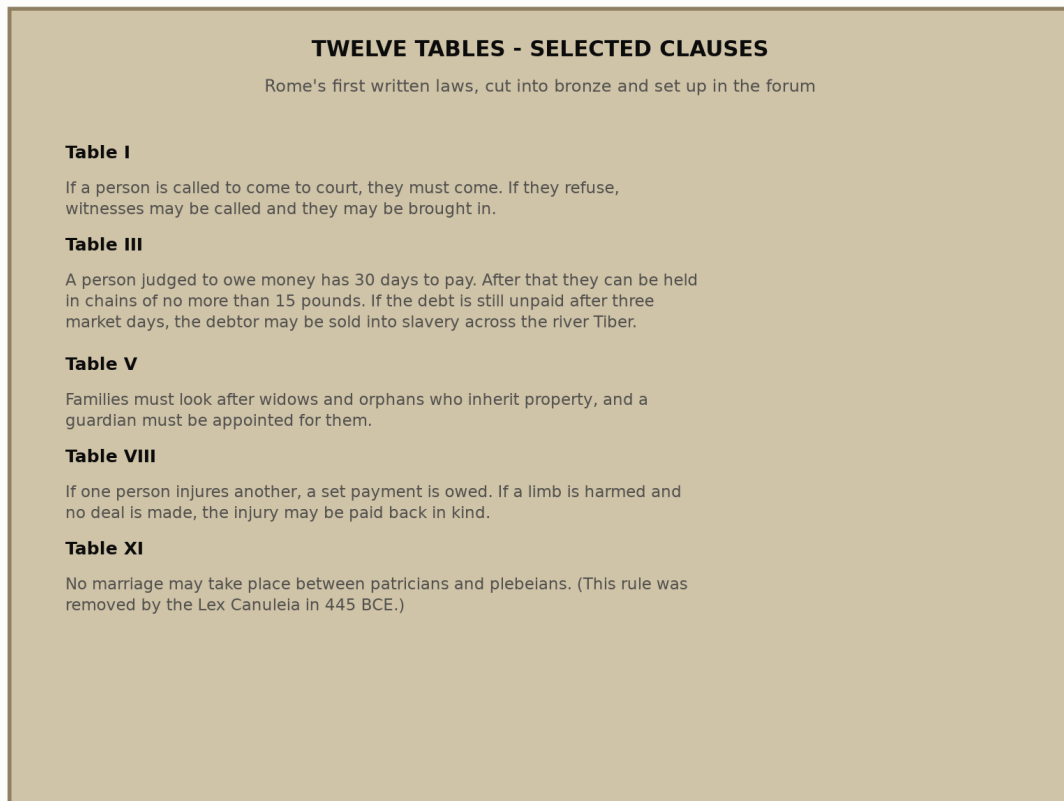
My own retelling of the fable as Livy records it. Livy wrote about four hundred and seventy years after the event; the words are his, not word-for-word fact.

A five-box diagram retelling the fable of the belly and the limbs after Livy: the plebeians walk out; the limbs refuse to feed the belly; the body weakens and the limbs learn the belly feeds them back; Agrippa draws the lesson that patricians and plebeians need each other - ending with the question of whose interests the story serves.

Figure 4 — the fable of the belly and the limbs, after Livy, Ab Urbe Condita 2.32 (my own retelling; Livy wrote about four hundred and seventy years after the event). The question box is the point of the source: a patrician told it to strikers, and it ends with the strikers giving way.**

Source 2 — the first written laws. The plebeians' other great win was having the laws written down, so that patrician judges could no longer apply unwritten custom as they pleased. Selected clauses, reworded in plain English:

The Twelve Tables (451-449 BCE): five clauses, reworded



My own plain-English rewording. The original bronze tablets did not survive; these clauses are preserved in the writings of later Roman authors such as Aulus Gellius and Cicero.

Why did writing the laws down matter to plebeians? Before this, unwritten custom was applied by patrician judges.

A bronze-coloured panel reproducing five reworded clauses of the Twelve Tables of 451-449 BCE: court summons; debt and debt-slavery; guardians of widows and orphans; payment for injury; and the ban on marriage between patricians and plebeians, later removed.

Figure 5 — five clauses of the Twelve Tables, my own plain-English rewording of clauses preserved in later Roman writers (Aulus Gellius, Cicero). The original bronze tablets did not survive.

Read Table III twice: it is the law **against** the plebeians' interest that explains **why** they protested. A citizen who fell into debt could be chained and sold into slavery. The plebeian perspective on the Tables is not "we won a book"; it is "at last the rules are where I can see them". The patrician perspective is different: written law still left the great families in charge. Both readings are true at once — that is what perspective means.

4 · Slavery, and the rise of freedmen

A note on a hard history. Slavery is a grave wrong. It is studied here because the lives of enslaved people are part of the story of Rome, and leaving them out would erase them. The facts are stated plainly; nothing here needs shock to matter.

Most people enslaved at Rome were captives taken in war, or children born to enslaved mothers. Rome's conquests fed the system: after the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE the surviving population of the city was sold into slavery, and later writers claimed vast numbers of captives from Julius Caesar's wars in Gaul — Plutarch claims a million, a figure to treat with care. Enslaved people did the work of the society:

The work of enslaved people in Rome, and the sources that show it

role	the work	sources that show it
Farm workers	Grew grain and olives on big estates, in work gangs under an overseer.	Cato the Elder, <i>On Agriculture</i> (about 160 BCE), gives rules for feeding and working farm slaves.
Household servants	Cooked, cleaned, made clothes and looked after children.	Households found at Pompeii; Roman comedy (Plautus) full of slave characters.
Gladiators	Trained in schools to fight in arenas for crowds.	The gladiator barracks at Pompeii; writers on the Spartacus revolt (73-71 BCE).
Tutors and scribes	Taught rich children, read, wrote and kept accounts.	Cicero's letters name his secretary Tiro, enslaved until Cicero freed him.
Miners and quarry workers	Dug ore and stone in harsh, dangerous conditions.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Library of History</i> 5.36-38, on the mines of Spain.

Most people enslaved in Rome were captives taken in war, or children born into slavery. They had no citizen rights and were owned as property.

A five-row table of the work done by enslaved people in Rome - farm workers, household servants, gladiators, tutors and scribes, miners and quarry workers - each row paired with the named ancient source that shows it.

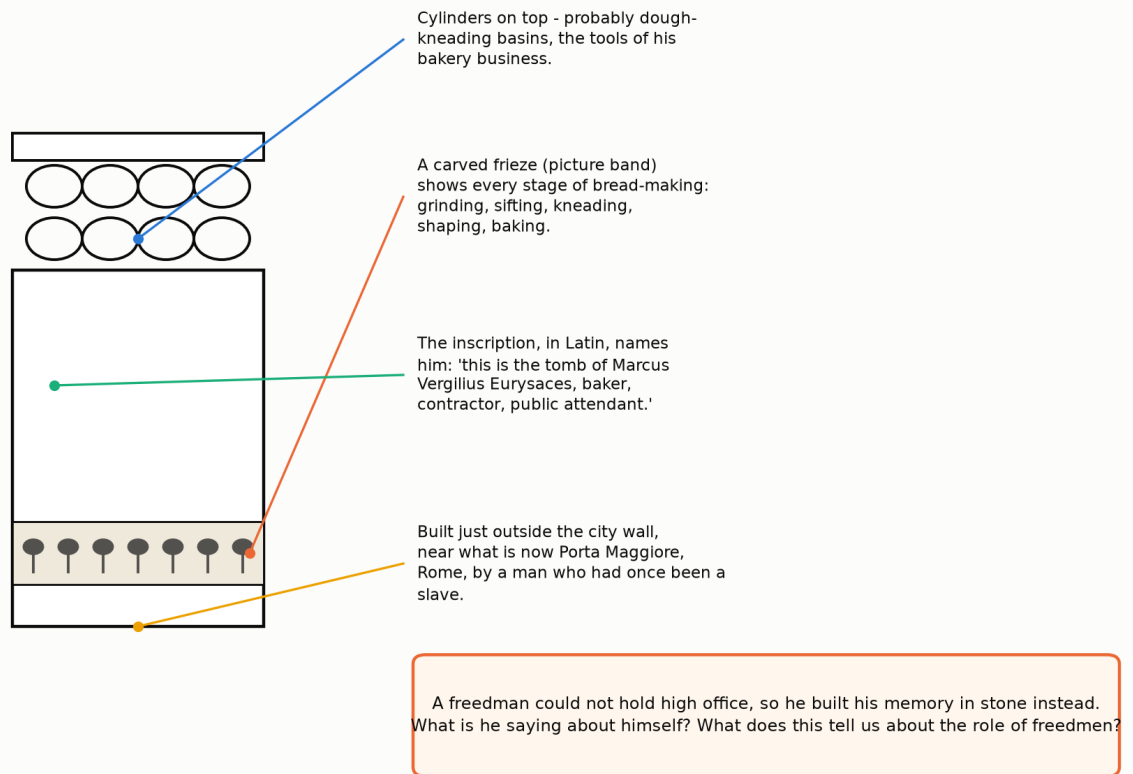
Figure 6 — the work of enslaved people, and the sources that show it.

Two sources give the sharpest picture. **Cato the Elder's farming handbook** (*On Agriculture*, about 160 BCE) tells an estate manager how much grain and clothing farm slaves should get, and advises selling slaves who are old or sick — a calm, practical cruelty that tells us how law and custom saw enslaved people: as tools that wear out. And in 73 BCE the gladiator **Spartacus** broke out of his training school at Capua with a small band; within two years his revolt had grown to tens of thousands and beaten several Roman armies, before Marcus Licinius Crassus crushed it in 71 BCE. Appian records that 6,000 captured followers were crucified along the road from Capua to Rome — the state's answer to anyone who questioned the system.

Contested word — *freedom*. Freedom is frame-dependent (like “down”: exact once you say who is speaking). For a senator, *libertas* meant living under laws, not under a king. For an enslaved person, freedom meant not being owned. Same word, different frames; a historian has to say whose freedom is being talked about, and every question here is answerable on these frames alone.

Setting slaves free was common at Rome, and a freed person became a citizen. Freedmen could grow rich, though not high-born. The best surviving picture of a proud freedman is a tomb:

Reading a monument: the tomb of Eurysaces the baker (about 50-30 BCE)



My own labelled sketch of the tomb and its reliefs. The tomb still stands at Porta Maggiore; parts of the frieze are in the Museo Nazionale Romano.

A labelled sketch of the tomb of Eurysaces the baker near Porta Maggiore in Rome: cylinder shapes on top read as dough-kneading basins, a carved band shows the stages of bread-making, and the Latin inscription names Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces, baker, contractor and public attendant.

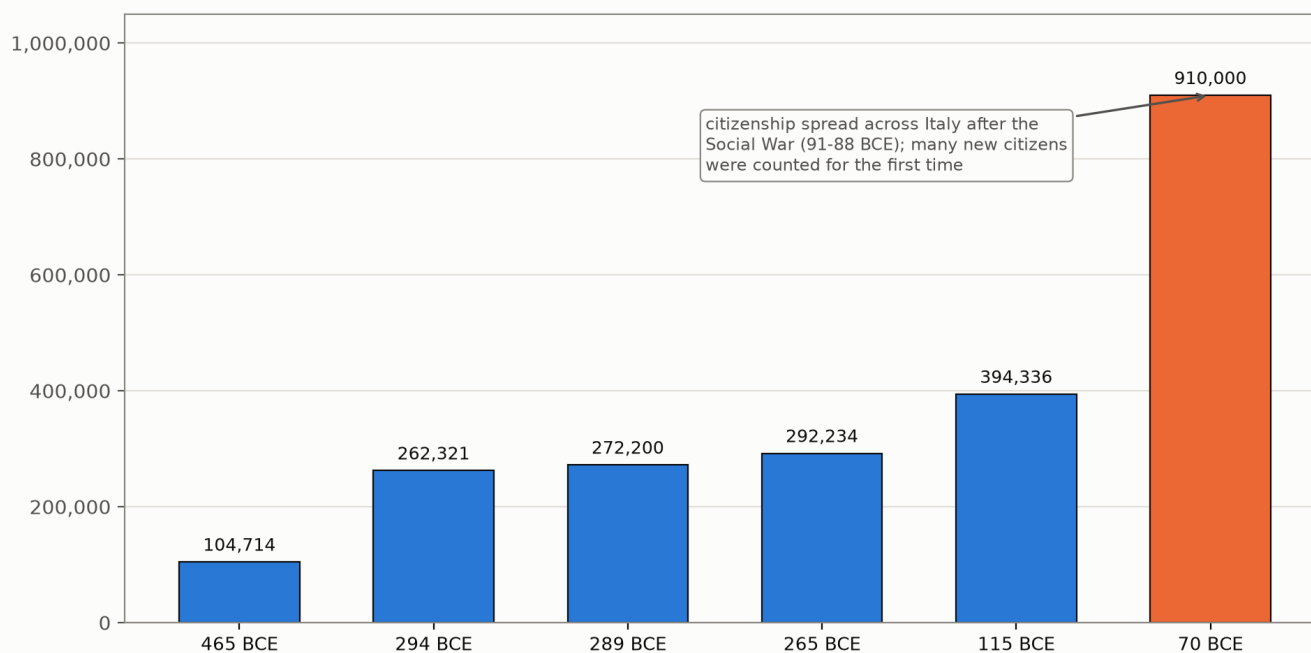
Figure 7 — reading a monument: the tomb of Eurysaces the baker (about 50–30 BCE). My own labelled sketch; the tomb still stands at Porta Maggiore, Rome.

Eurysaces could never be a senator, so he built his record in stone, with his trade on show. That choice — pride in the work that made him free and rich — is a primary source for the **role** of freedmen and for their own **perspective** on themselves.

5 · Counting Romans: a secondary-source debate

The Roman state counted its citizens at a **census** every few years. The numbers that survive are a ready-made lesson in checking sources:

Citizens counted at the Roman census, as recorded by Roman writers



Numbers as recorded by Roman writers (Livy and summaries of his work). Historians doubt some of these counts: the census lists were incomplete, and totals may include or leave out different groups.

A bar chart of six recorded census totals of Roman citizens from 465 BCE to 70 BCE, rising from about 105,000 to 910,000, with a note on the last bar about the spread of citizenship across Italy after the Social War of 91-88 BCE, and a note that historians doubt some of the recorded counts.

Figure 8 — citizens counted at the census, as recorded by Roman writers (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* and its summaries). The jump after 115 BCE reflects new citizens across Italy after the Social War (91–88 BCE).

Ask the source questions, not the chart:

1. **Who wrote these numbers down, and when?** Livy wrote under the first emperor, centuries after the first counts he reports. He himself warns, at the start of Book 6, that Rome's early records were thin and many were burned when an army from Gaul sacked the city (about 390 BCE) — the writer is telling us his own limits.
2. **What did “citizen” mean to the counter?** Counts include or leave out groups depending on the year; the jump to 910,000 by 70 BCE is mostly Italy becoming counted, not Italy growing.
3. **What do modern historians say?** Scholars still argue over what the early totals measured at all; the collection *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome* (ed. Kurt Raaflaub, 2nd edn 2005) is a good example of historians treating the traditional early story with care rather than taking it as fact word for word. **Secondary sources** like these do not replace the ancient ones; they test them against each other — which is exactly the job of a historian.

So the census chart is both **evidence** (of who was counted, and roughly when citizenship spread) and a **warning** (numbers are sources too, and they have authors).

6 · Reading material culture

Objects and buildings are sources with no words attached, and the method is the same four moves every time — describe, show, perspective, role:

Model: one paragraph analysing a source (the tomb of Eurysaces)

1. Describe the source - what it is, when, who made it

The tomb of Eurysaces the baker was built outside the walls of Rome, near the gate now called Porta Maggiore, around 50-30 BCE, by Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces, a freed slave who made his money baking bread.

2. State what it shows - quote or point at the detail

Its carved band shows each stage of baking bread, and its inscription names Eurysaces and his jobs.

3. Explain the perspective - whose point of view, and why

This shows Eurysaces' own perspective: he was proud of the trade that freed him and made him rich, and he wanted everyone who passed to know it.

4. Explain the role - what it tells us about the group in society

For historians, it is evidence that some freedmen could win wealth and respect, and that freedmen were changing how Romans thought about status.

Use the same four moves for any object, building, inscription or written source in this section.

Sentence lengths and facts here are worked as an example; your own paragraphs should use your own words and your chosen source.

A colour-coded model paragraph of four sentences analysing the tomb of Eurysaces: sentence one describes the source, sentence two states what it shows, sentence three explains the perspective, sentence four explains the role it is evidence for.

Figure 9 — model text: one paragraph, four moves. Use the same moves on any source in this section.

Notice move 3 and move 4: a good paragraph does not stop at *what* the source shows; it asks *who is speaking through it*, and *what it is evidence about*. That is the whole skill of this section in two sentences.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. Using Figure 1, complete a table with the five groups as rows and two columns: “could they vote?” and “could they hold high office?”. Add one more row for women of citizen families.

Q2. Match each part of Figure 2 to its job: (a) holds the state’s money and advises; (b) leads armies for one year; (c) protects plebeians and can say “I forbid”; (d) votes on laws and elects leaders.

Q3. Put these in date order using Figure 3: the Lex Hortensia; the Twelve Tables; the first walk-out; the Licinio-Sextian laws; the Lex Canuleia; the Lex Poetelia.

Q4. Figure 4, three parts. (a) In the fable, who do the limbs stand for, and who does the belly stand for? (b) What happens in the story to anyone who stops doing their share? (c) The story ends with the plebeians going back to work. Whose interests does that ending serve?

Q5. Figure 5, two parts. (a) Which clause would matter most to a plebeian farmer in debt, and why? (b) Why did writing the laws down change anything, even if the laws themselves were still harsh?

Q6. Figure 7, two parts. (a) Name two facts about Eurysaces’ life that the tomb itself tells us. (b) Give one reason a freedman might want his trade carved on his tomb.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Write two short speeches of about five lines each, set in 450 BCE: a patrician senator and a plebeian farmer each argue **for** their own side on the new Twelve Tables. Steelman: make each speech the strongest case you can, not a cartoon. Then add one sentence of your own: what do the two speeches agree about, without noticing it?

Q8. Choose one source from Figures 5, 6 or 7 and write an analysis paragraph using the four moves of Figure 9 in your own words.

Q9. Claim: “*Rome’s greatness was built on the work of enslaved people.*” Build the strongest case **for** the claim from Figures 6 and 8, then the strongest case **against** it (think about what else built Rome: citizen farmers, allies, trade, conquest itself). Finish with your reasoned verdict and the evidence it rests on. Marking rewards the quality of the reasoning on both sides, not the verdict you reach.

Q10. Using Figure 8 and the questions in Part 5: explain why the count jumps between 115 BCE and 70 BCE, and give one reason a historian would not trust the early numbers as exact.

Extended response (chapter task — the full criteria live in 7C and 7D)

ER1. Between 494 and 287 BCE, which group’s role in Roman society changed the most, and how far did it change? Use at least three sources from this section, apply the significance criteria from 7C (importance, depth, how many people, how long it lasted, relevance to us), and present your answer as a short evidenced argument in a format from 7D. Address the strongest counter-case to your choice of group.

Checkpoints (scaffolded tasks)

Checkpoint 1. A plebeian was a citizen by birth; a freedman had once been a slave and gained citizen rights only when set free — and still could not hold high office. The legal gap, not wealth, is the difference.

Q1. Patricians, plebeians, equites: vote yes, high office yes. Freedmen: vote yes, high office no. Women of citizen families: vote no, office no. Slaves: no and no — and no citizen status at all.

Q2. (a) the senate; (b) the consuls; (c) the tribunes of the plebeians; (d) the assemblies.

Q3. First walk-out (494) → Twelve Tables (451–449) → Lex Canuleia (445) → Licinio-Sextian laws (367) → Lex Poetelia (326) → Lex Hortensia (287).

Q4. (a) The limbs are the plebeians; the belly is the senate. (b) The whole body weakens — the story says no group can do without the rest. (c) It serves the senate’s interests: the moral is “keep your place”, and the striking side is the one asked to give way.

Q5. (a) Table III — it is the rule that let a citizen in debt be chained and sold, so it names the fear that drove the protests. (b) A written, public law can be pointed at, quoted and protested against; unwritten custom could be bent by the judges who held it.

Q6. (a) Any two of: his name; that he had been a slave (a freedman); that he was a baker and contractor; that he was rich enough to build a large tomb; that he worked near what is now Porta Maggiore. (b) e.g. office was closed to freedmen, so public memory had to be built another way; the tomb claims respect for work and wealth.

What a strong unscaffolded answer includes

Q7. Each speech uses the group’s real stakes (debt, land, office, written law); neither side is made foolish; the closing sentence finds shared ground (e.g. both accept that Rome needs order, or both assume women and slaves are outside the argument).

Q8. All four moves present in order; move 2 points at a real detail of the source; moves 3–4 separate *whose view* from *what it is evidence about*.

Q9. Two genuinely strong cases, each with named evidence (e.g. farm and mine labour, the gladiator schools, the captive markets of conquest; on the other side citizen soldier-farmers, Italian allies, trade and tax); the verdict cites the weighing, not a feeling.

Q10. The jump is explained by the spread of citizenship after the Social War (91–88 BCE), not by population growth; the early numbers are doubted because the records Livy used were thin and late, and many had been destroyed (Livy’s own warning, Book 6).

ER1. A named group with a dated change; three sources used as evidence, not decoration; the 7C criteria applied visibly; the counter-case given real strength before it is answered.

Key terms, defined where first used

social group · social structure · social hierarchy · patrician · plebeian · equites · freedman/freedwoman · paterfamilias · order · republic (defined in the box above) · veto · census · primary source · secondary source · perspective · material culture. (*Primary source*: a source made at the time by someone in the events — the bronze decree, the tomb, the Tables’ clauses as recorded. *Secondary source*: a later account that studies the primary sources — Livy’s history, Raaflaub’s collection. *Material culture*: the objects and buildings a society leaves behind.)

Sources and retrieval

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 7–8, VC2HH8K13 and elaborations .E01–.E09, per the VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29 and re-read 2026-08-21 (build TOC §1).
- Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.32 (the fable), 6.1 (the burned early records), census totals in Livy and the *Periochae* (figures checked 2026-08-25 against the census-statistics table, Wikipedia, “Roman census”).
- Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 20.1 (Table III and other clauses); Cicero, *De re publica* 2.37 (the marriage ban); the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, 186 BCE, bronze tablet, Tiriolo, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna (CIL P 581).
- Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture* (farm slaves); Appian, *Civil Wars* 1 and Plutarch, *Crassus* (Spartacus); Cicero’s letters (Tiro); Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 5.36–38 (mines); Plautus’ comedies, and the houses and gladiator barracks at Pompeii (household and arena work).
- Tomb of Eurysaces the baker, Porta Maggiore, Rome (c. 50–30 BCE); parts of the bakery frieze, Museo Nazionale Romano.
- K. Raaflaub (ed.), *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome*, 2nd edn, Blackwell, 2005 (modern debate).

All ancient texts are quoted or reworded in my own English; figures in this section are original diagrams made for this book.

What an ancient society believed and did: everyday life, worldviews, war, death and burial

Chapter 3 — The ancient world, 10 000 BCE – 600 CE · Section 3C · History 8

Content description VC2HH8K14 (Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Levels 7 and 8).

Draws on (elaboration ids of VC2HH8K14, verbatim from the VCAA export):

id	topic	what the elaboration asks for
.E01	China	daily-life beliefs in China: farming, Confucius, Han tombs
.E02	China	how the Mandate of Heaven explained times of war
.E03	Egypt	afterlife beliefs, tomb burial and mummification
.E04	Egypt	reading pictures in the Book of the Dead
.E05	Greece	Greek beliefs and practices: Olympics, Delphic Oracle
.E06	Greece	war values and practices: the Iliad, phalanx, navies
.E07	India	rites of passage and marriage ceremonies
.E08	India	how Vedism and Brahmanism shaped funeral customs
.E09	Rome	the Roman army: legions, centurions, tactics
.E10	Rome	home religion, baths, theatres and amphitheatres

This book's default case study for Chapter 3 is **Rome** (VC2HH8K14 .E09–.E10), so this section is taught through Rome. The other four societies stay in the table above as the paths a teacher may choose instead. Every question here is answerable from the Rome material.

1 · Three words that carry this section

The content description for this section is built from three idea-words: **beliefs**, **values** and **practices**. Fixing what each one means makes every task here answerable.

- A **belief** is something a person holds to be true. Romans held it to be true that guardian spirits watched over their homes.
- A **value** is something a person or a group holds to be important. Discipline and courage were important to the Roman army.
- A **practice** is something people actually do, again and again. Daily offerings at a home shrine, an afternoon at the baths, a march in tight ranks — these were Roman practices.

Beliefs and values live inside people's heads; practices are where you can see them. A historian usually works the other way round: from the visible practice back to the belief behind it.

Contested term — *worldview*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *worldview* in this content description but does not define it. This section therefore treats a *worldview* as **the set of beliefs and values through which people make sense of the world and their place in it**, and every question here is answerable on that meaning alone. Other definitions exist and are not the same as this one.

Three words that carry this section

Keep these meanings in view: every task in this section can be answered with them.

Belief

Something a person holds to be true.

Example: Romans held it to be true that their household spirits watched over the family.

Value

Something a person or a group holds to be important.

Example: discipline and courage were important to the Roman army.

Worldview

The set of beliefs and values through which people make sense of the world and their place in it.

The curriculum uses this word but does not define it. This section uses the meaning above. Other definitions exist and are not the same as this one.

Check before you answer a task: is the question about what people held to be true (beliefs), what they held to be important (values), or their whole way of seeing the world (worldview)?

Source of the wording: the content description for this section names beliefs, values, places and practices.

Three cards defining the words belief, value and worldview, with a worked example for each and a check question asking whether a task is about what people held true, what they held important, or their whole way of seeing the world.

Figure 1 — the three idea-words of this section. Keep their meanings in view: every task can be answered with them.

Checkpoint 1. Sort these four statements into *belief*, *value* or *practice*: (a) “The dead must be honoured by their family”; (b) “Each morning the family leaves food and wine at the home shrine”; (c) “Guardian spirits live in every house”; (d) “A soldier must never leave his post”.

2 · Rome across time: one society, three ages

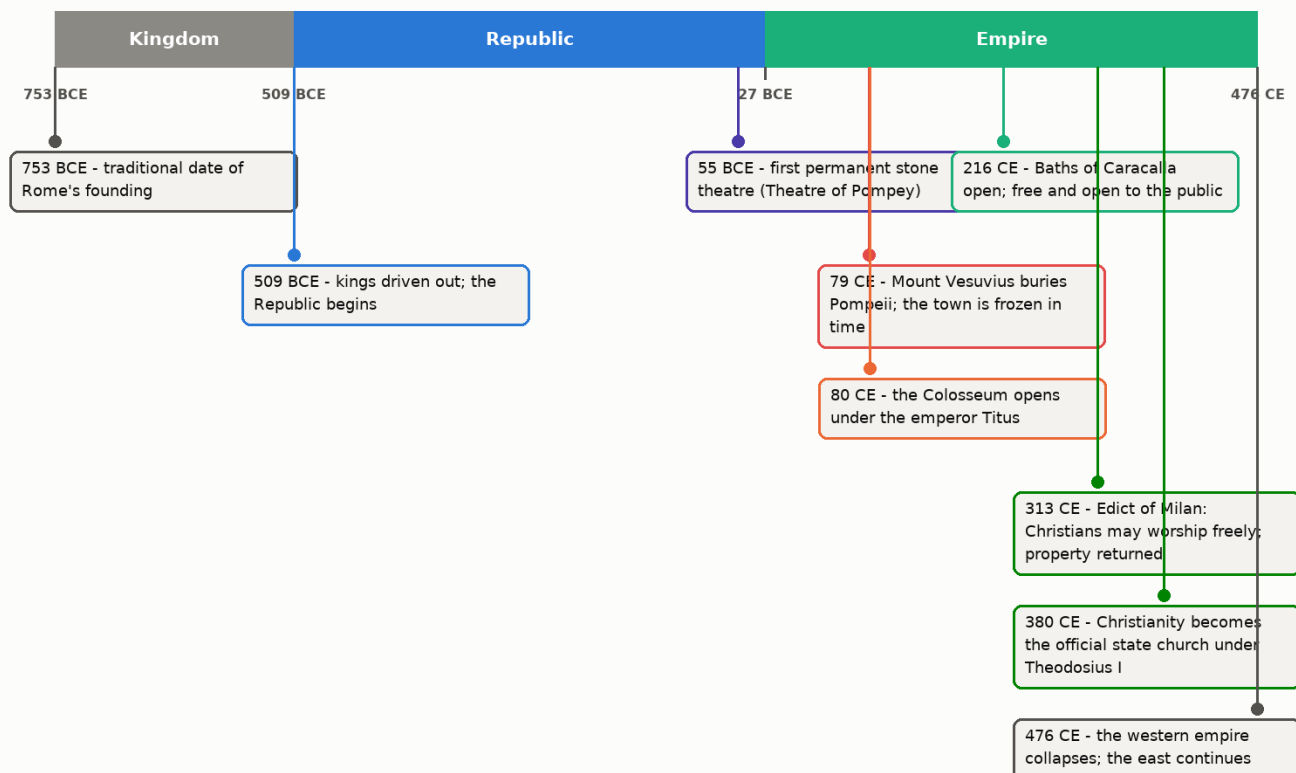
Rome’s story runs for more than a thousand years, and this section’s material sits at different points along it. Roman writers themselves split their past into three ages:

- the **Kingdom** (by tradition 753–509 BCE, when Rome had kings);
- the **Republic** (509–27 BCE, when there was no king and elected leaders shared power — the system you met in Section 3B);
- the **Empire** (from 27 BCE, when one ruler, the emperor, held power; in the west it ended in 476 CE, while the eastern half went on).

BCE means *before the common era*; **CE** means *common era* — the counting system historians use so dates read the same for everyone.

Rome across time: one society, three ages

This section mostly uses the years 200 BCE to 400 CE. BCE means before the common era; CE means common era.



Notice how much of this section's story sits inside the Empire band: the Colosseum, the great baths and the change to Christianity all come after 27 BCE.

A horizontal timeline of Rome's three ages - Kingdom, Republic and Empire - from 753 BCE to 476 CE, with nine dated events placed on the strip: the traditional founding, the start of the Republic, the first stone theatre, the burial of Pompeii, the opening of the Colosseum, the Baths of Caracalla, the Edict of Milan, Christianity becoming the state church, and the end of the western empire.

Figure 2 — Rome across time. The dates 753 and 509 BCE are traditional ones kept by later Roman writers, not proven dates. Notice how much of this section sits inside the Empire band.

Two habits will matter all the way through. First, **dating**: say *when* something sat. Second, **continuity and change**: a **continuity** is what stayed the same over time; a **change** is what shifted. The content description for this section asks for both — it is not enough to list what Romans did; you must say what stayed and what shifted while they did it.

Checkpoint 2. Using Figure 2: which of these came first — the opening of the Colosseum, the Edict of Milan, or the burial of Pompeii? Which age of Rome (Republic or Empire) were all three part of?

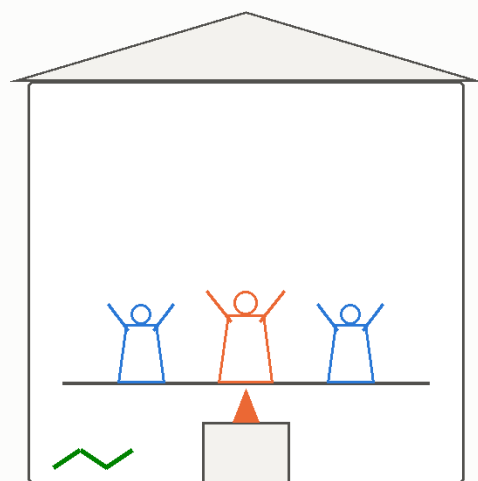
3 · Everyday life, part 1: household religion

Most Romans worshipped many gods — at great public temples, yes, but first and most often **at home**. Every household kept a small shrine, a **lararium**, and daily life began there. The religion of the home had its own spirits, shown in Figure 3:

- the **Lares** — guardian spirits of the household and family, usually painted as two young dancing men holding a drinking horn and a dish;
- the **Penates** — guardians of the storeroom and its food (grain, wine, oil), worshipped with Vesta, goddess of the hearth; a little food was tossed into the fire as their share;
- the **genius** — the protective spirit that followed a man from birth to death; women had a matching spirit called a **Juno**; the family poured a drink offering to the genius at meals.

Household religion: the lararium at home

A model of a Roman household shrine, based on painted shrines preserved at Pompeii. Drawn simply for teaching.



The spirits of the house

Lares

Guardian spirits of the household and family, painted as two young dancing men with a drinking horn and a dish. Some Romans thought they were spirits of the dead. Lares also stood at crossroads to watch over neighbourhoods.

Penates

Guardians of the storeroom and its food: grain, wine and oil. A little food was tossed into the hearth fire as their share. They were worshipped with Vesta, goddess of the hearth.

Genius

The protective spirit that followed a man from birth to death; the whole family was thought to have one too. Women had a Juno. At meals the family poured a drink offering to the genius.

Key to the shrine

- Genius - protective spirit of the head of the family
- Lares - two guardian spirits of household and family
- Snake - guardian spirit of the place
- Altar - daily offerings of food, wine and incense

Where do we know this from?

Painted lararia survived at Pompeii, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. The House of the Vettii had two of them. Some homes kept small statues of the Lares at the table during meals; food that fell to the floor was the spirits' share.

A simple labelled model of a Roman household shrine - two dancing Lares and a central genius figure above an altar with a guardian snake - beside cards describing the Lares, Penates and genius, a key to the drawing, and the evidence: painted shrines preserved at Pompeii, including two in the House of the Vettii.

Figure 3 — household religion at home: a model lararium and the spirits of the house. My own teaching drawing, based on painted shrines preserved at Pompeii.

The beliefs behind these practices: the world was full of spirits worth keeping friendly, the family's safety depended on small daily acts of respect, and the home itself was holy ground. Daily offerings of food, wine and incense were the practice that carried those beliefs.

What is the evidence? Painted lararia survived at Pompeii, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE — the House of the Vettii, a rich merchant family's home, had two of them. Notice a limit in the evidence: most surviving shrines come from well-off homes, so we know most about richer worship. Poorer families honoured the same spirits, often with less to offer.

Whose perspective is missing? Household religion ran through everyone's day, but the acts were led by the head of the household — in law and custom, usually the father. Enslaved people in the house took part in the family's rites, yet almost none of their own words about it survive. That silence is itself evidence: it tells us whose voices the sources keep and whose they lose.

4 · Everyday life, part 2: the baths, a public place for everyone

Away from home, the great daily practice was bathing. Rich and poor alike went to the public baths, the **thermae** (large bath complexes) or smaller local ones, most afternoons. The routine and the rooms are in Figure 4.

A day at the baths: routine and rooms

Bathing was a daily habit for rich and poor alike. The plan below is a simple version of a Roman public bath.

The routine

1. Exercise

Work out in the yard: running, wrestling or ball games.

2. Oil

Rub oil over the body.

3. Scrape

Scrape off oil and dirt with a curved metal tool called a strigil.

4. Bathe

Move through the rooms, warm to hot, then a cold plunge.

5. Meet

Talk, do business, invite friends to dinner.

The rooms

Frigidarium

cold room; cold plunge pool

Tepidarium

warm room; warm up gently

Caldarium

hot room; heated floor and walls

Apodyterium

changing room; clothes watched by a keeper

Palaestra

open yard for exercise

Furnace

hot air flowed under the floors and inside the walls

Baths of Caracalla, Rome: opened 216 CE; free and open to the public; about 1,600 people could bathe there at one time. It had two exercise yards, a library with Greek and Latin books, and gardens. Entry could cost as little as one quadrans, a small bronze coin - or nothing at all on free days.

A day at the Roman baths: on the left, a five-step routine of exercise, oil, scraping with a strigil, bathing warm to hot then cold, and meeting people; on the right, a labelled plan of the rooms - frigidarium, tepidarium, caldarium, apodyterium, palaestra and furnace - with facts about the Baths of Caracalla.

Figure 4 — routine and rooms of a Roman public bath. The heated floor system is a hypocaust: hot air from a furnace flowed under the floors and inside the walls.

The baths were more about people than water. They were places to do business, catch up on news, invite friends to dinner and be seen. The **Baths of Caracalla** in Rome, opened in 216 CE, were free and open to the public; about 1,600 people could bathe there at one time, and the grounds held two exercise yards, gardens and a library with Greek and Latin books. Entry at smaller baths could cost as little as a **quadrans**, the smallest bronze coin — or nothing on free days.

Reading a primary source — a letter about the baths. The writer **Seneca** (about 4 BCE–65 CE), a philosopher and tutor to the emperor Nero, once lodged in rooms right above a bathhouse. In a letter to his friend Lucilius (*Letters*, number 56) he complains about the noise — and without meaning to, he writes down a whole day of Roman life:

I am surrounded by every kind of noise. Above me live the exercise instructors. I can hear the grunts of a man lifting heavy weights, the slap of hands rubbing oil into shoulders, the calls of the ball player keeping score, and the splash of someone jumping into the pool. Then there is the hair-plucker, shouting in a thin, squeaky voice to attract customers — quiet only while he is actually plucking, when he makes someone else yell instead. And on top of it all, the drink seller, the sausage seller and the pastry seller, each calling out their wares in their own tune.

(Seneca, Letters 56.1–2, reworded in my own English.)

Ask the source the questions from Section 3B's four moves. **What it says:** a crowded, noisy, working bathhouse. **What it shows:** bathing was a daily habit shared across classes, and the baths were also a marketplace of small jobs — masseurs, hair-pluckers, food sellers all earned their living there. **Whose perspective:** a rich, easily annoyed outsider looking down at ordinary life — useful evidence, but a grumpy one. Seneca's letter is a **primary source:** written by a Roman at the time, about the world he lived in.

5 · Entertainment: theatres and amphitheatres

Rome's other great shared practices were its shows. Three kinds of place hosted them:

- the **theatre** — for plays, music and mime. Rome's first permanent stone theatre was the Theatre of Pompey, opened in 55 BCE; before that, theatres were wooden and pulled down after each season;
- the **amphitheatre** — an oval bowl for gladiator fights, animal hunts and other arena events;
- the **circus** — a long track for chariot racing, Rome's most popular sport. The Circus Maximus held over 150,000 spectators.

A note on a hard history. Arena shows included real deaths — condemned prisoners were executed as part of the day's events, and gladiators fought with real weapons. We study this because it is part of the truth about Rome, not to celebrate it. The facts are stated plainly; nothing here needs shock to matter.

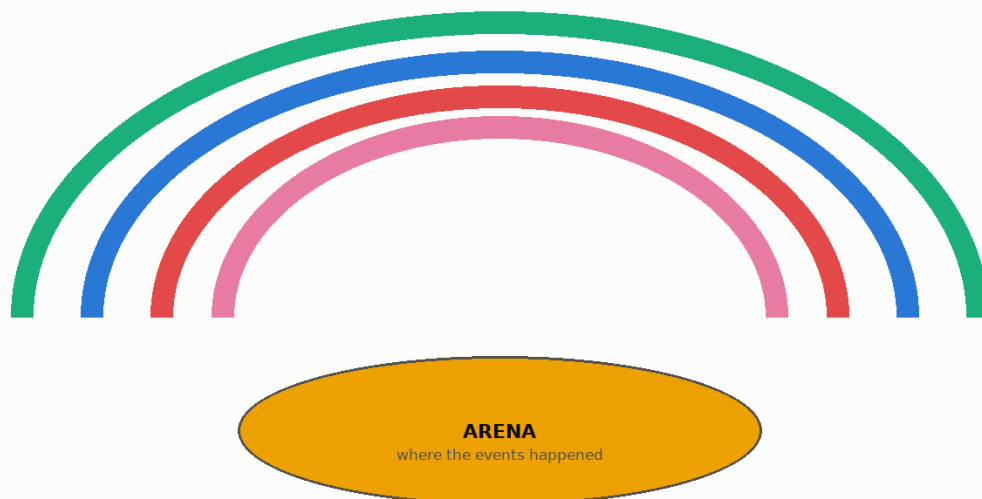
Inside an amphitheatre: everyone watched, in their place

A cutaway model of a Roman amphitheatre. The Colosseum in Rome was the largest ever built.

Who sat where

(inner ring = closest to the arena)

- Emperor and the Vestal Virgins
- Senators - the highest class of Rome
- Ordinary Roman citizens
- Other groups, with their own places



The Colosseum held 50,000 to 80,000 people. Numbered entrances let the crowd in and out quickly. Seating followed Rome's strict social order - the same order you met in Section 3B. Gladiators, animal hunts, plays of Roman myths and even mock sea battles were staged here.

A cutaway model of a Roman amphitheatre with coloured seating rings showing who sat where - the emperor and the Vestal Virgins nearest the arena, then senators, then ordinary citizens, then other groups - and a note that the Colosseum held 50,000 to 80,000 people with numbered entrances.

Figure 5 — inside an amphitheatre: everyone watched, in their place. My own teaching drawing; the seating order is the one recorded for the Colosseum.

The **Colosseum** in Rome was the largest amphitheatre ever built. It opened in 80 CE under the emperor Titus and held 50,000 to 80,000 people. Numbered entrances — you can still see the carved numerals above the arches today — let the crowd in and out quickly. Seating followed Rome's strict social order, the same order you met in Section 3B: the emperor and the Vestal Virgins (the priestesses of Vesta) at the front, then senators, then ordinary citizens, with other groups given their own places further up.

That seating plan is itself a **practice** carrying a **belief**: that rank should be visible, and that everyone belonged to a fixed place in the crowd. The shows were also gifts from the rich and from emperors — paid for to win popularity — so entertainment and politics were tied together.

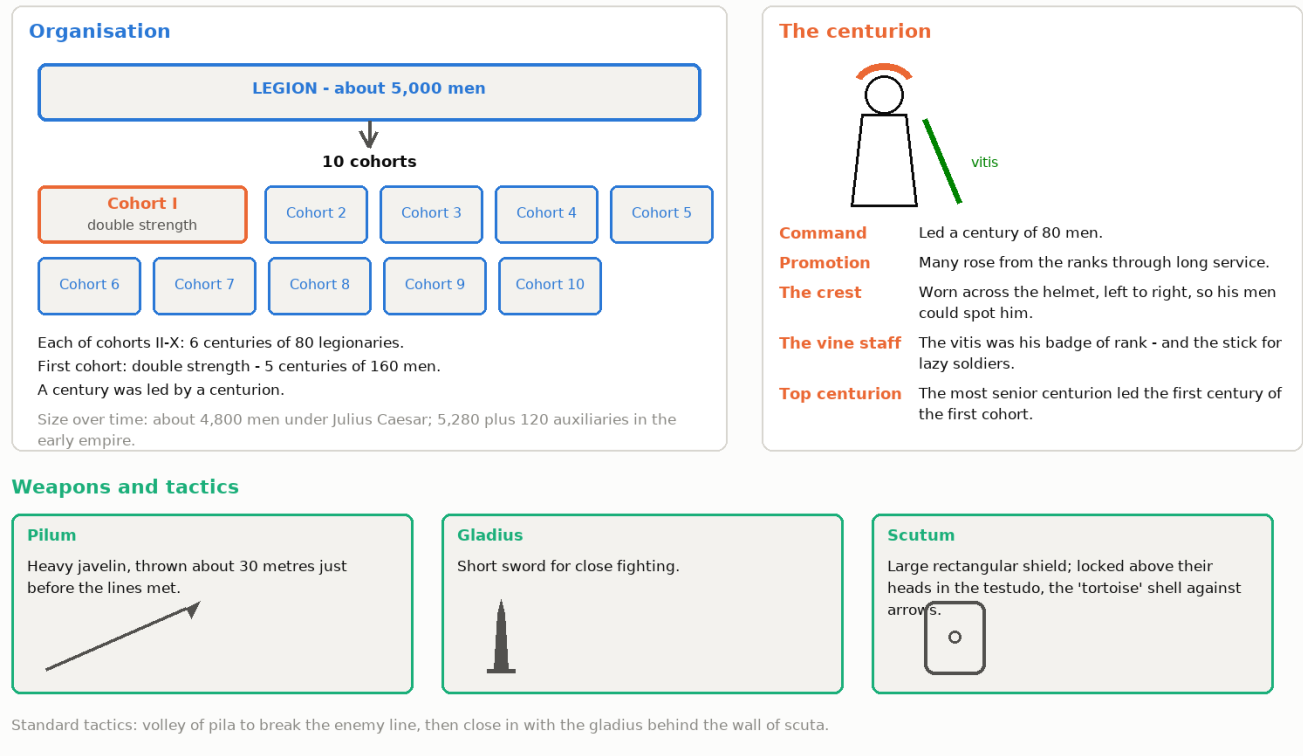
Checkpoint 3. Give one way the amphitheatre was like the baths (Part 4), and one way it was different, in what it said about who Romans were.

6 · Warfare: the legion and its values

Rome's worldview was not only about home and festival; it was also about war. For most of Rome's history, being strong in war was a value of the state itself — Romans thanked the gods for victories, and generals displayed the spoils of war in public. The machine behind those victories was the **legion**, Rome's main fighting unit.

The Roman legion: how the army was organised

The legion was Rome's main fighting unit. The layout below shows the army of the early empire.



The organisation of the Roman legion: a legion of about 5,000 men split into ten cohorts, cohorts two to ten each holding six centuries of eighty legionaries and the first cohort double strength; beside it the centurion with his crest worn across the helmet and his vine staff, and cards for the pilum, gladius and scutum.

Figure 6 — how the army was organised, with the weapons and tactics. The layout shows the army of the early empire; sizes changed over time, as the note on the figure says.

The organisation (early Empire): one legion of about 5,000 men, split into ten **cohorts**; nine cohorts held six **centuries** of 80 legionaries each, and the first cohort was double strength. Under Julius Caesar a legion was about 4,800 men; in the early empire the count ran to 5,280 legionaries plus 120 **auxiliaries** (non-citizen soldiers who supported the legion).

The man holding it together was the **centurion**. He led a century of 80 men and many rose from the ranks through long service, so the army's discipline was run by men who had been ordinary soldiers first. His marks of rank were practical as well as proud: a crest worn across the helmet from ear to ear, so his men could spot him in a fight, and the **vitis**, a vine staff that was both his badge of office and the stick that kept lazy soldiers awake. The most senior centurion of the whole legion led the first century of the first cohort.

Standard weapons: the **pilum**, a heavy javelin thrown about 30 metres just before the lines met; the **gladius**, a short sword for close fighting; and the **scutum**, a large rectangular shield. Locked above their heads, the shields made the **testudo** — the “tortoise” — a shell against arrows. The standard tactic was simple and drilled: a volley of pila to break the enemy line, then close in with the gladius behind the wall of shields.

The values behind the machine. The army worked because of beliefs as much as weapons: **discipline** (obedience, drill, keeping your place in the line), **courage**, and loyalty to your unit and its standards. New soldiers swore a military oath to obey their commanders. Breaches were punished hard — a centurion's vine staff was the mild end of it; units that fled in battle could be punished by lot. These values were the army's worldview in action: order beats numbers.

Change over time. The legion you have just met is the empire’s legion. The Greek writer **Polybius**, describing Rome in the second century BCE, records an older version organised in smaller units called maniples. Between his day and the empire’s, the army’s size, its units and how men were recruited all shifted — and historians still argue about how, as you will see in Part 8.

7 · Death and funerary customs

Romans believed the dead stayed connected to the living, and their funerary customs — the practices around death, burial and remembrance — carried that belief. The best surviving description of a well-off Roman funeral comes from **Polybius**, a Greek historian who was brought to Rome as a hostage in 167 BCE, kept there for about seventeen years, and watched Roman life closely. Writing in his *Histories* (Book 6, chapters 53–54), he describes what he saw:

When a famous man dies, his body is carried into the forum, the public heart of the city, and set up where everyone can see it. A son, or another close relative, climbs the speaker’s platform and speaks about the life and the good deeds of the dead man ... Then the body is taken away to be buried or burnt.

The most striking thing happens next. Men are dressed up to look like the family’s famous ancestors, wearing portrait masks made to match each ancestor’s face, and riding through the city in the funeral procession. They sit in a row on the platform, each wearing the robes of the high office his ancestor once held ... so that the memory of brave men is kept alive, and young Romans see their whole family history standing before them.

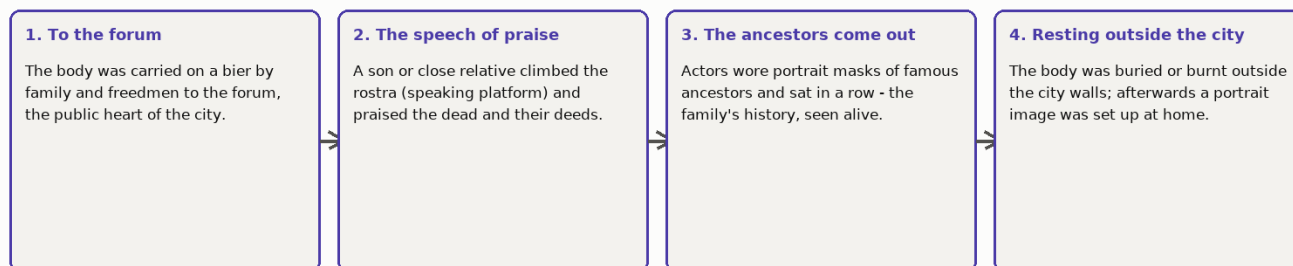
Afterwards, an image of the dead man is placed in the most visible spot in the house, kept in a wooden shrine, and brought out and honoured at family sacrifices.

(Polybius, Histories 6.53, reworded in my own English.)

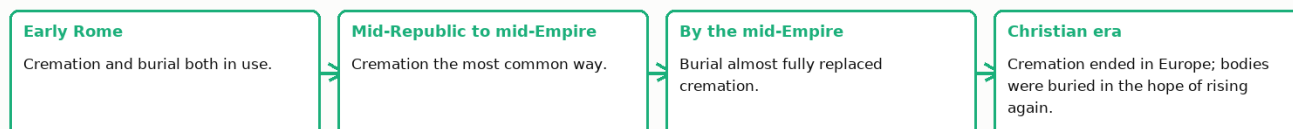
The four steps of that funeral, and the long change in how bodies were treated, are mapped in Figure 7.

Death and funerary customs: a Roman funeral

The steps below come from Polybius, a Greek historian who lived in Rome and described its customs in the second century BCE.



How bodies were treated changed over time



The dead were not forgotten

Every year from 13 to 21 February, at the Parentalia, families visited the tombs outside the city and left offerings: garlands, wheat, salt, bread soaked in wine, and violets. Lamps were lit at the tombs. Tombs lined the roads leading out of Roman cities, so everyone coming or going passed the remembered dead. The spirit shades of the dead were called the Manes; the restless dead with no one to remember them were settled at the Lemuria in May.

Four steps of a well-off Roman funeral after Polybius - the body carried to the forum, the speech of praise, actors wearing ancestor masks, and burial or burning outside the city - then a four-stage strip showing cremation giving way to burial over time, and a panel on the Parentalia festival and the Manes.

Figure 7 — death and funerary customs. The steps come from Polybius, writing in the second century BCE about the Rome he lived in.

Notice the beliefs these practices carried:

- **The dead were honoured in public.** The speech in the forum turned a death into a lesson about what Rome valued — service, office, brave deeds.
- **The family's past was made visible.** The ancestor masks (in Latin, *imagines*) meant a boy watching a funeral met his whole family's history walking through the street.
- **The dead stayed neighbours.** Tombs lined the roads leading out of Roman cities — Roman law kept burial outside the city walls — so everyone coming or going passed the remembered dead.
- **The dead came back each year.** At the **Parentalia**, every year from 13 to 21 February, families visited the tombs and left offerings: garlands, wheat, salt, bread soaked in wine, and violets, with lamps lit at the graves. The spirit shades of the dead were called the **Manes**; families feared the dead who had no one to remember them, and at the **Lemuria** in May the head of the household performed rites to settle any restless shades.

How bodies were treated changed. Early Rome used both cremation (burning the body) and burial. From the mid-Republic to the mid-Empire, cremation was the commoner way. By the mid-Empire, burial had almost fully replaced it — and with Christianity's rise, cremation faded out in Europe, as burial matched the belief in the body rising again. Here is the content description at work: a practice, tracked across centuries, showing both continuity (the family still returned to the tomb) and change (what happened to the body itself).

Primary source close study. Polybius' passage above is this section's close study. Read it twice, then use Figure 9's three steps on it — the third step matters most: Polybius describes a **well-off** funeral. The funeral of a poor Roman left far less trace, and his pages say little about it. A strong reading says what the source shows *and* what it cannot.

8 · Continuity and change — and a debate historians still have

Pull the four themes of this section together, and ask the two questions that run through the whole content description: what stayed the same, and what shifted, across the Republic and the Empire?

Continuity and change in Roman life

Two questions run through this section: what stayed the same, and what shifted, over roughly 700 years?

	Continuity - what stayed the same	Change - what shifted
Household religion	Daily offerings at the lararium went on for centuries, in rich homes and poor ones alike.	Christianity spread: made legal in 313 CE (Edict of Milan), then the official state church in 380 CE under Theodosius I.
The army	The legion - cohorts and centuries - stayed the backbone of Rome's army.	Tradition says the general Marius reformed how men were recruited around 107 BCE, but modern historians debate what he actually changed.
Entertainment	Theatre, arena shows and chariot racing stayed the favourite ways to spend a day off.	The scale grew: Pompeii's amphitheatre (about 70 BCE) is one of the oldest still standing; the Colosseum (80 CE) seated tens of thousands; the Circus Maximus held over 150,000.
Treatment of the dead	Tombs lined the roads outside cities, and families kept returning to them at festivals.	Cremation gave way to burial by the mid-Empire.

Continuity and change is a key idea in history: when you use a source, look for both.

A grid of four themes - household religion, the army, entertainment, and the treatment of the dead - each with a continuity column for what stayed the same and a change column for what shifted, from daily offerings at the lararium to the rise of Christianity, from the legion staying Rome's backbone to the debate over Marius' reforms.

Figure 8 — continuity and change in Roman life. When you use any source from this section, look for both columns at once.

A secondary-source interpretation: did Marius really change the army? Look at the army row of Figure 8: it says *tradition says* the general Marius reformed how men were recruited around 107 BCE. Here is the debate behind that careful wording.

For a long time, the standard story went like this. By the late second century BCE, Rome's old rule — that only men who owned property could serve — was starving the army of recruits. In about 107 BCE, the general **Gaius Marius**, needing soldiers for a war in North Africa, enrolled men with no property at all, volunteers who served for pay and for a share of the spoils. The result, this story says, was a new kind of army: professionals, loyal to the general who paid and rewarded them rather than to the republic — the very soldiers who later fought Rome's civil wars. The ancient source for the story is the writer **Plutarch**, in his *Life of Marius*.

Modern historians have tested that story against the evidence, and many now push back: recruitment of poorer citizens had already happened before Marius; our sources record no law of his changing who could serve; and the “professional” army grew by slow steps over a century, not in one reform. **Erich Gruen**, in *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (1974), treats the so-called reforms as mostly a response to one emergency, later made to look like a turning point. Other historians, such as **P. A. Brunt** in *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (1988), still give Marius a real part in the change, while agreeing the old “one reform changed everything” version is too neat.

Notice what this debate teaches. Both sides use the same ancient sources; they differ on how much weight to give them. That is what **secondary sources** do — they are later accounts that argue over the primary evidence. And it is a good model of a historical claim done honestly: say what tradition claims, then say what the evidence can and cannot support.

Checkpoint 4. In your own words, state one difference between the traditional Marius story and the way most modern historians now tell it.

9 · Reading a source in three steps

Every source task in this section — and in the rest of the book — uses the same method:

Reading a source in three steps

Use these steps for the source task at the end of this section - and for any source you meet.

Step 1

What does it say?

Who made it, when, and for whom? What can you find directly in it? Here, the source is Polybius, a Greek kept in Rome as a hostage for 17 years, describing a Roman funeral.

Step 2

What does it show?

What beliefs, values or practices can you work out from it? Point to the exact words that support your idea. A good answer says: 'This shows... because the source says...'

Step 3

What can't it show?

Every source has limits. Polybius describes well-off families; the funeral of a poor Roman looked different, and his pages say little about it.

Marks in this workbook reward reasons backed by evidence, not just a conclusion.

There is often no single right answer about what a source 'means' - what matters is how well you support your reading with words from the source and with what you know about Rome.

Three cards for reading a source: step one asks what it says - who made it, when, for whom; step two asks what beliefs, values or practices it shows, with evidence quoted; step three asks what it cannot show, using Polybius' well-off funerals as the worked example.

Figure 9 — the three-step method, applied to Polybius. Marks reward reasons backed by evidence, not just a conclusion.

Step 3 is the one most often missed, so practise saying it out loud. Polybius is a strong witness: intelligent, careful, and living inside the society he describes. But he is also a Greek outsider writing to explain Rome to other Greeks, and he chose what struck him as remarkable — a well-off noble funeral. His silence about ordinary deaths is not an accident; it is the shape of his evidence. The same test works on Seneca (a rich man annoyed by noise), on the Pompeii shrines (mostly rich homes), and on the Colosseum seating (order as the powerful wanted it seen).

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. Using Figure 1, sort these into *belief*, *value* or *practice*: (a) leaving an offering at the lararium each morning; (b) holding discipline to be the heart of a good army; (c) holding it to be true that the family's genius watches over its head; (d) going to the baths most afternoons.

Q2. Figure 2. Copy the nine events into date order, then mark each one as Kingdom, Republic or Empire. (Two hints: the traditional founding is oldest; the Edict of Milan sits inside the Empire band.)

Q3. Figure 3, three parts. (a) Match each spirit to its job: guardian of the storeroom; protective spirit following a man from birth; guardian spirit of the household. (b) What did families give these spirits, and how often? (c) Name the town that preserved the painted shrines, and the event that preserved it.

Q4. Figure 4, two parts. (a) List the five steps of the bath routine in order. (b) Which room would you enter to: cool down with a cold plunge; warm up gently; sit in the hottest room with heated floors?

Q5. Figure 5, two parts. (a) List the seating order from closest to the arena outwards. (b) The seating plan was a practice carrying a belief — what belief? (Use Figure 1's meanings.)

Q6. Figure 6, three parts. (a) Complete a table: unit — leader — number of men, for legion, cohort (ordinary) and century. (b) Name the three standard weapons and the job of each. (c) What two marks of rank let a legionary spot his centurion in battle?

Un scaffolded

Q7. Read the Seneca letter extract in Part 4 again. Write one analysis paragraph using the three steps of Figure 9: what it says, what it shows about daily life at the baths, and one limit of the source. Finish with a sentence naming whose perspective you are hearing.

Q8. Claim: “*The amphitheatre held Rome together.*” Build the strongest case **for** the claim (shared shows, gifts from the great, everyone in one place), then the strongest case **against** it (seating by rank, the arena’s violence, whose popularity the shows really bought). Finish with your reasoned verdict and the evidence it rests on. Marking rewards the quality of the reasoning on both sides, not the verdict you reach.

Q9. Using Part 8 and Figure 8: explain what the traditional story says Marius changed about the army, and give one reason a modern historian doubts that one man changed it all in one year. Finish by saying whether the army’s story across this section is mostly continuity or mostly change — and what evidence decides you.

Q10. Using the Polybius extract in Part 7 and Figure 7: identify two Roman beliefs about death and the dead that the funeral practices carried, and for each one point to the exact words or steps that support your reading. Then write one limit of Polybius’ account and explain why that limit exists.

Extended response (chapter task — the full criteria live in 7C and 7D)

ER1. Between about 200 BCE and 400 CE, which changed more — Romans’ everyday practices (home religion, baths, shows) or their practices of war and death? Use at least three sources from this section (one must be the Polybius extract or the Seneca letter), apply the significance criteria from 7C (importance, depth, how many people, how long it lasted, relevance to us), and present your answer as a short evidenced argument in a format from 7D. Address the strongest counter-case to your choice, and name at least one continuity that ran through your whole period.

Checkpoints (scaffolded tasks)

Checkpoint 1. (a) value; (b) practice; (c) belief; (d) value. (The trap is (a): “must be honoured” says what Romans held to be important, not a belief about what is true — the belief part is *that* the dead can be honoured, and it lives inside the value.)

Checkpoint 2. The burial of Pompeii (79 CE) came first, then the Colosseum’s opening (80 CE), then the Edict of Milan (313 CE). All three sit in the Empire band.

Checkpoint 3. Alike: both were daily or regular shared places where Romans of different ranks gathered. Different: the baths mixed people in the same rooms, while the amphitheatre fixed every person to a ranked seat — one practice blended the crowd, the other displayed its order.

Checkpoint 4. The tradition says one general, in about 107 BCE, opened the army to propertyless volunteers and so created a new, personal, professional army; most modern historians say poorer men were already being recruited, that no such law of Marius survives, and that the professional army grew by slow steps across a century.

Q1. (a) practice; (b) value; (c) belief; (d) practice.

Q2. 753 BCE founding (Kingdom) → 509 BCE Republic begins (Republic) → 55 BCE Theatre of Pompey (Republic) → 79 CE Pompeii buried (Empire) → 80 CE Colosseum opens (Empire) → 216 CE Baths of Caracalla (Empire) → 313 CE Edict of Milan (Empire) → 380 CE state church (Empire) → 476 CE west ends (Empire).

Q3. (a) Penates — storeroom; genius — a man’s protective spirit from birth; Lares — household and family. (b) Food, wine and incense, every day. (c) Pompeii, preserved by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE.

Q4. (a) Exercise, oil, scrape (with the strigil), bathe, meet. (b) Cold plunge — frigidarium; warm up gently — tepidarium; hottest room with heated floors — caldarium.

Q5. (a) Emperor and the Vestal Virgins; senators; ordinary citizens; other groups with their own places. (b) The belief that rank should be visible — that everyone has a fixed place, and the order of society should be on show even at play.

Q6. (a) Legion — a commander (senior officers above the centurions) — about 5,000 men; ordinary cohort — six centurions, one per century — 480 men; century — a centurion — 80 men. (b) Pilum — heavy javelin thrown before contact; gladius — short sword for close fighting; scutum — large shield, also locked above their heads in the testudo. (c) The crest worn across the helmet, left to right, and the vitis (vine staff).

What a strong unscaffolded answer includes

Q7. All three steps present: what the letter directly records; at least one belief or practice worked out from it (e.g. bathing as a daily, mixed-class habit; the baths as a workplace) with the supporting words quoted; and a real limit (one rich man's ear, one building, one mood).

Q8. Two genuinely strong cases, each with named evidence (shared spectacle, public gifts, the seating order, arena deaths, the politics of popularity); the verdict cites the weighing of evidence, not a feeling.

Q9. The traditional claim stated plainly (propertyless volunteers, armies loyal to generals, citing Plutarch); at least one doubt stated from Part 8 (no surviving law; earlier recruitment; change by slow steps); a clear continuity/change judgement with the evidence named (e.g. the legion's shape stayed, recruitment shifted).

Q10. Two beliefs with exact support from the extract (e.g. the dead live on in memory — the speech and the masks; the family's history is a public good — the procession; the dead stay part of the household — the image kept at home); a limit tied to Polybius' position (well-off funerals only; an outsider writing for Greeks).

ER1. A named theme with dated change; three sources used as evidence, not decoration, including the Polybius extract or the Seneca letter; the 7C criteria applied visibly; the counter-case given real strength before it is answered; at least one continuity named across the whole period.

Key terms, defined where first used

belief · value · practice · worldview (defined in the box in Part 1) · continuity · change · Kingdom, Republic, Empire · BCE / CE · lararium · Lares · Penates · genius · Juno · thermae · hypocaust · quadrans · theatre · amphitheatre · circus · legion · cohort · century · centurion · vitis · auxiliaries · pilum · gladius · scutum · testudo · maniples · funerary customs · cremation · forum · imagines · Parentalia · Manes · Lemuria · primary source · secondary source. (*Primary source*: made at the time by someone in that world — Seneca's letter, Polybius' account, the painted shrines at Pompeii. *Secondary source*: a later account that argues over the primary evidence — Gruen's and Brunt's books.)

Sources and retrieval

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 7–8, VC2HH8K14 and elaborations .E01–.E10 (substantive renumbering per build TOC D7), per the VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29 and re-read 2026-08-21 (build TOC §1).
- Polybius, *Histories* 6.53–54 (the Roman funeral); Polybius brought to Rome as a hostage in 167 BCE and kept about seventeen years.
- Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* (*Epistulae Morales*) 56.1–2 (the noise of the baths).
- Plutarch, *Life of Marius* (the traditional account of Marius' recruitment, about 107 BCE).
- Ovid, *Fasti* 2 (the Parentalia, 13–21 February) and *Fasti* 5 (the Lemuria).
- The painted lararia at Pompeii, including the two in the House of the Vettii (buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, 79 CE); the Colosseum, opened 80 CE under Titus, with its numbered entrances and recorded seating order; the Theatre of Pompey, opened 55 BCE; the Baths of Caracalla, opened 216 CE (capacity figures checked 2026-08-25 against Wikipedia, "Baths of Caracalla").

- Roman legion organisation and sizes (cohort and century strength; about 4,800 men under Julius Caesar; 5,280 legionaries plus 120 auxiliaries in the early empire) checked 2026-08-25 against Wikipedia, “Roman legion”.
- E. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic*, University of California Press, 1974; P. A. Brunt, *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays*, Oxford University Press, 1988 (the modern debate over Marius’ reforms).

All ancient texts are quoted or reworded in my own English; figures in this section are original diagrams made for this book.

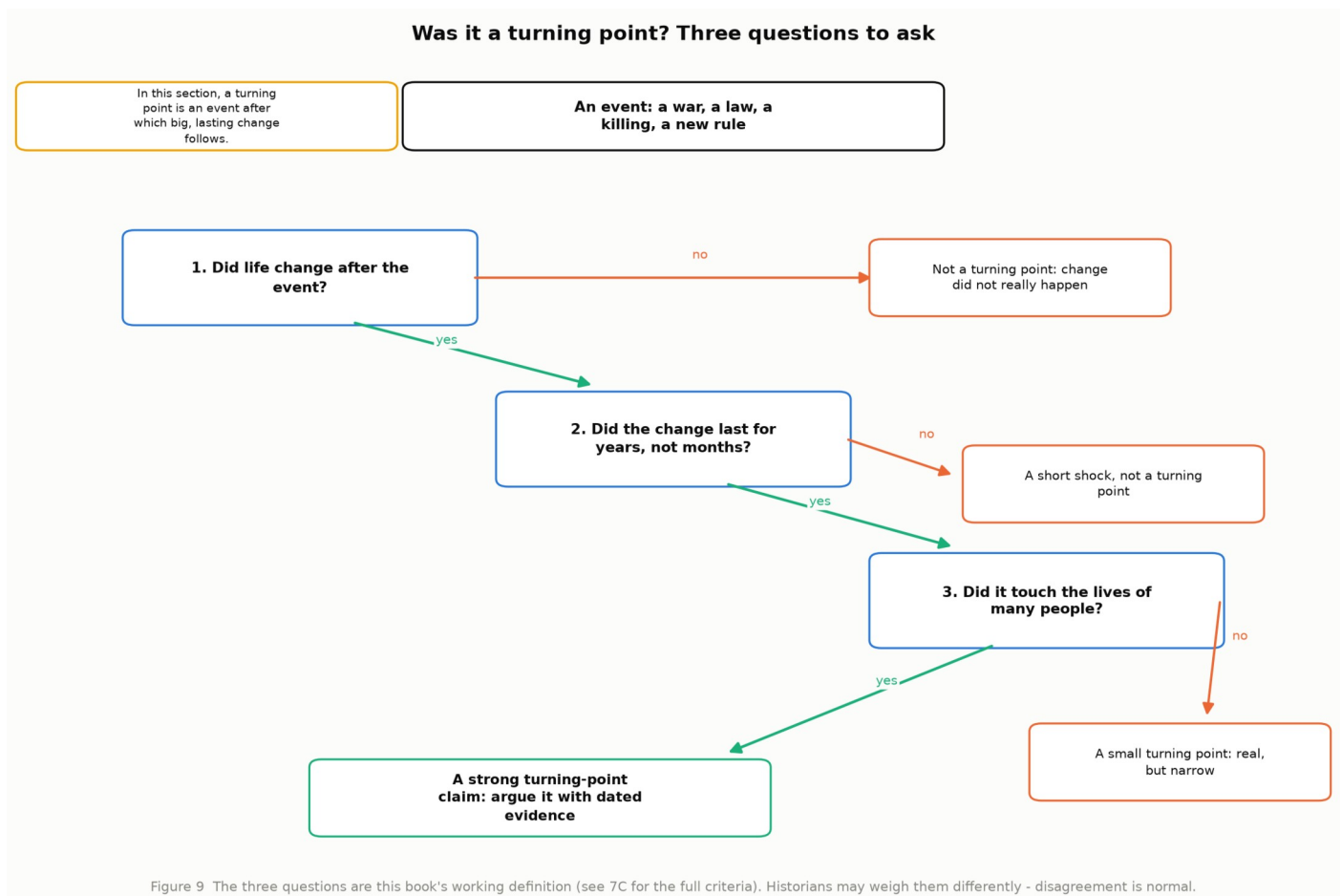
Turning points: events that changed an ancient society

Owens: VC2HH8K15 **Draws on:** VC2HH8K15 .E01–.E05 (Rome default: .E05; alternative routes for .E01–.E04 at the end of the sequence)

The big question: what counts as a turning point?

Historians do not all agree about turning points. Some look for one big event that changes everything. Others say real change is slow, built from many small steps, so no single event deserves the label. This is a live disagreement in the profession, and you will be marked on the quality of your reasons, not on which side you pick.

This section uses one working definition, and states it openly: **a turning point is an event after which big, lasting change follows**. Figure 9 turns that definition into three questions you can apply to any event. When we call something a turning point in this section, we mean it passes those three questions, and the evidence says so.

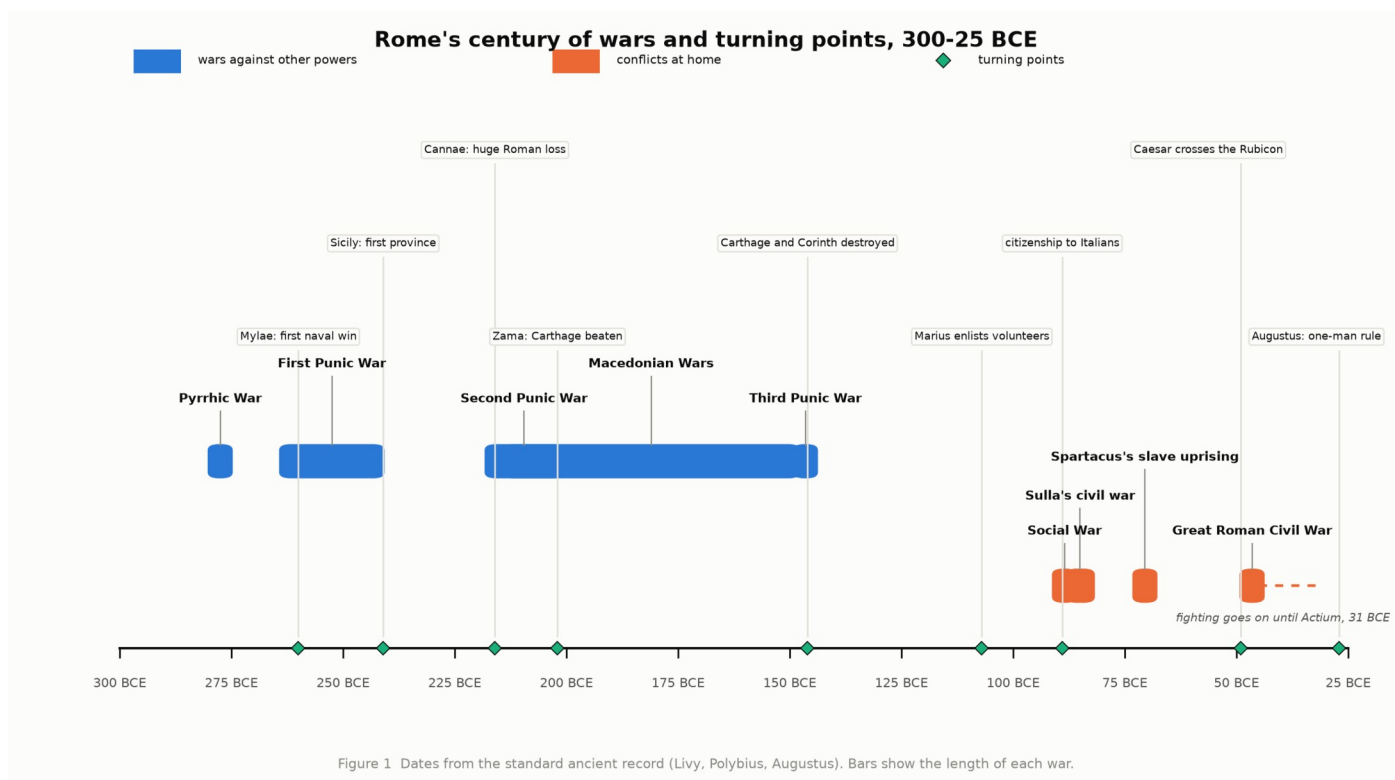


Flow chart of three questions for deciding whether an event was a turning point, with yes and no paths leading to “not a turning point”, “a short shock”, “a small turning point” and “a strong turning-point claim”.

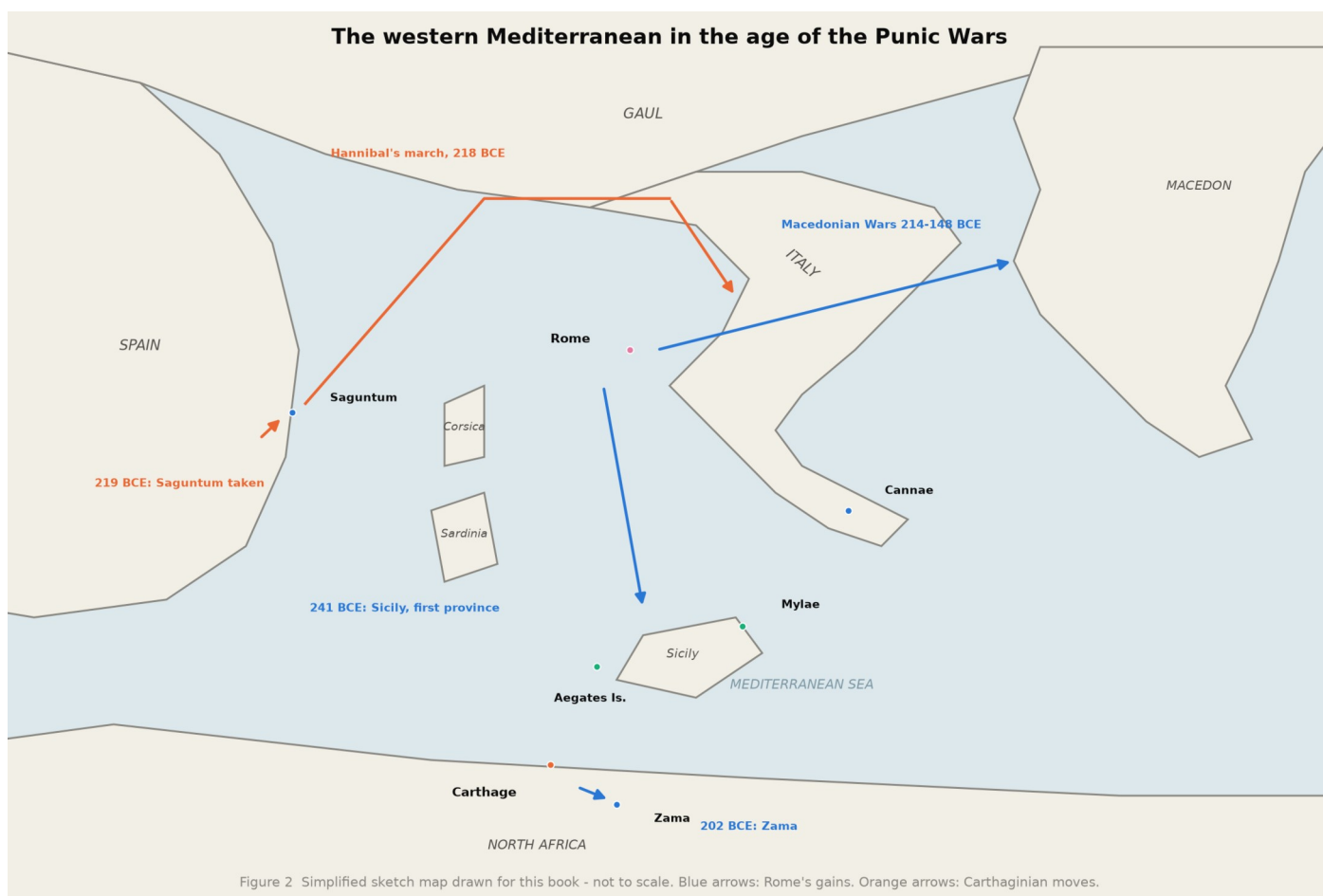
The society we study is **Rome**, the default route for this chapter. In 280 BCE Rome was already the leading power in Italy, but it was not yet a sea power and it ruled no land outside Italy. By 27 BCE it ruled lands around the whole Mediterranean, and one man, Augustus, held real power. The six wars in Figure 1 are the events we will test against our definition.

Key words for this section. A **republic** is a state with no king, where leaders are chosen and the law stands above any one person. Rome’s republic was led by two **consuls**, chosen each year, and guided by the **Senate**, a council of leading men. A **province** is a land outside Italy ruled by Rome. The **census** is the official count of citizens, used for war and tax. A **primary source** is made by people who were there at the time; a **secondary source** is made later, looking back. The **Punic Wars** are the three wars between Rome and Carthage (“Punic” was the Roman word for Carthaginian).

The teaching sequence — Rome at war, 280–27 BCE



Timeline of the six wars and key events from 300 BCE to 25 BCE, with a bar for each war and dated marks for Mylae, Cannae, Zama, the murder of Caesar and the start of the rule of Augustus.



Simplified sketch map of the western Mediterranean showing Spain, Gaul, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, North Africa and Macedon, with blue arrows for Rome's gains and orange arrows for the moves of Carthage, including Hannibal's march of 218 BCE.

Rome's six wars, and what changed after each

War and dates	Against	Result	What changed
Pyrrhic War 280-275 BCE	King Pyrrhus of Epirus (Greece)	Rome kept Italy; Pyrrhus left	Rome now led all of Italy - and had felt the cost of fighting a trained king's army
First Punic War 264-241 BCE	Carthage	Rome won; took Sicily, then Sardinia	First fleet, first sea wins, first overseas provinces - Rome became a sea power
Second Punic War 218-201 BCE	Carthage (Hannibal)	Rome won at Zama (202 BCE)	Carthage lost its fleet and army; huge loss of Roman citizens; wealth and slaves poured in
Macedonian Wars 214-148 BCE	Macedon and Greek states	Rome won; Macedon became a province	Rome's power now stretched east as well as west
Third Punic War 149-146 BCE	Carthage	Carthage destroyed; its land a province	The old rival was gone - and Romans began to ask who really held power at home
Great Roman Civil War 49-45 BCE	Roman against Roman (Caesar v Pompey)	Caesar won; fighting went on to 31 BCE	The republic kept its name, but real power moved to one man (Augustus from 27 BCE)

Figure 3 Dates follow the standard ancient record (Livy, Polybius, Plutarch; retrieved 2026-08-25). Read 'what changed' against Figure 8.

Table of Rome's six wars with dates, enemies, results and what changed after each war.

The Pyrrhic War (280–275 BCE). King Pyrrhus of Epirus, a Greek soldier-king, came to Italy to fight Rome. He won two battles, but each win cost him so many men that he could not go on. He left Italy, and Rome kept the lead in Italy. The lesson Romans drew was hard but useful: they could lose battles to a trained king's army and still win the war, because they could raise new armies and he could not.

The First Punic War (264–241 BCE). Carthage was a rich trading city in North Africa with a strong war fleet. When the two powers clashed over Sicily, Rome faced a problem: it had no war fleet at all. The answer, and the first sign of a turning point, is in the primary source close study below: Rome built a fleet from nothing, copied from a grounded Carthaginian ship, and won at sea. In 260 BCE the consul Gaius Duilius won the battle of Mylae using a boarding bridge that let Romans fight on an enemy deck as if on land. In 241 BCE, at the battle of the Aegates Islands west of Sicily, Rome destroyed the last Carthaginian relief fleet, and Carthage gave up Sicily — Rome's first province. Sardinia and Corsica followed. A land power had become a sea power.

The Second Punic War (218–201 BCE). In 219 BCE Hannibal, the leading Carthaginian general, took the town of Saguntum in Spain, a friend of Rome. In 218 BCE he marched his army over the mountains from Spain into Italy. At Cannae in 216 BCE he destroyed a Roman army in one day — the worst defeat in Rome's history. The ancient numbers disagree: Polybius says about 70 000 Romans were killed, Livy says 48 200, and modern historians read the battle much smaller, perhaps 10 500–16 000. The disagreement is itself a lesson in sources (Figure 4). Yet Rome refused to make peace, and the war turned. The young general Scipio carried the war to Africa and beat Hannibal at Zama in 202 BCE. Carthage lost its fleet, its army and its independence. Wealth and captives poured into Rome, and the farms of Italy, burned and emptied by the war, would never be quite the same.

Second Punic War (218-201 BCE): short-term and long-term impacts

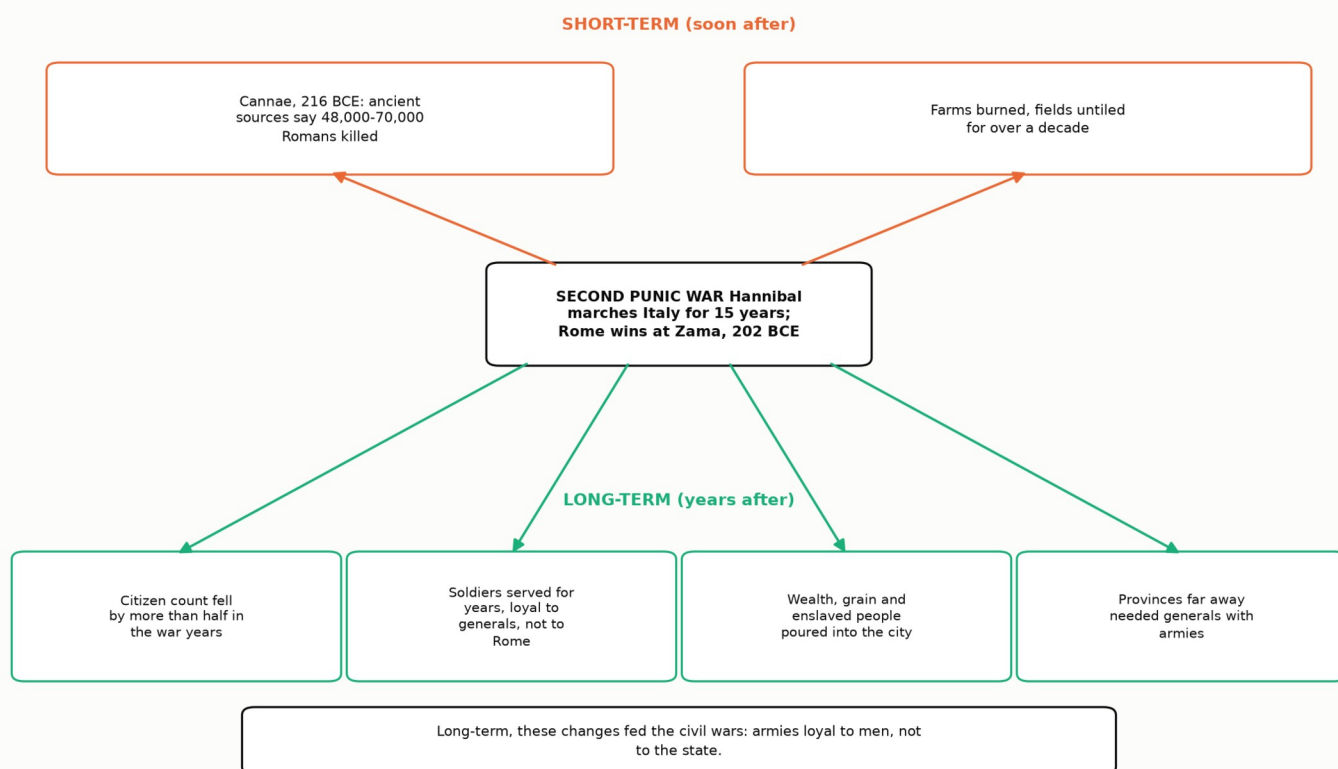


Figure 4 A consequence web: one event, two time horizons. Cannae figures: Polybius 70,000; Livy 48,200; a modern low estimate 10,500-16,000.

Diagram sorting the short-term and long-term results of the Second Punic War, with the battle of Cannae at the top and a strip below comparing the ancient and modern death counts.

The Macedonian Wars (214–148 BCE). While Hannibal was in Italy, Rome also fought Macedon, the Greek kingdom in the north-east. Four wars ended with Macedon a province in 148 BCE. Rome's power now stretched east as well as west, and Greek art, Greek learning and Greek money flowed west.

The Third Punic War (149–146 BCE). A generation later, Rome picked the last quarrel with Carthage. The city was destroyed in 146 BCE and its land became a province. With the old rival gone, Romans began to ask a new question at home: who really holds power now?

The Great Roman Civil War (49–45 BCE, fighting to 31 BCE). The wars had made armies loyal to their generals, not to the republic. In 49 BCE Julius Caesar marched his army across the Rubicon river into Italy against the Senate's orders — open war, Roman against Roman. He beat Pompey's side at Pharsalus in 48 BCE and was master of Rome until he was murdered in the Senate house in 44 BCE. The fighting went on to 31 BCE. In 27 BCE his heir took the name Augustus and held real power, though the republic kept its old names.

The pattern of change. Figure 8 sorts what changed and what stayed the same across these two and a half centuries. Figure 7 gives one long measure: the census.

Roman citizens counted at the census, 340-28 BCE (thousands)

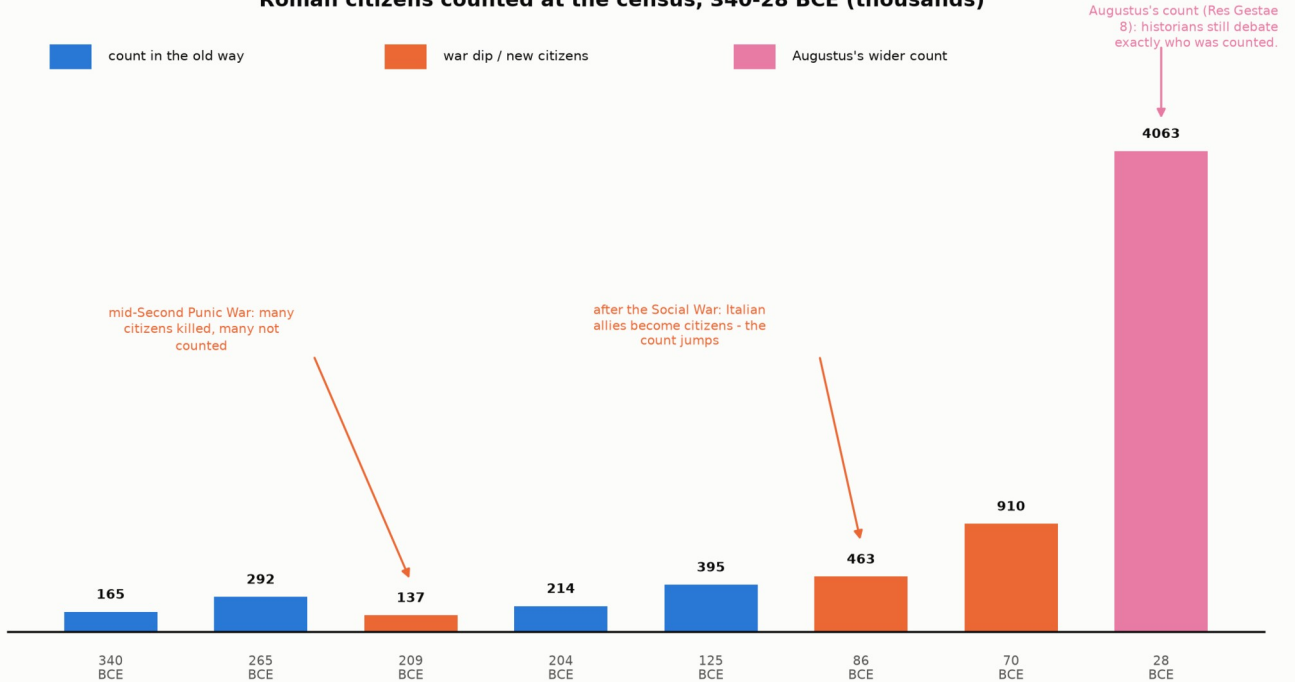


Figure 7 Counts of adult male citizens as recorded (Livy, *Periochae*; Augustus, *Res Gestae* 8; retrieved 2026-08-25). The 28 BCE jump is in the records - its meaning is debated.

The count dips to 137 000 in 209 BCE, in the darkest part of the Second Punic War, when Hannibal was in Italy. It jumps to 910 000 by 70 BCE because, after the Social War (91–87 BCE), Rome's Italian allies were given citizenship and counted at last. The count of 4 063 000 in 28 BCE (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 8) is debated — it may count women and children for the first time — but every reading agrees the citizen body had grown several times over. Figures like these are how historians measure a turning point: not by one battle, but by what the totals look like afterwards.

What stayed the same. Change was real, but so was continuity. The old forms survived: consuls were still chosen, the Senate still met, the law courts still sat, and the census still ran. Rome was still the capital, citizens still served in the armies, most people still farmed, and the old gods were still honoured. A turning point does not erase a society; it bends the path of one. That is exactly the pattern Figure 8 shows, and it is the pattern the tasks at the end of this section ask you to use.

Rome after the wars, 264-27 BCE: what changed, what stayed the same

CHANGED	STAYED THE SAME
Who held power The Senate once shared power with elected consuls; after the civil wars, one man held the real power.	The old forms The Senate still met; consuls were still elected each year; law courts still sat.
Size of Rome's rule From one city in Italy to provinces on three shores of the Mediterranean.	The capital Rome itself stayed the head of everything.
The army From citizen-farmers serving short spells to long-service soldiers loyal to their general.	Who served Soldiers were still Roman citizens, and citizens still expected to serve.
The citizen count From about 300,000 adult male citizens to millions under Augustus.	The census Counts of citizens were still taken, as they always had been.
Wealth and slavery Silver, grain and enslaved people flowed in from the provinces on a new scale.	Daily life for most Most people still lived by farming; the old gods and home rites went on.

Figure 8 A continuity-and-change organiser. Use it to check any claim: does it name a change AND a thing that carried on?

Two-column diagram listing what changed (who held power, the size of Rome's rule, the army, citizen numbers, wealth and slavery) and what stayed the same (the old forms, the capital, citizens serving, the census, daily life and the old gods) between 264 BCE and 27 BCE.

A model paragraph: was the First Punic War a turning point?

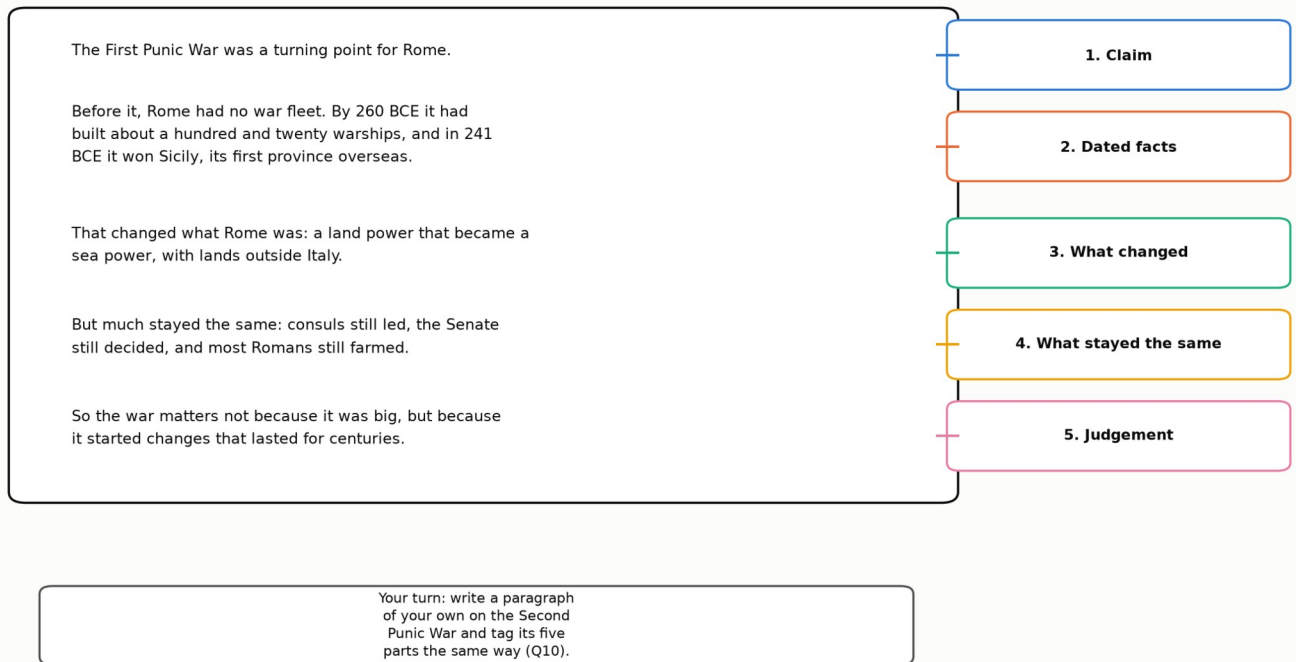


Figure 10 A model paragraph with its five parts tagged. Sentences 2-4 give the evidence; sentences 1 and 5 do the judging. Written for this book.

Model paragraph on the First Punic War with its five sentences tagged as claim, dated facts, what changed, what stayed the same, and judgement.

Close study — a primary source: Polybius on the first fleet

PRIMARY SOURCE - Polybius, Histories 1.20-23

Polybius was a Greek writer living in Rome. He wrote in the 150s-120s BCE, about a century after these events.

When the Romans decided to build their first war fleet, they had no warships of their own. But a Carthaginian warship that ran aground fell into their hands, and they used it as a model and built their whole fleet to its pattern.

They had no trained rowers, so they trained their men on dry land. They set out rowers' benches on the shore, made the men sit in order, and taught them to pull together on a signal, as if the land were the sea.

At Mylae (260 BCE) they fitted their ships with a boarding bridge. When an enemy ship came close, the bridge dropped onto its deck, and the Romans crossed and fought on it as if on land. The Carthaginians lost about fifty ships, and Rome - which had owned no fleet a few years earlier - had won its first battle at sea.

1
the decision
and the model

2
the method:
practice on
land

3
the result: a
new sea power

My own shortened telling of Polybius 1.20-23 (Greek text; public-domain Greek editions).

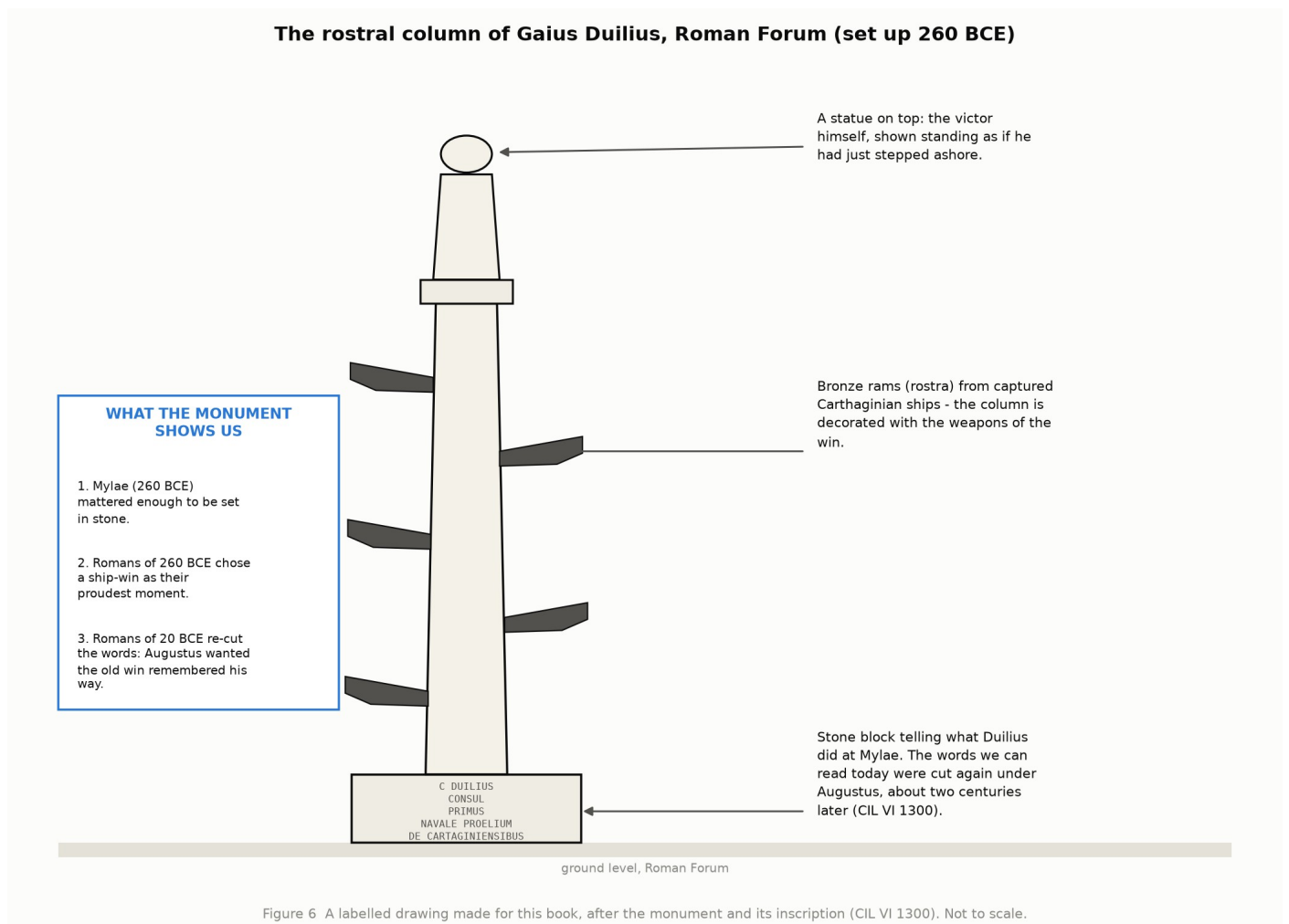
Ask of any source: Who wrote it? When? How did they know? Polybius wrote a century after Mylae, from earlier writers and from documents in Rome - a strong source, still checked against finds like the rams in Figure 6.

Figure 5 A primary source card with margin notes 1-3. Polybius, Histories 1.20-23.

Primary source card carrying three shortened passages of Polybius on Rome's first war fleet, with three margin notes and a box of source questions.

Polybius is our best written source for the Punic Wars: a Greek historian living in Rome, writing in the 150s–120s BCE, about a century after Mylae. He questioned older writers and Roman records. Read his three passages in Figure 5 against the three margin notes, then apply the source questions in the box at the foot of the card.

Two more primary sources check his story, and they are not books at all.



Labelled drawing of the column of Gaius Duilius in the Roman Forum, decorated with the bronze rams of captured ships, with a statue on top and a stone base carrying an inscription.

First, the column of Duilius (Figure 6), set up in the Roman Forum in 260 BCE — the same year as Mylae. It is decorated with the bronze rams of captured ships, and its stone base names the consul and his win at sea. It was made by the people who were there. It tells us what Romans of 260 BCE chose to celebrate: not a land battle, but a ship win. That choice is evidence all by itself. (The words we read today were cut again under Augustus, about two centuries later — one monument, two moments of remembering.)

Second, the sea floor off the Aegates Islands. Since 2010, searches of the battle site have raised 27 bronze rams and 10 helmets from the water; four of the rams carry Roman marks. These are the weapons of the battle of 241 BCE itself. No writer was there — the finds are the witnesses.

Putting the three together. A written account a century later, a monument from the year itself, and the metal from the sea floor: three different kinds of primary source, and they agree. Rome really did build a fleet from nothing, win at sea, and judge the win worth setting in stone and worth fighting for. When sources of different kinds line up like this, historians call the evidence strong.

Close study — a secondary interpretation: was one ruler needed?

By 27 BCE the wars above had made Rome huge — and had ended the republic in all but name. Historians have disagreed about this for as long as it has been studied. Two views, each stated at its strongest:

View A — the republic was worn out. The German historian Theodor Mommsen, in his *History of Rome* (1854–56), argued that the old republic could no longer govern what the wars had made. Provinces were too big for consuls chosen each year, armies answered to generals, and the civil wars showed a state tearing itself apart. On this view, one

strong ruler was not the death of the republic but the answer to a republic that had already failed; Augustus brought order, law and peace to a world the Senate could no longer hold.

View B — the price was freedom. The republican side answers from the ancient sources themselves. Cicero, in his speeches against one-man rule (the *Philippics*, 44–43 BCE), put the case at the time: a state where one man gives the orders is not a commonwealth at all, whatever old names it keeps. On this view, the republic’s faults were real but fixable, and the “order” of one man depended on the luck of who came next — a peace that ends when a bad ruler arrives is not peace, it is a pause.

Both views use the same events — the civil wars, the size of the provinces, the armies’ loyalty to generals. They weigh the same facts in different ways. That is what a contested question looks like in history: not one side ignorant, but two sides weighing. In your own writing (Q9), state each view in full before you judge between them, and you will be marked on the quality of your reasons, never on the side you choose.

Alternative routes (for teachers and curious readers)

The default route above is Rome (.E05), but VC2HH8K15 can be taught through other ancient societies. Each option below is a full route into the same CD, using the same three questions from Figure 9:

- **China (.E01):** the Warring States era (481–221 BCE) — long wars that weakened the Zhou dynasty (a family line of kings) and its feudal system (lords holding land from the king in return for soldiers), with several lords claiming the Mandate of Heaven (the right to rule, granted by heaven).
- **Egypt (.E02):** repeated poor Nile floods as one cause behind the First Intermediate Period (about 2181–2055 BCE), a long age of weak central rule — studied through archaeological evidence and historians’ interpretations. (This route doubles as the neutral-context companion of section 2B; taught here it covers VC2HH8K15, not VC2HH8K07.)
- **Greece (.E03):** putting key events in order — the alphabet, the first games at Olympia, tyranny on the rise, Draco’s laws, early coinage, the coming of democracy — and sorting what continued from what changed.
- **India (.E04):** developing questions on how far contact with Persia, and trade with Rome, drove change.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Use the timeline (Figure 1).

Part	Hint
(a) Which war lasted the longest?	Read the bars, not the names: the longest bar is the longest war.
(b) Put in order, first to last: the battle of Zama; the battle of Mylae; Caesar crosses the Rubicon; the Pyrrhic War begins.	Work left to right along the line; BCE counts down towards zero.

Q2. Use the map (Figure 2). (a) Name the two large islands that passed to Rome after the First Punic War. (b) The battle that ended that war was fought at sea, off the Aegates Islands. In one sentence, explain why a sea battle decided a war about an island. *Starter:* “*Sicily could only be supplied by ...*”

Q3. Use the wars table (Figure 3). Write the name of the war that matches each clue: (a) Rome’s first fleet and first provinces; (b) the worst Roman defeat, then a Roman win in Africa; (c) a Greek king whose wins cost too much; (d) the war that ended with a city destroyed; (e) Roman against Roman.

Q4. Use the Polybius card (Figure 5).

Part	Hint
(a) What did the Romans use as the model for their first warships?	Margin note 1 points at the answer.
(b) Why did they train their rowers on dry land?	Margin note 2.
(c) Complete a source check: Who wrote it? When? How did they know?	The box at the foot of the card.

Q5. Use the Duilius column (Figure 6). (a) What objects decorate the shaft of the column, and where did they come from? (b) The base was re-cut under Augustus, about two centuries after Mylae. *Hint: a monument is a choice about what to remember.* What does the re-cutting tell us about what Augustus wanted Romans to remember?

Q6. Use the census chart (Figure 7).

Part	Hint
(a) The count falls sharply by 209 BCE. Which war was being fought, and what had just happened at Cannae?	Match the date to the timeline.
(b) The count jumps between 86 BCE and 70 BCE. What had Rome's Italian allies just received, after the Social War (91–87 BCE)?	A bigger count is not always a bigger population.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Using Figure 8, choose **three changes** and **three continuities** between 264 BCE and 27 BCE. For each, add one line of dated evidence from this section.

Q8. The bronze rams from the Aegates sea floor: (a) Classify this source — primary or secondary, and written, object or archaeological find? (b) Which parts of Polybius's story do the rams support? (c) What can the rams **not** tell us? Explain one limit of archaeological evidence.

Q9. Read the two views of Rome's one-man rule (View A and View B above). Summarise each view in full, as its own side would put it, in two or three sentences, then argue which view you find better reasoned. You are marked on the quality of your reasons, not on the side you choose.

Q10. Write a model paragraph of your own on the **Second Punic War**, tagging its five parts exactly as Figure 10 does: claim, dated facts, what changed, what stayed the same, judgement.

Extended response

“The Second Punic War was the true turning point of Rome's history, not the First.” Do you agree? Write about one page. Apply the three questions of Figure 9, order your events chronologically (Skills 6B), separate short-term shock from long-term change (Skills 7B), and judge significance using criteria (Skills 7C). Construct your answer as an evidenced argument (Skills 7D): every claim dated, every judgement argued.

Answers and model responses

Q1. (a) The Macedonian Wars (214–148 BCE), about 66 years. (b) Pyrrhic War begins (280 BCE) → Mylae (260 BCE) → Zama (202 BCE) → Caesar crosses the Rubicon (49 BCE).

Q2. (a) Sicily, and then Sardinia (with Corsica). (b) Model: Sicily could only be supplied and held by sea, so once Rome destroyed the relief fleet at the Aegates Islands, Carthage could no longer feed or reinforce the island, and gave it up.

Q3. (a) First Punic War. (b) Second Punic War. (c) Pyrrhic War. (d) Third Punic War. (e) Great Roman Civil War.

Q4. (a) A Carthaginian warship that ran onto the shore and fell into Roman hands. (b) They had no trained rowers, so they practised the rowing order on land until the crews could pull together on a signal. (c) Polybius, a Greek historian living in Rome; writing in the 150s–120s BCE, about a century after Mylae; from earlier writers and from Roman records — a strong source, still checked against finds such as the rams.

Q5. (a) Bronze rams from captured Carthaginian ships. (b) Model: Augustus wanted the old sea win remembered as part of *his* Rome's story — a reminder that Rome's greatness began with wins at sea, now under one man's rule. The re-cutting shows memory itself being used by the new order.

Q6. (a) The Second Punic War; at Cannae (216 BCE) a Roman army had been destroyed, and Hannibal was burning farms across Italy. (b) Citizenship: after the Social War, Rome's Italian allies were counted as citizens at last, so the count measures a bigger "Rome", not just a fast-growing population.

Q7. Model set — changes: (1) Rome ruled provinces overseas (Sicily 241 BCE), not just Italy; (2) the citizen count grew from about 292 000 (265 BCE) to 910 000 (70 BCE) as allies were enrolled; (3) real power moved from the Senate to one man (Augustus, 27 BCE). Continuities: (1) consuls were still chosen each year; (2) the Senate still met and the courts still sat; (3) most Romans still farmed, and the old gods were still honoured.

Q8. (a) Primary; an archaeological find (objects from the event itself). (b) They confirm a large sea battle off the Aegates Islands around 241 BCE, with Roman and Carthaginian ships present — the battle Polybius describes as the end of the war. (c) Model limit: rams cannot tell us who gave the orders, why the battle began, or the numbers killed; objects give no narrative, so they must be read together with written sources.

Q9. Model structure: View A (Mommsen) says the republic could no longer govern its own empire — provinces too big, armies loyal to generals, civil war after civil war — so one ruler was the answer to failure, and Augustus brought order. View B (the republican case, Cicero's *Philippics*) says a state ordered by one man is not a commonwealth, the republic's faults were fixable, and one-man "peace" lasts only as long as a good ruler lives. Judgement: either side is acceptable; strong answers weigh both views in full and argue from dated events (e.g. the civil wars for A; the murder of Caesar and the loss of free elections for B).

Q10. Model tags for a Second Punic War paragraph — claim: "The Second Punic War was a turning point for Rome." Dated facts: Hannibal took Saguntum 219 BCE, won at Cannae 216 BCE; Scipio won at Zama 202 BCE. What changed: Carthage lost its fleet and army; wealth and captives poured into Rome; Italian farms were burned and emptied. What stayed the same: consuls still led, the Senate still decided, the old gods were still honoured. Judgement: the war matters because it left Rome without a rival overseas and with an army loyal to generals — the two facts that later broke the republic.

Sources for this section (all retrieved 2026-08-25)

- **Polybius**, *Histories* 1.20–23 (Greek text; public-domain Greek editions) — the first fleet, land training, Mylae. Figure 5 is my own shortened telling, labelled as such.
- **CIL VI 1300** — the inscription of Duilius, Roman Forum (Latin inscription collection); column set up 260 BCE, re-cut under Augustus.

- **Livy**, *Periochae* and Book 22 — census figures and the Cannae account (48 200).
- **Augustus**, *Res Gestae* 8 — the census count of 4 063 000, 28 BCE.
- **Appian**, *Civil Wars* 1.7 — the Social War and the grant of citizenship to Italian allies.
- **Plutarch**, *Life of Pyrrhus* — the Pyrrhic War.
- **Aegates Islands finds** — bronze rams and helmets raised from the battle site in seabed searches reported 2010–2024 (27 rams, 10 helmets; four rams with Roman marks).
- **Modern battle estimates** — modern low readings of Cannae (10 500–16 000), against Polybius (70 000) and Livy (48 200).
- **Theodor Mommsen**, *History of Rome* (1854–56) and **Cicero**, *Philippics* (44–43 BCE) — the two views of one-man rule.

All figures in this section are original drawings and tables made for this book, from the dated sources above.

When societies met and clashed: conquest, growing trade, peace treaties

In this section we follow one society — Rome — to see how contact and conflict between societies produced three big developments: the **conquest** of other peoples' lands, **growing trade**, and **peace treaties**. We ask *why* Rome kept fighting, *what changed* as a result, and *who gained* from the so-called peace.

Curriculum focus — VC2HH8K16 Students learn about: why societies came into contact or conflict, and what followed from it — conquest, growing trade, peace treaties.

This section delivers the Rome elaborations (the chapter plan makes Rome the end-to-end case study; the other societies' elaborations, .E01–.E09, stay as comparison points):

- VC2HH8K16.E10 — the empire's furthest reach, and foreign cults changing Roman worship: Isis (Egypt), Mithras (Persia) and the Pantheon of Gods (Greece)
- VC2HH8K16.E11 — explaining Pax Romana
- VC2HH8K16.E12 — analysing why Rome's power rose and spread

Skills joined here: ordering events on timelines (Section 6B), causes and consequences (Section 7B), sources and interpretations (Sections 6C–6F).

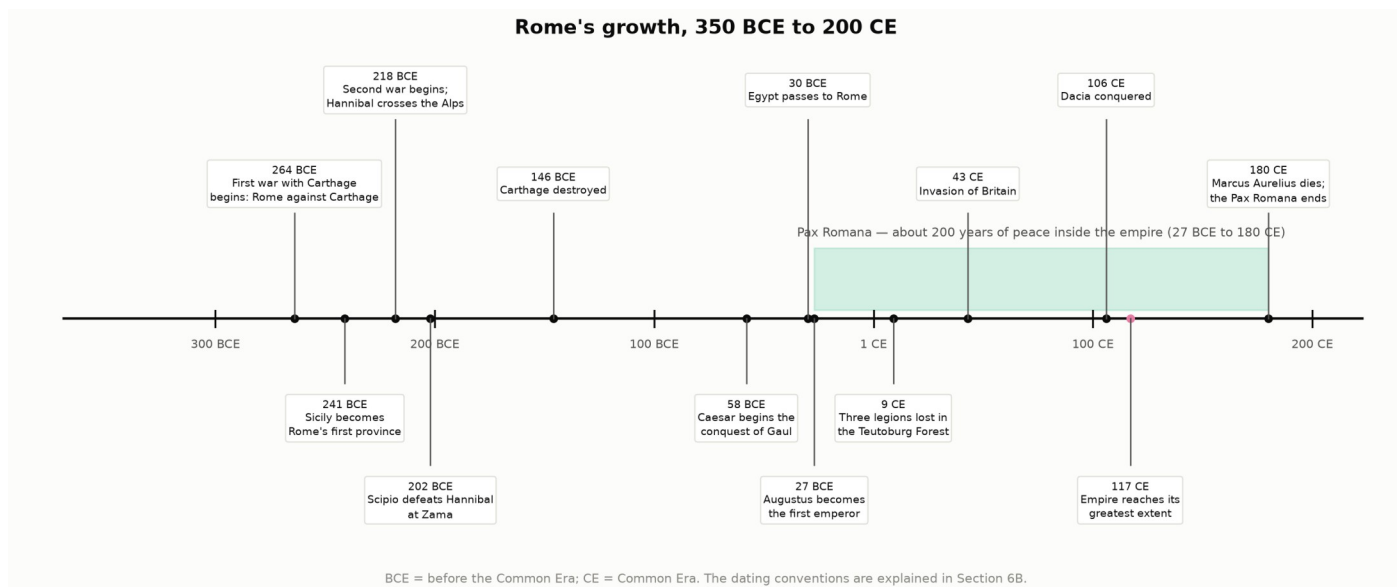
Key terms

- **empire** — one power ruling many peoples and lands, usually won by force. *Empire* is a contested word: what one society calls “bringing order”, the conquered may call rule by force. In this section we use it to mean Rome's rule over many provinces.
- **province** — a district outside Italy ruled by Rome, with a Roman governor and taxes paid to Rome.
- **tribute** — a forced payment of money or goods from one power to another.
- **treaty** — a formal agreement that ends a war or makes peace, with terms both sides must accept.
- **frontier** — the edge of an empire's ruled lands, often guarded by soldiers.
- **legion** — the main unit of the Roman army, about 5,000 soldiers.
- **Pax Romana** — “the Roman peace”: the long period, roughly 27 BCE to 180 CE, with no civil wars and no big invasions inside most provinces.

Teaching sequence

Part 1 — One city comes to rule many peoples VC2HH8K16.E12

Around 509 BCE, Rome was a small city-state that had thrown out its kings and set up a **republic**: a state led by elected officials and a senate of noble families. By 200 CE, the same city ruled lands from Britain to Mesopotamia. Figure 1 shows the shape of that story before we try to explain it.



Timeline from 350 BCE to 200 CE showing Rome's wars of growth, the greatest extent of the empire in 117 CE, and the long Pax Romana band from 27 BCE to 180 CE

Figure 1. Rome's rise in a handful of events (Section 6B shows how to read and build timelines like this one).

Two things to notice in Figure 1. First, growth came in bursts: each war added land, and each new border made the next war more likely. Second, the Pax Romana band is not the end of war — it is the end of war *inside* the empire. We come back to that in Part 3.

Part 2 — Conquest: the wars with Carthage and the making of an empire VC2HH8K16 . E12

Rome's biggest early rival was **Carthage**, a rich trading city in North Africa with its own empire of ports and islands. Rome and Carthage fought three wars (264–146 BCE).

- **First war (264–241 BCE):** mostly a war over Sicily. Rome won, and Sicily became Rome's first **province** — a ruled district paying tax to Rome.
- **Second war (218–201 BCE):** the Carthaginian general **Hannibal** crossed the Alps into Italy and beat Roman armies again and again. Rome survived, carried the war to Africa, and won at **Zama (202 BCE)**.

- **Third war (149–146 BCE):** Rome finished the job. Carthage was destroyed.

A peace treaty is a source: its terms tell us who won and what the winner wanted. Compare the two treaties in Figure 2.

Two peace treaties with Carthage, side by side		
Part of the peace	Peace of 241 BCE (ends the first war with Carthage)	Peace of 201 BCE (ends the second war with Carthage)
Land	Carthage gives up Sicily, which becomes Rome's first province.	Carthage keeps its homeland in Africa but gives up Spain.
Fleet	Warships partly handed over.	All warships handed over except ten.
Money	3,200 talents of silver paid over ten years (a talent was a large weight of silver).	10,000 talents of silver paid over fifty years.
Prisoners and hostages	Roman prisoners handed back for a payment.	Carthaginian hostages handed over to Rome.
Right to make war	Carthage must not attack Rome's allies.	Carthage must not make war at all without Rome's consent.
146 BCE: after the third war, Rome destroyed Carthage. The treaties show a pattern — each defeat made the terms harsher, and they lasted only as long as Rome wished.		

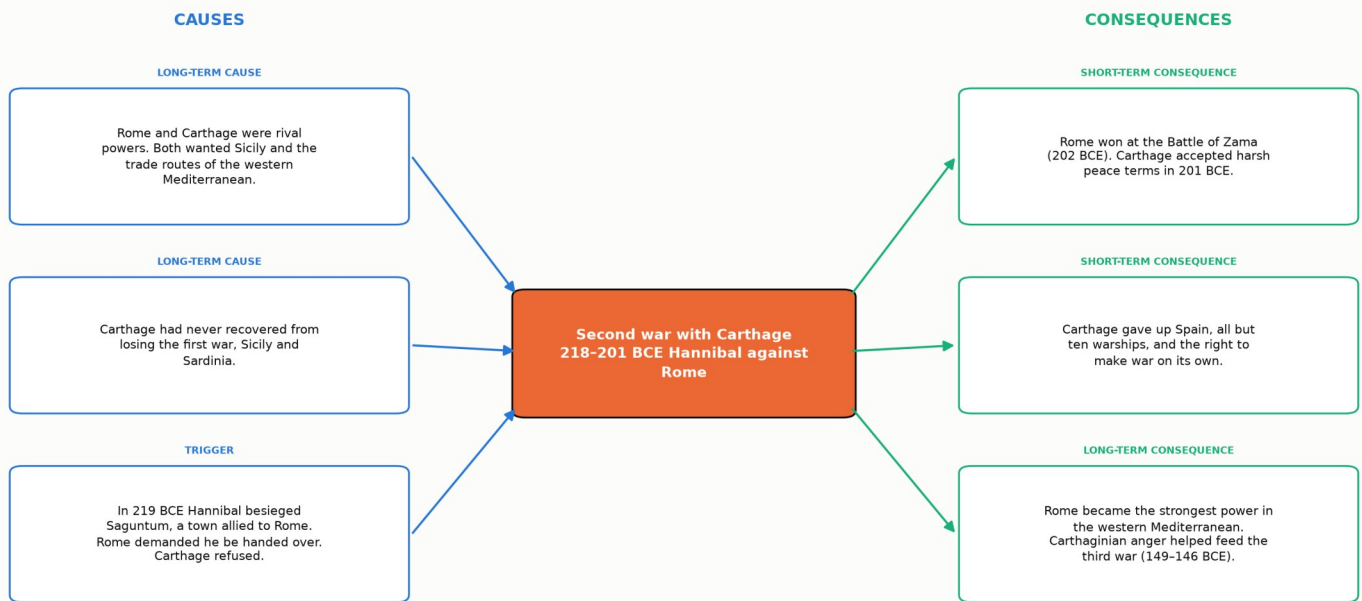
Table comparing the peace terms of 241 BCE and 201 BCE across land, warships, money, prisoners and hostages, and the right to make war, with a note on the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE

Figure 2. Two peace treaties with Carthage: each defeat brought harsher terms.

The pattern in Figure 2 is a key idea for this section: **consequences feed back into causes**. The harsh terms of 201 BCE left Carthage weak but bitter, and left Rome used to winning.

Historians sort causes into **long-term causes** (deep, slow-building reasons), **short-term causes**, and a **trigger** (the spark that sets off fighting). They sort consequences the same way. Figure 3 models this for the second war with Carthage (the method is practised in Section 7B).

Model: causes and consequences of the second war with Carthage (218–201 BCE)



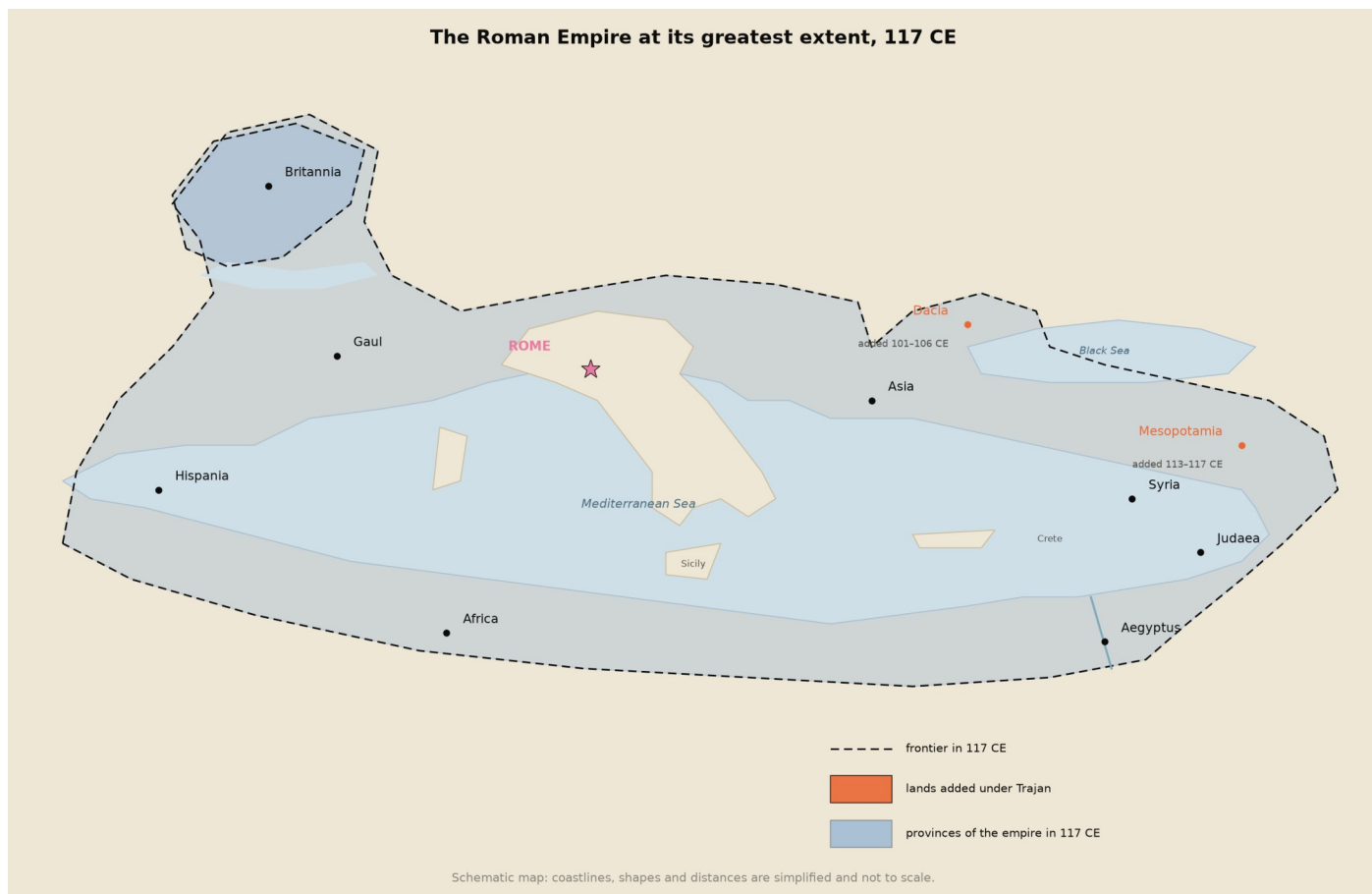
A shape to reuse: long-term causes build pressure over years, a trigger sets the event off, and consequences can be short-term or long-term. Sorting skills are practised further in Section 7B.

Cause and consequence model of the second war with Carthage, with long-term causes and a trigger on the left and short-term and long-term consequences on the right

Figure 3. One war, sorted into causes and consequences.

After the wars with Carthage, Rome was the strongest power around the Mediterranean Sea, and conquest fed more conquest: each new province brought tax, grain and silver, and each new border touched new neighbours.

- **Julius Caesar** conquered Gaul (modern France) in his **wars in Gaul (58–50 BCE)**. Caesar wrote his own account of these wars. Historians use it, but they check it: Caesar wanted Romans to read him as a great general.
- In **30 BCE**, Egypt fell to **Octavian**, soon honoured with the name **Augustus**, the first emperor. Egypt's grain now fed the city of Rome.
- **Claudius** invaded **Britain in 43 CE**. In **60–61 CE**, Queen **Boudica** led a revolt against Roman rule; it was put down harshly. Revolts are a consequence of conquest that victory arches do not show.
- The emperor **Trajan** took **Dacia (101–106 CE)** and pushed east into **Mesopotamia (113–117 CE)**. In **117 CE** the empire stood at its **furthest expansion** — the first half of .E10. No later emperor kept lands beyond it.
- **Hadrian** gave up Mesopotamia and, from **122 CE**, had a stone wall built across northern Britain. The wall said it plainly: expansion had limits.



Schematic map of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in 117 CE, showing the provinces, Trajan's additions of Dacia and Mesopotamia, and the frontier line around the Mediterranean

Figure 4. The empire at its greatest extent, 117 CE. Schematic — not to scale.

Part 3 — Pax Romana: peace — for whom? VC2HH8K16.E11

From Augustus (27 BCE) to the death of the emperor **Marcus Aurelius** (180 CE), most provinces saw no civil wars and no big invasions. Roads were safe, towns grew, and trade spread. Romans called this the **Pax Romana**, the Roman peace. An altar in Rome, the **Ara Pacis**, dedicated in 9 BCE, was built to honour that peace.

But Figure 5 holds two truths side by side.

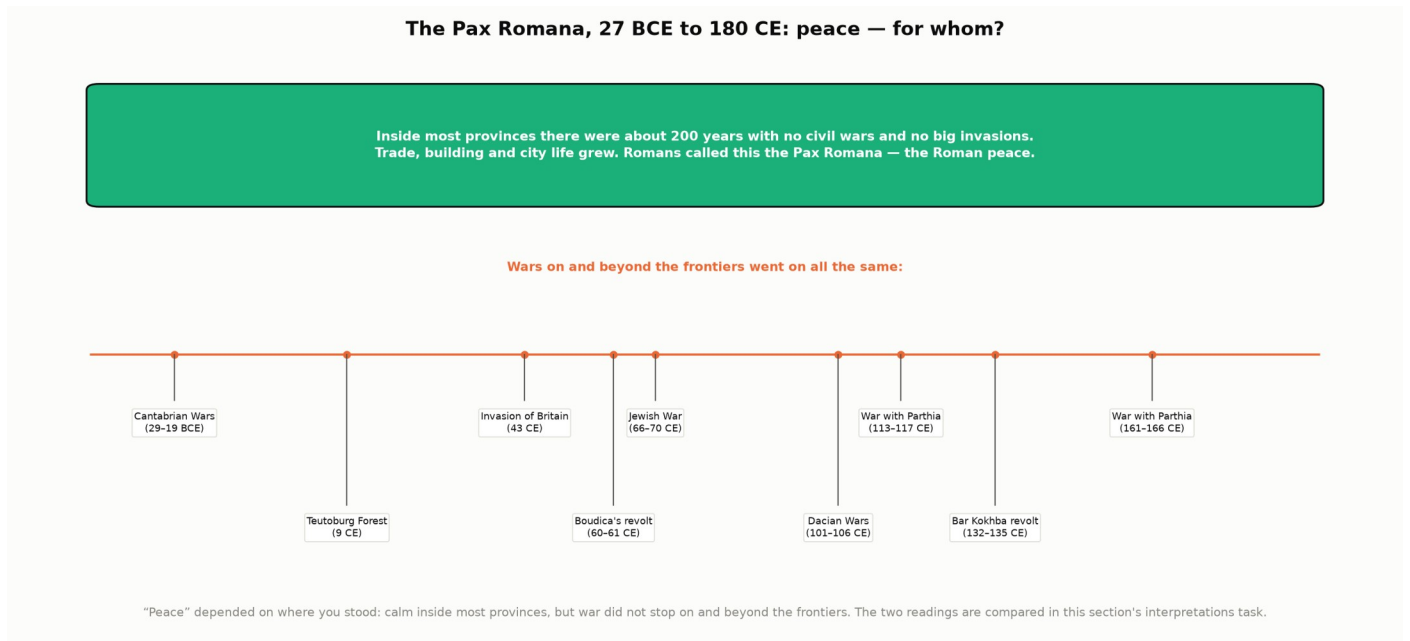


Diagram pairing the claim of about 200 years without civil wars or big invasions inside most provinces with a timeline of frontier wars, including the Teutoburg Forest, Boudica's revolt, the Dacian Wars and the Bar Kokhba revolt

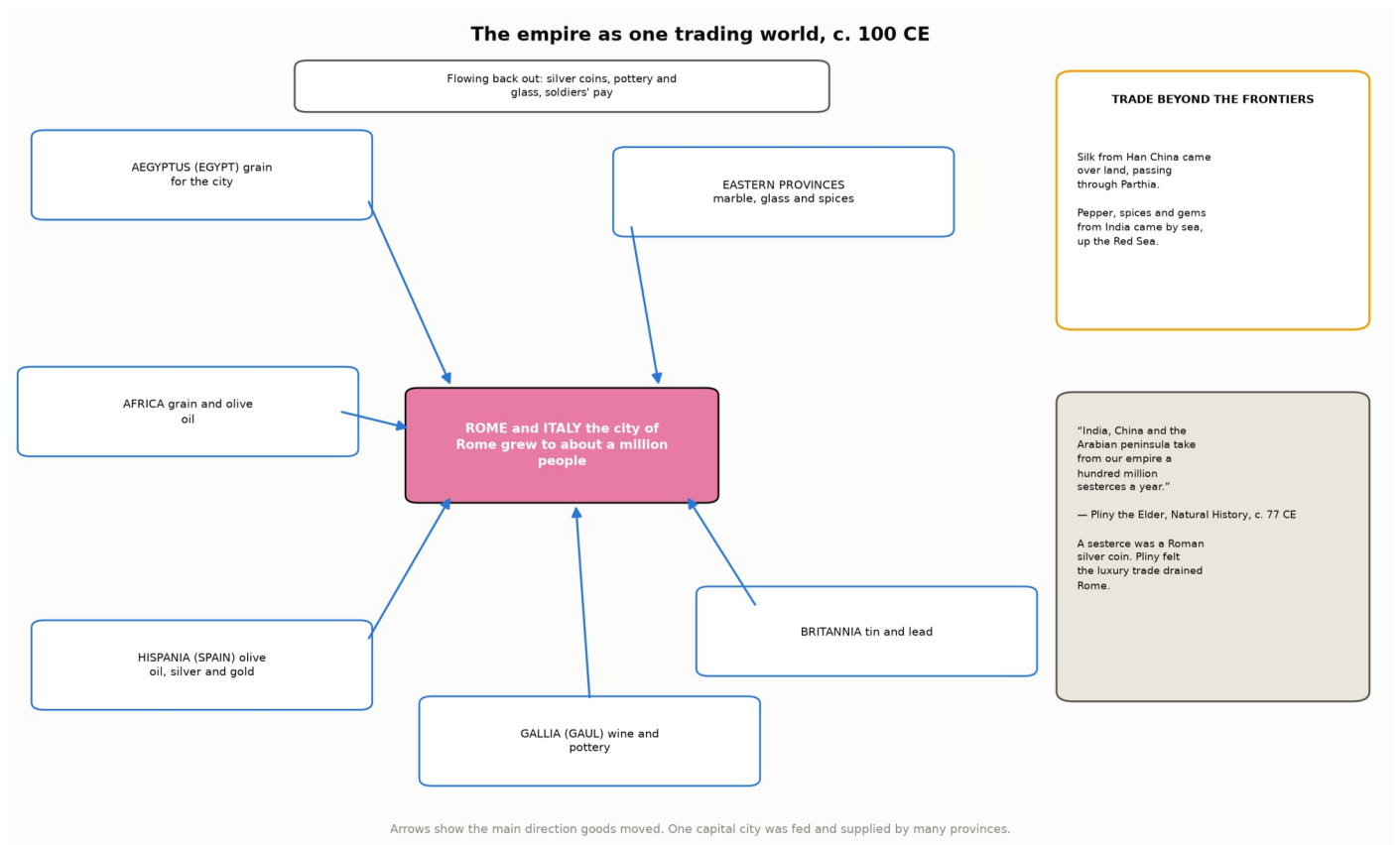
Figure 5. The Pax Romana, 27 BCE to 180 CE: calm inside, war at the edges.

Inside the provinces, "peace" was real: no civil wars, safe roads, courts that worked. On and beyond the frontiers, war never stopped — and for newly conquered peoples, "peace" meant taxes, lost land and friends and family sold as **enslaved** people. The Roman writer **Suetonius** (c. 121 CE) tells us that after three legions were destroyed in the **Teutoburg Forest (9 CE)**, Augustus cried out, "Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!" Even the bringer of peace counted its costs.

So whether the Pax Romana was a good thing is a *frame* question: the answer depends on where you stand. We weigh the two frames in Part 6.

Part 4 — The expansion of trade: one sea, one market VC2HH8K16.E12

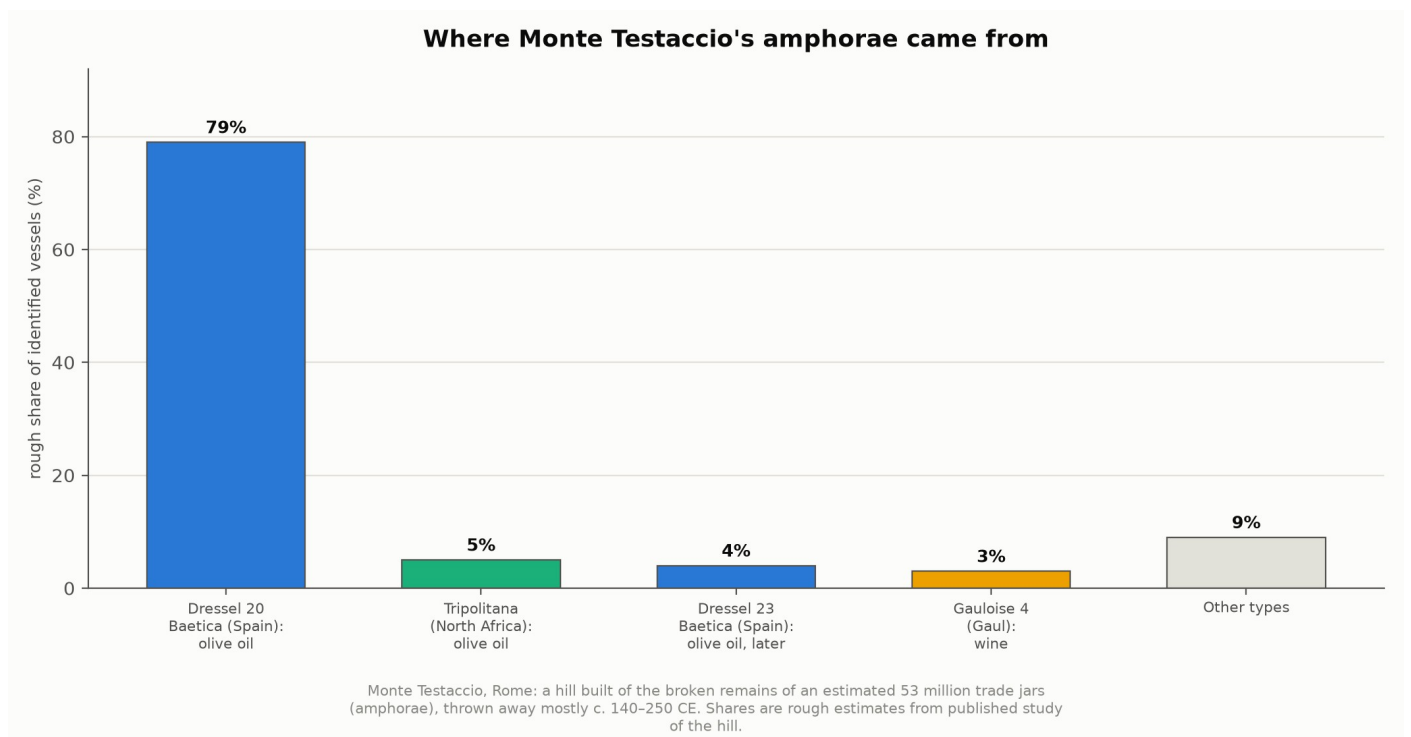
Conquest did not only move borders; it moved goods. One ruled sea, one coinage, one system of law, and a web of roads and ports turned the empire into a single trading world (Figure 6).



Flow diagram of goods moving from six provinces into Rome and Italy, with silver coins, pottery and glass flowing back out, alongside trade beyond the frontiers in silk and spices and a complaint from Pliny the Elder about silver draining east

Figure 6. The empire as one trading world, c. 100 CE.

Archaeology backs the picture up. In Rome, the hill of **Monte Testaccio** is built from an estimated 53 million broken oil jars, thrown away mostly c. 140–250 CE near the river. Figure 7 shows where those jars came from: above all, olive oil from **Baetica** in Spain.



Bar chart of the rough share of identified amphorae at Monte Testaccio: Dressel 20 from Baetica 79 per cent, Tripolitana 5 per cent, Dressel 23 4 per cent, Gauloise 4 3 per cent, and other types 9 per cent

Figure 7. Where Monte Testaccio's amphorae came from.

Trade also reached **beyond** the frontiers: silk from Han China came overland through Parthia, and pepper, spices and precious stones from India came by sea. The Roman writer **Pliny the Elder** (c. 77 CE) complained that this luxury trade drained silver out of the empire: “India, China and the Arabian peninsula take from our empire a hundred million sesterces a year” (a sesterce was a Roman silver coin). The complaint is itself evidence. Trade on that scale was new, and it was a **consequence of conquest**: the empire's silver, gathered as tax and plunder, paid for it.

Part 5 — Contact changing belief: foreign gods in Rome VC2HH8K16.E10

Goods and soldiers carried gods. Rome's oldest foreign borrowing was Greek: Roman gods were matched to Greek ones (Jupiter–Zeus, Venus–Aphrodite), and the **Pantheon** in Rome — a temple to many gods, rebuilt c. 125 CE — takes its name from Greece. From Egypt came **Isis**, a goddess of magic, family and the sea, worshipped by merchants and freed slaves; her temple at **Pompeii** was buried and kept safe by the volcano disaster of 79 CE. From Persia came **Mithras**, a god of soldiers and traders, worshipped in small underground shrines; one was found under **London** in 1954. Figure 8 sums up the three.

Foreign gods in the Roman world: three examples of contact changing belief				
	Where it came from	How it reached the Roman world	Evidence you can still see	Who worshipped
The Greek pantheon	Gods of Greece matched to Roman names: Jupiter–Zeus, Juno–Hera, Venus–Aphrodite, Mars–Ares, Minerva–Athena.	Centuries of contact with Greek settlers in southern Italy; Greek books and teachers came to Rome.	Temples and statues across the empire; the Pantheon in Rome, rebuilt c. 125 CE, honoured many gods.	Public worship shared by most people in Roman society.
Isis, from Egypt	An Egyptian goddess linked to magic, family and the sea.	Carried by merchants and sailors across the Mediterranean.	A temple of Isis preserved at Pompeii; statues and small shrines found across the empire.	Merchants, freed slaves and even some emperors.
Mithras, from Persia	A Persian god worshipped in shared meals and mystery rites.	Carried by soldiers and merchants along the frontiers.	Underground shrines (mithraea) from Rome to London; London's was found in 1954 and is on show today.	Mostly soldiers, merchants and officials.

Belief travelled the same routes as goods and soldiers. Some foreign worships were welcomed; a few, at times, were banned or punished.

Table of three foreign worships — the Greek pantheon, Isis from Egypt and Mithras from Persia — with columns for where each came from, how it reached the Roman world, the evidence still visible, and who worshipped it

Figure 8. Three examples of contact changing Roman belief and practice.

Rome usually welcomed new gods. Worship that refused to honour the Roman state could, at times, be banned or punished. Either way, contact changed Roman religious belief and practice — which is exactly what .E10 asks us to describe.

Part 6 — Whose story? Augustus writes it up; historians write back

Primary source close study. When Augustus died in 14 CE, he left a list of his deeds, the **Res Gestae** (“The Deeds of Augustus”). Copies were carved in stone across the empire; the best surviving copy stands on the temple of Rome and Augustus at **Ancyra** (modern Ankara, Türkiye). Figure 9 shows three short excerpts.

A primary source: the Res Gestae of Augustus

RES GESTAE DIVI AVGVSTI	TRANSLATION (shortened, made for this book)
IANVM QVIRINVM [...] CVM PER TOTVM IMPERIVM POPVLI ROMANI TERRA MARIQVE ESSET PARTA VICTORIIS PAX [...] TER ME PRINCIPE SENATVS CLAVDENDVM ESSE CENSUIT (13) AEGYPTVM IMPERIO POPVLI ROMANI ADIECI (27) PARTHOS SPOLIA ET SIGNA RESTITVERE MIHI SVPPLEICESQVE AMICITIAM POPVLI ROMANI PETERE COEGI (29)	The gate of Janus Quirinus ... our ancestors wished it shut whenever peace had been won by victory through the whole empire of the Roman people, on land and on sea ... while I was princeps, the senate decreed three times that it should be shut. (line 13) I added Egypt to the empire of the Roman people. (line 27) I forced the Parthians to give back to me the spoils and standards of three Roman armies, and to seek, as suppliants, the friendship of the Roman people. (line 29)

Augustus, Res Gestae (The Deeds of Augustus), written
before his death in 14 CE. The best surviving copy is
carved in Latin and Greek on the temple of Rome and
Augustus at Ancyra (modern Ankara, Türkiye). Excerpted
and translated for this book, 2026-08-25.

[...] marks cut text. Latin carved in capitals.

One emperor, three developments: peace (13), conquest (27) and diplomacy (29). It is his own account — that is exactly why historians read it carefully.

Primary source panel with shortened Latin excerpts of the Res Gestae of Augustus on the left and an English translation on the right, covering peace won by victory (line 13), the adding of Egypt to the empire (line 27), and the Parthians handing back the standards of three Roman armies (line 29)

Figure 9. The Res Gestae of Augustus, excerpted.

Read Figure 9 like a historian (Sections 6C–6D): ask *who* speaks, *why*, and *what is left out*. Line 13 celebrates “peace won by victory” — peace as a prize of war. Line 27 says, in one line, what conquering Egypt meant. Line 29 celebrates the handing back of the standards lost when Roman armies were beaten at Carrhae (53 BCE) — returned by Parthia in 20 BCE without a battle, a win Augustus dressed up as a triumph. The Res Gestae is priceless evidence **and** Augustus’ own side of the story. That double nature is the point.

Interpretations. Was the Pax Romana a blessing, or a cover for conquest? Figure 10 sets two readings side by side (weighing them is practised in Section 6F).

Same empire, two readings

Reading 1 — Rome's own voice

- Augustus lists conquered lands in his *Res Gestae* and celebrates "peace won by victory".
- The Ara Pacis altar in Rome (dedicated 9 BCE) honours the peace of Augustus.
- Coins celebrate the return of the standards from Parthia — a win with no battle.
- The message: Roman rule brings order, roads, law and safety.

Reading 2 — voices of conquered peoples

- In Tacitus' *Agricola* (c. 98 CE) the British leader Calgacus says of Rome: "They plunder, they butcher, they ravage, and they give it the false name of empire; they make a desert and call it peace."
- Boudica's revolt (60–61 CE) showed that conquest bred anger, not gratitude.
- For many, the price of "peace" was taxes, lost land and enslaved people.

Note: Calgacus' speech was written by Tacitus, a Roman author. Historians read it as a Roman imagining of the enemy's voice, not as recorded words — that makes it evidence of both voices at once.

Two-panel figure comparing two readings of the same empire: Rome's own voice, from the *Res Gestae*, the Ara Pacis and coins, against the voices of conquered peoples, from Calgacus in Tacitus, Boudica's revolt, and the price of taxes, lost land and enslaved people

Figure 10. Same empire, two readings.

In 1776, **Edward Gibbon** wrote that the years from 96 to 180 CE were the time when the human race was most happy and prosperous — the classic praise of the Pax Romana. In 2016, **Adrian Goldsworthy** wrote a whole book on the Pax Romana agreeing that the peace was real, while adding that it was won by violence and kept by the sword, and that not everyone shared it. Same facts, different weighting: that is what interpretation is.

Historians have long argued about **why** Rome expanded, too:

- **Tenney Frank (1914)** studied Rome's early wars and argued that Rome mostly fought *defensive* wars — pulled in step by step as allies called for help, until, almost without planning it, Rome owned an empire.
- **William Harris (1979)** answered that the Roman ruling class *chose* war, again and again, for land, plunder and glory; fear was the mask, profit the engine.

Argue each side at its strongest before you judge. Frank is right that Rome rarely declared war out of the blue — there was nearly always a call for help, a broken treaty, a frightened ally. Harris is right that the same senate that answered those calls also chose war when peace would have done, and grew rich on the results. Most historians today blend the two: a system that kept choosing war while honestly believing it was defending itself.

That blend is your model for .E12: causes are layered (long-term, short-term, trigger), and consequences ripple (conquest → trade → new beliefs → new revolts → new wars).

Worked example (scaffolded)

Question: Use Figure 3 to write one well-structured paragraph: "Explain causes and consequences of the second war with Carthage."

Step 1 — Sort. Pick two causes (one long-term, one trigger) and two consequences (one short-term, one long-term) from Figure 3.

Step 2 — Connect. Join them with cause-and-consequence language: *because, as a result, this led to, in the long term.*

Step 3 — Date and place. Add at least two dates, and say who won and who lost.

Model opening (you finish it): "Rome and Carthage were rivals for power and trade around the Mediterranean Sea, so when Carthage attacked Saguntum in 219 BCE, ..."

Practice questions — scaffolded

1. (6B) Use Figure 1. Put these in order, from the first to the last: (a) Augustus becomes the first emperor; (b) the battle of Zama; (c) the empire at its greatest extent; (d) the first war with Carthage begins; (e) Boudica's revolt.
2. (6C) Use Figure 2. (a) Name one land term and one money term that was harsher in 201 BCE than in 241 BCE. (b) Which term took away Carthage's right to defend itself?
3. (7B) Use Figure 3. Label each item as *long-term cause*, *trigger* or *consequence*: (a) rivalry over trade and power; (b) Carthage attacks Saguntum; (c) Rome takes Spain.
4. (6C) Use Figure 4. (a) Name the two provinces the map shows as added by Trajan, with their dates. (b) Which sea sat at the centre of the empire?
5. (6D) Use Figure 9. (a) Who wrote the Res Gestae, and by when? (b) Which line (13, 27 or 29) is evidence of conquest? (c) Give one reason historians check this source rather than simply believe it.
6. (6E) Use Figure 10. Match each frame to a reading: "peace as safety and order" / "peace as the silence of the conquered".

Practice questions — unscaffolded

7. (E11) Explain the Pax Romana in your own words (4–5 sentences). Say what it meant inside most provinces, and what was happening on and beyond the frontiers.
8. (7B, E12) Write one paragraph (6–8 sentences) explaining causes and consequences of the second war with Carthage. Use at least two causes, two consequences, and two connectives.
9. (E12) "Conquest caused the expansion of trade." Use Figures 6 and 7 to support this claim with three points of evidence.
10. (6F, E11) "The Pax Romana was a myth." Use Figure 10 and Part 6 to argue both sides, then give your own judgement.

Answers (scaffolded)

1. d (264 BCE), b (202 BCE), a (27 BCE), e (60–61 CE), c (117 CE).
2.
 - (a) Land: in 241 BCE Carthage gave up Sicily; in 201 BCE it also gave up Spain. Money: 3,200 talents over ten years became 10,000 talents over fifty years. (b) The ban on making war without Rome's consent.
3.
 - (a) long-term cause; (b) trigger; (c) consequence (short-term).
4.
 - (a) Dacia (added 101–106 CE) and Mesopotamia (added 113–117 CE). (b) The Mediterranean Sea.
5.
 - (a) Augustus; written before his death in 14 CE. (b) Line 27. (c) Any one: it is his own account of himself; it leaves out defeats and cruelty; it was carved to be honoured, not checked.
6. “Peace as safety and order” → Reading 1 (Rome's own voice). “Peace as the silence of the conquered” → Reading 2 (voices of conquered peoples).

Fully-worked solutions (unscaffolded)

7. The Pax Romana (“Roman peace”) was the long period from 27 BCE to 180 CE when most provinces had no civil wars and no big invasions. Inside the empire, roads were safe, towns grew and trade spread, so for many people the peace was real. But on and beyond the frontiers war never stopped, as the Teutoburg Forest, Boudica's revolt and the Dacian Wars show. For newly conquered peoples, “peace” meant taxes, lost land and enslaved family. So the Pax Romana was peace for the inside of the empire, won and kept by war at its edges.

8. Rome and Carthage were rivals for power and trade around the Mediterranean Sea, and this rivalry was the long-term cause of the second war with Carthage. The trigger came in 219 BCE, when the Carthaginian general Hannibal attacked Saguntum, a town friendly to Rome. As a result, Rome declared war. In the short term, the war brought Hannibal into Italy and, after his early wins, a Roman victory at Zama in 202 BCE. The peace terms — losing Spain, the fleet and paying 10,000 talents — were a further consequence for Carthage. In the long term, Rome stood alone as the leading Mediterranean power, and that new strength led to more conquests. Causes were layered, and consequences fed the next round of conflict.

9. First, Figure 6 shows that after conquest the empire worked as one market: grain from Aegyptus and Africa fed the city of Rome, while oil, wine, metal and pottery flowed in from the provinces — trade on that scale needed the ruled sea and roads that conquest built. Second, Figure 7 shows the scale in the archaeology: Monte Testaccio's ~53 million jars, mostly Spanish oil jars, are physical proof of a regular, empire-wide trade. Third, Figure 6 also shows trade reaching beyond the frontiers (silk, spices), paid for with the empire's silver — silver gathered as tax and plunder from conquered lands. So conquest built the one market, and the one market expanded the trade.

10. One side says the Pax Romana was a myth: Calgacus, in Tacitus, calls it a desert called peace; revolts such as Boudica's, and wars from Teutoburg to the Bar Kokhba revolt, show that for the conquered it meant taxes, lost land and slavery. The other side, from Gibbon, says the years to 180 CE were the happiest and most prosperous the human race had known: inside most provinces there were no civil wars, safe roads and growing towns, and Goldsworthy agrees the peace was real. My judgement: the Pax Romana was neither myth nor gift. It was a real peace for the inside of the empire, won by conquest and kept by the sword — which is why two honest readings of the same facts can differ.

Source notes (retrieved 2026-08-25)

Primary sources

- *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* — inscription, best surviving copy on the temple of Rome and Augustus at Ancyra (modern Ankara, Türkiye); written before 14 CE; excerpted and translated for this book.
- *Ara Pacis Augustae* — altar, Rome, dedicated 9 BCE.
- Coins of Augustus celebrating the return of the standards from Parthia (20 BCE) — surviving examples in museum collections, e.g. the British Museum, London.

- Temple of Isis — Pompeii archaeological park, buried 79 CE.
- London mithraeum — found 1954, Museum of London.
- Monte Testaccio — archaeological site, Rome.

Ancient writers (translations made for this book)

- Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, book 12, c. 77 CE.
- Tacitus, *Agricola* (speech of Calgacus), c. 98 CE — Tacitus composed the speech; it is evidence of Roman imaginings of the enemy's voice.
- Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, c. 121 CE.

Secondary sources

- Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 1776, ch. III.
- Adrian Goldsworthy, *Pax Romana*, 2016.
- Tenney Frank, 1914 — the defensive-war reading of Rome's early wars.
- William Harris, 1979 — the aggressive-war reading of Rome's early wars.

One person or group that changed an ancient society

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH8K17 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding, The ancient world, 10 000 BCE – 600 CE).

Elaboration linkage (D7 — linkage only, not a teaching order; ids verbatim from the VCAA export, final ids over substantive elaborations):

- **Rome (default path, D9):** .E09 — one Roman figure: context, early life, deeds, contemporaries’ verdicts (e.g. Mark Antony, Agrippina the Younger); .E10 — a biography of one significant Roman. This section is authored end-to-end on **Augustus**, the named figure whose career best fits the CD’s focus on changing an ancient society; Julius Caesar appears as context and as the student biography option in Q8, per the chapter note (“Julius Caesar or Augustus”).
- **Alternative paths (join key, remain available to a teacher or a D9 sign-off swap):** .E01 China — evaluate one significant Chinese figure of the era; .E02 China — biography of Wu Zetian, Qin Shi Huang or Confucius; .E03 Egypt — evaluate a significant figure such as Nefertiti or Rameses II; .E04 Egypt — biography of Hatshepsut, Rameses II or Cleopatra; .E05 Greece — evaluate a significant figure such as Herodotus or Plato; .E06 Greece — biography of Leonidas or Pericles; .E07 India — evaluate one significant Indian figure of the era; .E08 India — biography of Chandragupta Maurya or Ashoka. Each alternative reuses this section’s structure: historical context → early life → achievements → contemporaries’ perceptions → evaluation with questions and criteria → biography task.

Achievement standard coverage: this section serves the standard’s sentence on identifying and explaining which events, people, ideas and developments carried continuity and change, and its sentence on establishing and analysing historical significance with criteria — the roles and contributions of people, events, places, developments and legacies. Criteria work is owned by 7C (VC2HH8S09) and is applied here, not re-taught; source features and value are owned by 6C/6D (VC2HH8S03/VC2HH8S04) and applied here in the Res Gestae close study and the Suetonius interpretation.

First Nations disposition (§2A): none — the CD and all ten of its elaborations carry no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Nothing in this section is excluded.

Cross-references: 3B (patricians, plebeians, slaves — the social groups Augustus ruled over), 3D (turning points: the assassination of Julius Caesar as the trigger of the civil wars), 3G (interpretations and legacies of Rome and Augustus), 6C/6D (source features, strengths and limitations), 7C (significance criteria), 7D (constructing evidenced interpretations). No section assumes a specific Level 7 sequence (D1).

Key subject terms defined at first use (D2 exemption 2): role, contribution, achievement, significant individual, group, contemporaries, evaluate, criteria, biography, republic, emperor, principate, princeps, patron, patronage, civil war, standing army, grain dole, primary source, secondary source (the last two re-established in one sentence, owned by 6C). Contested-term handling per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md`: “achievement” and “great” are defined as contested at first use (whose standard? from whose point of view?) with the operational frame stated; the two opposed contemporary views of Augustus are steelmanned (Rule 5) and tested symmetrically (Rule 4), and marking is on quality of reasoning, not conclusion reached (Rule 5, stated in the answer guide).

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Frame the CD: what “role”, “contribution” and “achievement” mean, and why “achievement” is a contested word (What you will learn). 2. Historical context first (E09 names it): Rome’s republic in crisis, Julius Caesar, the assassination, the civil wars (Key ideas Part 1; Figure `3f_timeline.png`). 3. Early life to power: Octavius → Octavian → Augustus (Part 2; Figure `3f_timeline.png`). 4. The changes, sorted by area of society (Part 3; Figures `3f_change_web.png`, `3f_republic_to_empire.png`) — this is the “role, contribution and achievements” core. 5. Contemporaries’ perceptions (Part 4; Figure `3f_two_views.png`) — steelman both views; mark reasoning, not conclusion. 6. Primary-source close study: the Res Gestae, Augustus’s own account (Figures `3f_resgestae_card.png`, `3f_resgestae_extract.png`) — features, content, context, and the gap between what it says and what it leaves out. 7. Secondary-source interpretation: Suetonius, writing about 107 years later (Figures `3f_suetonius_card.png`, `3f_brick_marble.png`) — strengths,

limitations, and his record of the divided verdict on Augustus. 8. Evaluation with questions and criteria (Part 5; Figure 3f_criteria.png), then scaffolded practice Q1–Q6, unscaffolded Q7–Q10. The chapter’s evidence-based extended response lives in the Skills chapters, not here (per-section volume, §3).

Common misconceptions to address: that “emperor” means Augustus was a king with a crown (he refused the title of king and kept the republic’s names and offices — his power was new, its costume was old); that one man alone changed Rome (he relied on a group: Agrippa, Maecenas, the poets, the army); that the Res Gestae is a neutral record of facts (it is Augustus’s own case for his legacy, and its silences are evidence too); that a secondary source written later is automatically worthless (Suetonius worked from records and gives us views no primary source keeps); that “great” settles the argument (it reports a judgement and must be earned with defined criteria and evidence).

What you will learn in this section

About two thousand years ago, one young man from Rome rose to power in a broken, war-torn state — and over more than forty years changed how millions of people were ruled, fed, protected and remembered. His name was **Augustus**. In this section you will study his **role** (the part he played), his **contribution** (what he gave to Roman society) and his **achievements** (what he got done) — and you will judge, with questions and evidence, whether those changes were good ones, and for whom.

Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **role** — the part a person or group plays in events.
- **contribution** — what a person or group gives or adds to a society.
- **achievement** — something a person or group succeeds in doing. **Note:** this is a contested word. What counts as an achievement, and whether it was a good one, depends on who is judging and what standard they use. In this section, an achievement is treated as *a change a person or group brought about that we can check in the sources* — and every judgement about whether it was “great” must be argued with evidence, not assumed.
- **significant individual** — a person whose actions made a large, lasting difference to a society. **Group** — a set of people whose combined actions did the same. The curriculum allows either; the examples for this section are all individuals, so we study one individual in depth. Task Q10 shows how the same questions can be asked of a group.
- **contemporaries** — the people who lived at the same time as the person being studied.
- **evaluate** — to judge how good, important or successful something was, using reasons and evidence.
- **criteria** — the standards or tests you use when you evaluate.
- **biography** — an account of a person’s life, written by someone else.

We will also keep using words you have met in other sections: **source**, **evidence**, **primary source** (made at the time, by someone there or close to it), **secondary source** (made later by someone who was not there), **cause**, **consequence**, **continuity**, **change** and **significance**.

Key ideas

Part 1: Rome before Augustus — a republic in crisis

For nearly five hundred years, Rome had been a **republic** — a state with no king, where citizens chose leaders to govern for set times. Real power sat with the **senate**, a council of wealthy, well-born men, and with elected officials such as the two **consuls**, who led the state for one year each. No one man was meant to rule alone.

By the first century BCE, that system was breaking. Generals with loyal armies fought each other for control. One of them, **Julius Caesar**, conquered new lands, grew rich and powerful, and in 49 BCE marched his army into Italy against the senate’s orders. He won a civil war and was made **dictator** — an official given supreme power in a crisis, once only for a short time, but Caesar held it for years. In 44 BCE a group of senators, fearing he wanted to be king, **assassinated** him: they stabbed him to death at a senate meeting on the **Ides of March** (15 March).

The murder did not save the republic. It started fresh civil wars that lasted more than a decade. This is the broken world our individual grew up in — the **historical context** the curriculum asks you to examine.

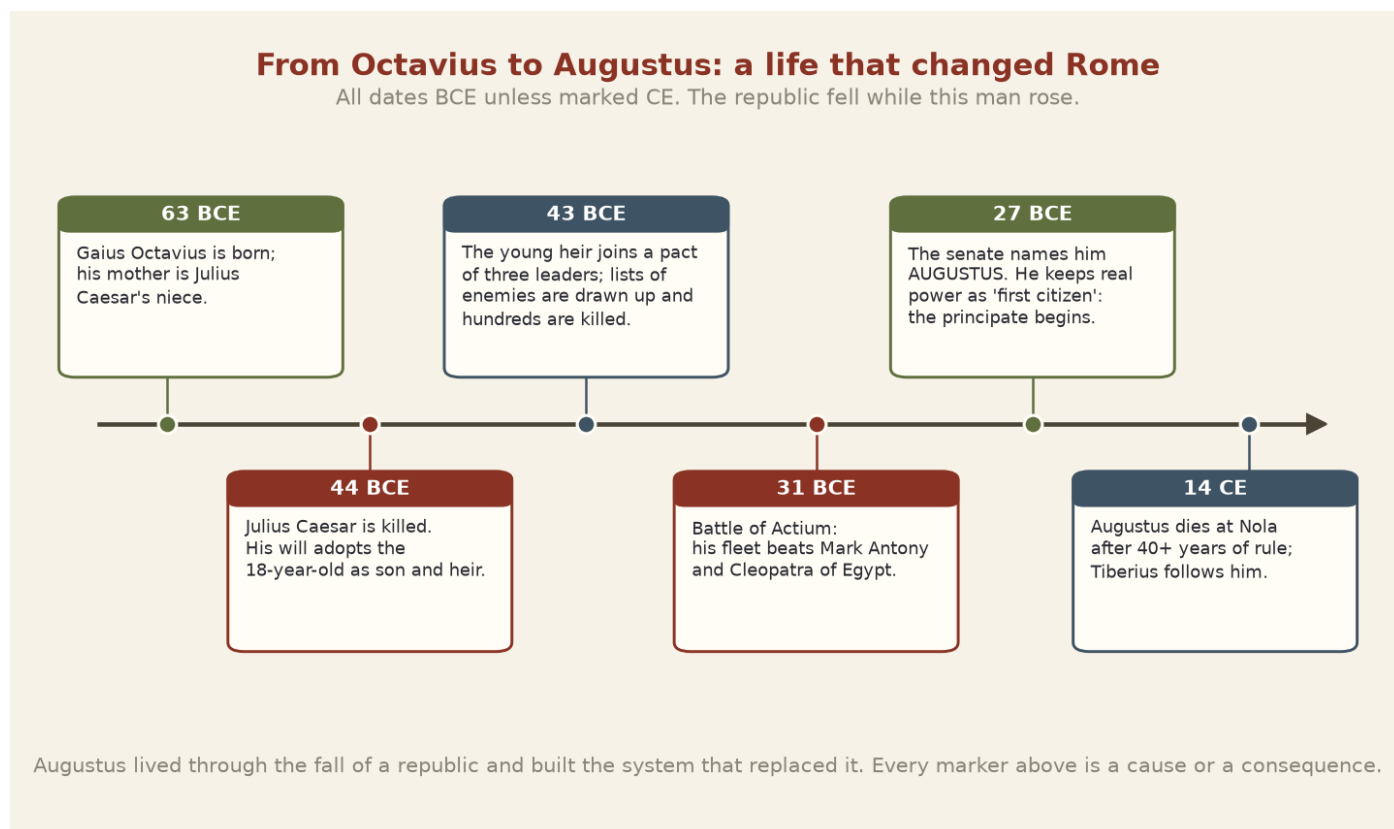
Part 2: From Octavius to Augustus

The future Augustus was born **Gaius Octavius** on 23 September 63 BCE. His mother was Julius Caesar's niece, which made Caesar his great-uncle. When Caesar was killed in 44 BCE, his will named the eighteen-year-old as his adopted son and chief heir. From that moment the teenager called himself by Caesar's name. Historians call this early phase of his life **Octavian**.

What followed was fifteen years of alliances, betrayals and battles. Octavian first joined with two of Caesar's followers to hunt down the assassins, but the three leaders also drew up lists of political enemies to be killed, and hundreds of men died. Then the alliance itself split, and civil war began again. In **31 BCE**, at a great sea battle off the coast of Greece, Octavian's fleet beat the forces of his last rival, **Mark Antony**, and Antony's ally, Queen **Cleopatra** of Egypt. By 30 BCE Octavian stood alone at the top of the Roman world.

In **27 BCE** he did something clever. He announced that he was handing power back to the senate and people of Rome. The grateful senate gave him a new name: **Augustus**, meaning "the honoured one". In practice Augustus kept real control — over the army, the money and the provinces — while the senate, the consuls and the old republican names all stayed in place. He called himself **princeps**, "first citizen". Later historians call his system of rule the **principle**: one-man rule dressed in republican clothes. He was, in effect, Rome's first **emperor** — a single ruler holding power for life — though he never used a crown or the title of king.

Augustus ruled for more than forty years, until his death on 19 August 14 CE.



Timeline of the life of Augustus and the fall of the Roman republic, from his birth in 63 BCE to his death in 14 CE, marking the assassination of Julius Caesar, the great sea battle of 31 BCE and the naming of Augustus

Part 3: How Augustus changed Roman society

Augustus's changes reached nearly every part of Roman life. Historians sort them into areas so they can be studied — and judged — one by one.

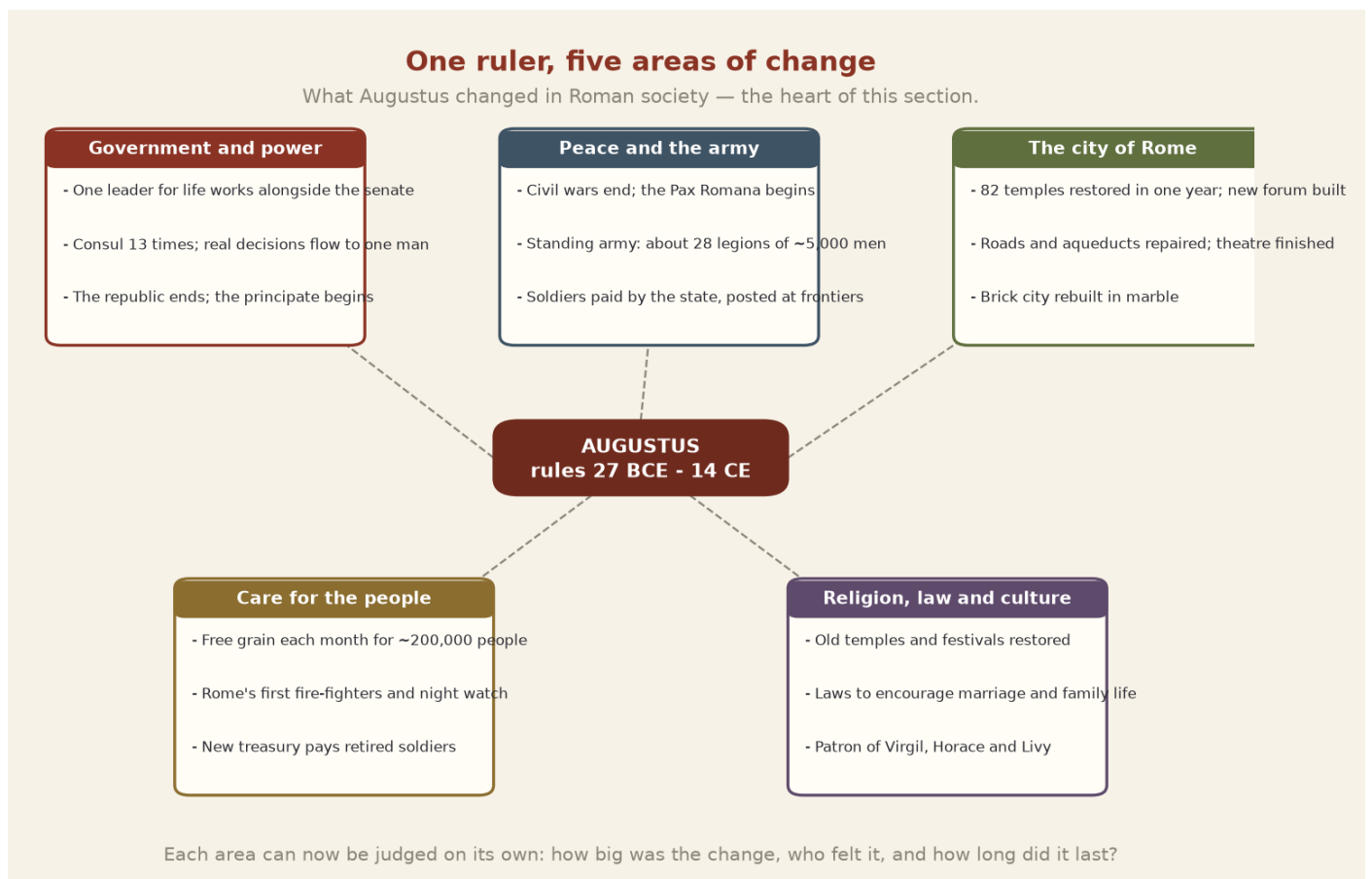
Government and power. Augustus created a new way of ruling: one leader, chosen for life, working alongside (and above) the senate. He was consul thirteen times, and he used law and census-taking to organise the state. The senate still met; elections still happened; but real decisions now flowed to one man. This was the biggest single change: it ended the republic and set the pattern of rule that Rome kept for centuries.

Peace and the army. After a hundred years of civil wars, Augustus brought peace to most of the Roman world. He turned the army into a **standing army** — professional soldiers paid and supplied by the state, not by ambitious generals — of about 28 **legions** (each of roughly 5,000 men). He posted them at the frontiers, built roads so they could move fast, and created a special bodyguard of soldiers camped near the city itself. The long period of peace that began under him is known as the **Pax Romana**, “Roman peace”.

The city of Rome. Augustus rebuilt the capital. He restored temples (his own record says 82 in one year alone), built a new **forum** — a public square — with a grand temple, finished a theatre, repaired roads and **aqueducts**, and added markets and public buildings. His biographer’s famous summary: he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble.

Care for the people. About 200,000 people in Rome received free **grain** each month — the **grain dole** — and Augustus made sure the supply kept flowing from Egypt and North Africa. He set up Rome’s first organised fire-fighters and night watch, and a new treasury to pay retired soldiers, so armies no longer depended on the money or favour of their generals.

Religion, law and culture. He restored old temples and festivals, and passed laws to encourage marriage and family life. He also acted as a **patron** — a rich supporter — of writers and artists. His helper **Maecenas** backed poets such as **Virgil** and **Horace** and the historian **Livy**, whose works shaped how Romans saw their own past. This flowering is still called the “Augustan age” of Roman writing. His right-hand man **Agrippa** built temples, baths and waterworks — evidence that changing Rome took a team, not just one man.



Web diagram sorting the changes Augustus brought to Roman society into five areas: government and power, peace and the army, the city of Rome, care for the people, and religion, law and culture

Rome before and after Augustus

Same city, same names - a different way of life. Compare column by column.

Area of life	Under the republic (before)	Under Augustus (after)
Who rules	Two consuls elected for one year; the senate of wealthy families led the state	One leader for life - the emperor. Consuls and elections remain, but real decisions flow to him.
The army	Armies raised when needed; soldiers follow their general and are paid by the state	A standing army of 28 legions; soldiers paid by the state and posted at the frontiers; a guard force near Rome.
The city	Temples and public buildings of brick and tufa; the city suffered fires and floods	Temples restored in a year, a new forum, a theatre, repaired roads and aqueducts.
Food and safety	Grain supply can fail; no organised fire-fighters or night watch	Free grain each month for about 200,000 people; Rome's first fire-fighters and night watch.
Stability	A century of political murder and civil wars.	Decades of peace across the empire - the start of the Pax Romana.

Notice what stayed the same too: the senate still met, consuls were still elected, and the old names were kept. Change and continuity sit side by side.

Comparison chart showing how Rome was ruled and lived in under the republic before Augustus and under Augustus after: who held power, how the army worked, what the city looked like, and how people were fed and protected

Part 4: What did people at the time think?

The curriculum asks how a significant individual “was perceived by their contemporaries” — that is, what the people who lived through it made of him. For Augustus, contemporaries split sharply, and both views deserve their strongest form before you judge either.

View 1 — he saved Rome. To many, Augustus ended a century of bloodshed, gave the state one clear leader, fed the city, rebuilt its temples and brought decades of peace and steady rule. Poets praised him; cities set up altars to his peace; ordinary people had grain, games and safety. In this view, his achievements were real, wide and lasting — and the price, some shared power given up, was worth paying.

View 2 — he destroyed liberty. To others — above all in the senate class — Augustus was the man who finished off the republic. His road to power ran through civil war, the killing lists of 43 BCE, and the deaths of rivals. The old freedom, in which leading citizens shared rule and checked each other’s power, was gone. In this view, the peace was real but it was the peace of one man’s grip, and the marble city stood on top of a lost republic.

Neither view is silly, and neither is complete. Your task as a historian is not to pick a side because it sounds nicer, but to weigh the evidence for each and say what you judge, and why. Different students, reasoning well from evidence, may reach different judgements — that is expected, and it is the reasoning that is marked.

Two views of Augustus from his own time

Both views are held by real people with real evidence. Weigh them before you judge.

VIEW 1 - He saved Rome	VIEW 2 - He destroyed liberty
- Ended a century of civil wars and bloodshed - Gave the state one clear leader after years of chaos - Fed the city: free grain for about 200,000 people a month - Rebuilt temples, squares and roads; made Rome safe and grand - Brought decades of peace and steady rule - the Pax Romana - Poets praised him; cities raised altars to his peace Its strongest line: the peace was real, wide and lasting.	- His road to power ran through civil war and the deaths of rivals - In 43 BCE he shared in lists of enemies to be killed; hundreds died - The senate lost its real share of power; elections kept the names only - The old freedom - leaders sharing and checking power - was gone - Conquered peoples, slaves and the poor gained least from his rule - His own record lists only his good deeds Its strongest line: the peace was the peace of one man's grip.

Neither view is silly; neither is complete. Your job: weigh the evidence for each, then say what you judge and why. Two students who reason well may reach different judgements - the reasoning is what counts.

Diagram presenting the two strongest contemporary views of Augustus side by side: he saved Rome from civil war, and he destroyed the republic's shared freedom, each with its evidence and the reminder that judgement must follow evidence

Part 5: Evaluating achievements with questions and criteria

To evaluate Augustus's achievements, historians use questions and **criteria** — agreed tests for judging importance. You met significance criteria in section 7C; here are the ones we use in this section:

1. **How big was the change?** One street repaired, or the whole way a state is ruled?
2. **How many people felt it?** A few senators, or millions across the empire?
3. **How long did it last?** A year, or centuries after his death?
4. **What do the sources show?** Buildings, coins, inscriptions and writings can all be checked. Whose voices do they carry — and whose are missing (slaves, women, conquered peoples)?
5. **Good for whom?** An achievement for the state may be a disaster for the people it conquered. A full evaluation names who gained and who lost.

Judging an achievement: five questions, applied

The criteria this section uses - with a worked example on Augustus's settlement of power in 27 BCE.

Criterion (the test)	What to ask	Worked example: 27 BCE
1. How big was the change?	One small fix, or a whole new way of ruling?	Augustus's ruling: one leader for life replaced shared rule.
2. How many people felt it?	A few leaders, or millions across the empire?	Millions. The senate lost its real share of power; the city was fed.
3. How long did it last?	A year, a lifetime, or centuries after the person died?	Centuries. Rome kept this form of rule long after Augustus died.
4. What do the sources show?	Buildings, coins, inscriptions, writings - and whose voices survive?	Buildings, coins and temples survive. Voices of slaves and conquered peoples are mostly missing.
5. Good for whom?	Who gained and who lost? Name both.	Many gained peace and grain. Senators lost shared rule; conquered peoples lost their freedom.

A judgement that uses all five tests is an evaluation. 'He was great' on its own is not - it is a claim waiting for evidence. These are the same criteria used in section 7C for historical significance.

Table of the five evaluation questions and criteria used in this section to judge the achievements of Augustus, with a worked example applied to his settlement of power in 27 BCE

Primary source close study: Augustus's own words — the Res Gestae

Near the end of his life, Augustus wrote an account of what he had done. It is called the **Res Gestae Divi Augusti** — “The Deeds of the Divine Augustus”. After his death in 14 CE the text was carved in Latin on bronze tablets set up in front of his great **mausoleum** (tomb) in Rome. Copies were sent across the empire. The best surviving copy, in Latin and Greek, is carved on the walls of a temple in **Ankara**, in modern Turkey — so scholars call it the Ankara copy.

Primary source card: the Res Gestae Divi Augusti

The words Augustus chose to be remembered by.

PRIMARY SOURCE - an inscription in Augustus's own name	
What it is:	The 'Deeds of the Divine Augustus' - Augustus's own list of his life, his honours and his works, written near the end of his life.
Who made it:	Augustus himself (or writers working from his words).
When:	Composed by about 14 CE; set up after his death on 19 August 14 CE.
Material and form:	Latin text carved on bronze tablets and stone; copies sent across the empire in Latin and Greek.
Where it stood:	Bronze tablets stood in front of his great tomb (mausoleum) in Rome, where all could see them.
Best surviving copy:	Carved on the walls of the temple of Rome and Augustus at Ankara, in modern Turkey - scholars call it the Ankara copy.
Purpose:	To fix how later generations would remember him: the wars he ended, the buildings he raised, the money he gave.
It CAN show:	how Augustus saw himself; what he chose to claim; real facts (offices, deaths of 43 BCE, buildings he created).
It CANNOT show:	the way he was actually thought; the lives of slaves, women and conquered peoples.

Source card for the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*: what it is, who wrote it, when, what it was made of, where it stood, and where the best surviving copy can be seen today

Here is the most famous passage, from chapter 34 of the inscription. The Latin is from the Ankara copy; the English is a fresh translation made for this section.

“In my sixth and seventh consulships [28 and 27 BCE], after I had put out the fires of the civil wars, I gained control of everything by the agreement of all, and I handed the state over from my own power into the judgement of the senate and the people of Rome. For this service, the senate gave me the name Augustus ... After that time I stood above everyone in influence, but of power I had no more than the other men who were my colleagues in each office.”

— *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, chapter 34, translated from the Latin by the author for this section

Run your source questions over it:

- **Features and context:** an inscription — words carved in stone and bronze — set up where everyone could see them. It is a **primary source**: Augustus's own words, from his own lifetime, about his own deeds.
- **What it shows:** how Augustus wanted to be remembered. He claims he *ended* civil wars, *freed* the state, and *gave power back* — while keeping more influence than anyone.
- **What it does not show:** the killings of 43 BCE, the civil wars' dead, or the views of the senators who lost their share of power. A source that lists only its good deeds is not lying in every line — but it is choosing every line.
- **A small clue to careful reading:** in chapter 1 Augustus says he was “nineteen” when he raised his first army; by our counting he was eighteen. Romans counted ages in a different way — and the man writing had every reason to sound older and grander.

The figure below sorts the main sources about Augustus — primary and secondary — and what each one can show us.

The boast that summed up a reign

Suetonius, The Life of Augustus, chapter 28 - written about 121 CE.

WHAT SUETONIUS WROTE (translated for this section)

‘He made the city so grand - even though it was not dressed to match the greatness of the empire, and was open to floods and fires - that he could rightly boast: I FOUND ROME A CITY OF BRICK, AND I LEAVE IT A CITY OF MARBLE.’

Latin: Urbem ... excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus, marmoream se relinquere, quam latericiam accepisset.

What it tells us

What we should check

What it cannot tell us

Augustus rebuilt the capital on a grand scale

As the emperor, people could judge. Temple locations had to be approved. This meant that Augustus had some temples razed for it to be built instead - evidence must test it.

What he did not do. He did not build a temple to his own god, but he did build a temple to Mars, the god of war.

Suetonius wrote this a century after Augustus died - one reason we check his story against stones, coins and inscriptions.

Feature panel of Suetonius's brick-and-marble quote about Augustus's rebuilding of Rome, in Latin and translation, with what the quote tells us and what we should still check

What survives of Augustus? Sorting the sources

Every claim in this section rests on sources like these.

Source	Type	What it shows	Where it is today
Res Gestae - Augustus's own record of his deeds, carved on bronze and stone	PRIMARY	How he wanted to be remembered; offices, titles and buildings he owned	Best copy, building in the city of Ankara, Turkey
Silver coins struck with his face, names and honours	PRIMARY	The image and titles he put into every hand	British Museum, London
The marble statue of Augustus found at Prima Porta	PRIMARY	How he chose to be seen: calm, in army dress, like a very young Mars	Rome
The Ara Pacis - the Altar of Augustan Peace, dedicated 9 BCE	PRIMARY	The peace he claimed, carved in marble where he could	Rome
Suetonius, The Life of Augustus, written about 121 CE	SECONDARY	Praise and blame side by side, from a careful collector of copies of his books	Rome
Cassius Dio, Roman History, written in the early 200s CE	SECONDARY	A long story of his rise and rule, using earlier writings	Rome

Primary sources were made at the time; secondary sources were made later by people who were not there. Both need checking - section 6C and 6D show how.

Table sorting the main sources about Augustus into primary and secondary, with what each source shows and where it can be seen today

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Using Figure 3f_timeline.png, put these five events in order from first to last, and give the date of each: (a) the great sea battle off the coast of Greece; (b) Augustus dies at Nola; (c) the assassination of Julius Caesar; (d) the senate gives Octavian the name Augustus; (e) the birth of Gaius Octavius.

Q2. Figure 3f_change_web.png sorts Augustus's changes into five areas. Sort these five actions into the correct area, with one line of evidence from the section for each: (a) creating a standing army of about 28 legions; (b) setting up fire-fighters and a night watch; (c) restoring 82 temples in one year; (d) ruling as consul thirteen times while real power flowed to one man; (e) keeping free grain flowing to about 200,000 people in Rome.

Q3. Read the Res Gestae passage in Figure 3f_resgestae_extract.png. Which parts are **fact claims** (things we can check against other evidence), and which parts are **Augustus’s own favourable judgement**? Name one of each and explain your sorting.

Q4. Give one strength and one limitation of each source studied in this section: (a) the Res Gestae; (b) Suetonius’s *Life of Augustus*. Use the two source cards (Figures 3f_resgestae_card.png and 3f_suetonius_card.png) to help you.

Q5. Look at Figure 3f_two_views.png. Match each piece of evidence below to the view it best supports — View 1 (he saved Rome) or View 2 (he destroyed liberty): (a) decades of peace and steady rule after a century of civil wars; (b) the killing lists of 43 BCE, in which hundreds of enemies were put to death; (c) free grain for about 200,000 people in Rome each month; (d) the end of the senate’s real share of power.

Q6. Biography planner. Copy the frame in Figure 3f_biography_frame.png and fill in each box for Augustus: birth and family; early life and the will of Caesar; road to power; main changes as leader; what contemporaries thought; death and what he left behind. Use information from Parts 1–4 of Key ideas.

Writing a biography: plan first, then write

To create your biography, first plan your biography. Then write your biography.

1. Birth and family	2. Early life
3. Road to power	4. Main changes
5. What contemporaries thought	6. Death and what he left behind

Model paragraph about Augustus

Augustus was born in 63 BCE to Gaius Octavius and Atia. He was adopted by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. He became the first emperor of Rome in 27 BCE. He ruled for 40 years and brought peace and stability to Rome. He was a great leader and a great man. He died in 14 CE at Nola. He left behind a great legacy and a great name.

Biography planner with six boxes to fill — birth and family, early life, road to power, main changes, what people at the time thought, death and what was left behind — and a model paragraph about Augustus beside them

Tasks to try on your own

Q7. Choose ONE achievement of Augustus from Figure 3f_change_web.png. Evaluate it using all five criteria in Figure 3f_criteria.png. Finish with a clear judgement of your own: how important was this change, and for whom? Give evidence for every point.

Q8. Using your planner from Q6, write a short biography of Augustus — or, as an alternative, of Julius Caesar (his story is in Part 1 and in section 3D) — in one paragraph of 5–7 sentences. Cover context, early life, achievements, and what contemporaries thought, and end with one sentence of your own evaluation. The model paragraph in Figure 3f_biography_frame.png shows one good shape; yours may be different.

Q9. “Augustus saved Rome.” “Augustus destroyed the Roman republic.” For each claim, give the strongest evidence a supporter would use. Then write your own reasoned judgement — two or three sentences — saying which claim you find better supported by the evidence, or why neither claim tells the whole story. You are marked on the reasoning, not on which side you land on.

Q10. The curriculum allows a group as well as an individual. Choose ONE group that helped change Rome under Augustus — for example, the poets of the Augustan age (Virgil, Horace, Livy), the army engineers who built the roads, or his helpers Agrippa and Maecenas. List their role, their contribution and one achievement, and name one source you would use to study them (a building, a poem, a road, an inscription).

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. (e) birth of Gaius Octavius, 63 BCE → (c) assassination of Julius Caesar, 44 BCE → (a) battle of Actium, 31 BCE → (d) the senate gives Octavian the name Augustus, 27 BCE → (b) Augustus dies at Nola, 14 CE. Accept dates within a year where sources vary.

Q2. (a) peace and the army; (b) care for the people; (c) religion, law and culture; (d) government and power; (e) care for the people. Evidence lines: 28 legions and the Pax Romana; first organised fire-fighters and night watch; his own record (Res Gestae, ch. 20) of 82 temples restored; consul thirteen times, real power flowing to one man (the principate); the grain dole reaching about 200,000 people a month.

Q3. Fact claim, e.g.: he held his sixth and seventh consulships in 28–27 BCE; the senate gave him the name Augustus; he out-ranked his colleagues in office. Judgement, e.g.: that he “handed the state over” to the senate and people; that his power was “no more” than his colleagues’. Accept any sorting defended with reasoning: the test is whether the student separates what can be checked from what is Augustus’s own account of his motives and place. Both kinds of sentence are evidence — of different things (what happened; how Augustus wanted it seen).

Q4. (a) *Res Gestae*: strength — primary, Augustus’s own words from his lifetime, and public record of what he chose to claim; limitation — self-praise, written to fix his reputation, silent on the killings of 43 BCE and on voices opposed to him. (b) Suetonius: strength — worked from records and earlier writings, keeps both praise and blame, gives details no primary source keeps; limitation — wrote about 107 years after Augustus’s death, never met him, includes gossip and anecdotes. Accept reasoned variants.

Q5. (a) View 1; (b) View 2; (c) View 1; (d) View 2. Accept reasoned moves of an item to the other view (e.g. a student who argues the grain dole also shows one-man control), provided the reasoning is given.

Q6. Accept completed organisers that carry, at minimum: born Gaius Octavius, 63 BCE, great-nephew of Julius Caesar; adopted in Caesar’s will 44 BCE, age 18; alliances, the killings of 43 BCE, Actium 31 BCE; 27 BCE named Augustus, the principate; changes across government, army, city, welfare, religion and culture; contemporaries divided between “saviour” and “destroyer of liberty”; died 19 August 14 CE at Nola, succeeded by Tiberius.

Q7. Mark on: criterion-by-criterion application (size, reach, duration, source support, who gained and lost), evidence named for each point, and a judgement tied to the criteria. Any achievement from the web is acceptable; different judgements with sound reasoning meet the standard (CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 5).

Q8. Mark on coverage (context, early life, achievements, contemporaries’ perceptions, closing evaluation) and on evidenced statements. A Julius Caesar answer may draw Part 1 and section 3D; the same coverage applies. The model paragraph is one acceptable shape.

Q9. Mark on: the strength of each side’s evidence (View 1: peace after civil war, grain, building, decades of stable rule; View 2: the killings of 43 BCE, civil war, the end of the senate’s real share of power), and the student’s own judgement with reasons. Do not mark the conclusion itself; two opposed judgements can both be full marks.

Q10. Accept any group with a stated role, contribution and achievement, plus one real, named source (e.g. the poets: their surviving poems; the engineers: surviving roads such as the repaired Via Flaminia; Agrippa: buildings and waterworks). The point is transfer: the same framework applies to a group as to an individual.

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D4). Verified 25 August 2026.

- **Res Gestae Divi Augusti (“The Deeds of the Divine Augustus”)** — Latin text composed by or for Augustus near the end of his life (d. 14 CE); original bronze tablets stood before the Mausoleum of Augustus, Rome; best surviving copy carved in Latin and Greek on the temple of Rome and Augustus at Ankara, Turkey (the Ankara copy). Chapters 1 and 34 quoted above in my own translation from the standard Latin text. Subject of Figures 3f_resgestae_card.png and 3f_resgestae_extract.png.
- **Suetonius (Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus), *The Lives of the Caesars*, Life of Augustus** — written about 121 CE. Chapter 28 (the brick-and-marble passage) and chapter 99 (the deathbed scene) rendered in my own translation from the Latin; the split verdict on Augustus (chapters 99–101) summarised in the author’s own words. Subject of Figures 3f_suetonius_card.png and 3f_brick_marble.png.
- **Augustus’s building record in the Res Gestae, ch. 20** — 82 temples restored in one year (28 BCE), cited in Part 3.
- **The grain dole figures** — about 200,000 recipients in Rome per month, from the Res Gestae, ch. 15, cited in Part 3 and Q2/Q5.
- **The Augustus of Prima Porta** — marble statue, first century CE copy of a bronze original of about 20 BCE, found at Prima Porta near Rome in 1863; Vatican Museums, Rome. Cited in the sources table, Figure 3f_sources_table.png.

- **The Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace)** — marble altar in Rome, vowed 13 BCE, dedicated 30 January 9 BCE; Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome. Cited in the sources table, Figure 3f_sources_table.png.
- **Silver coinage of Augustus** — e.g. the denarius type showing the civic crown, struck at Rome about 18–17 BCE; examples in the British Museum, London. Cited in the sources table, Figure 3f_sources_table.png.
- **Virgil, Horace and Livy** — works composed under Augustus's patronage and that of Maecenas; described in the author's own words, not quoted.
- All dates follow the BCE/CE conventions taught in section 6B. No First Nations content appears in this section (none exists in this CD or its elaborations).

Why an ancient society or person mattered: interpretations and legacies

Section 3G · Strand: Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Sub-strand: The ancient world, 10 000 BCE – 600 CE · Depth topic: Rome (default topic, D9) **Owens:** VC2HH8K18 **Draws on:** .E01–.E10 (this section teaches .E09–.E10; .E01–.E08 are linkage keys only under the depth-topic rule D7 — they belong to this CD’s other study choices, which this book did not choose, and are glossed below by id for traceability)

Content description VC2HH8K18: how an ancient society’s or person’s significance has been read, and what legacies it left.

Taught in this section (depth topic: Rome):

.E09 how the five Roman sites are examined — Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia Antica, the Roman Forum and the Colosseum

.E10 weighing what Nero’s rule did to Rome and to the provinces

Linkage keys only — other study choices of this CD (D7; not taught in this book):

.E01 (China) ancient festivals still celebrated today — Spring Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival

.E02 (China) World Heritage listing: the Great Wall, Qin Shi Huang’s mausoleum

.E03 (Egypt) legacies handed down: papyrus, brewing, influence over Greece and Rome

.E04 (Egypt) the Great Pyramids, a tomb site — how readings of them shifted over time

.E05 (Greece) Olympia, Delphi, Delos, the Acropolis, the Agora — changing readings of each site

.E06 (Greece) Pericles’ importance, and Athenian democracy’s legacy today

.E07 (India) what digs show of politics, society and economy: Lothal, Sanchi

.E08 (India) why Mohenjo-daro made the World Heritage list

Teaching sequence

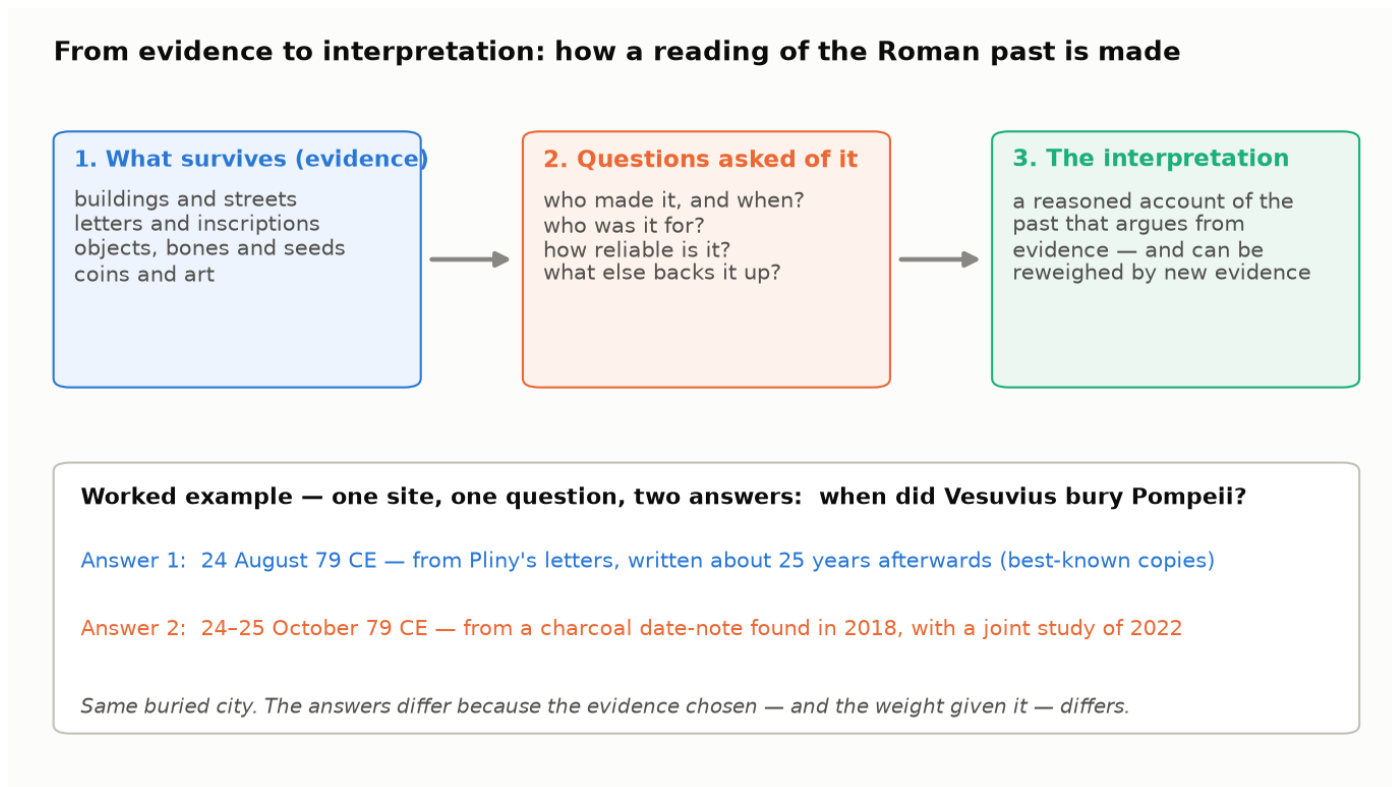
1. Words to define before we start

Contested terms, defined before use.

- **Significance** — the Victorian Curriculum uses the word *significance* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as **how much something mattered, and still matters**: how many people it touched, how much it changed their lives, how long its effects lasted, and whether those effects are still visible today. *Significance* is a judgement word, not a measured one like length or weight: two careful people can weigh the same facts in different ways and both argue their case well. Section 7C owns the full toolkit of significance tests; here you will use four of them — **people, depth, duration, relevance**.
- **Legacy** — something handed down from the past that still shapes life today. A legacy can be a thing (a building, a word, a law), a habit (a way of building or ruling), or a story people still argue about. Legacies are not always good — harm is handed down too. To *trace* a legacy is to show the chain from then to now, link by link.
- **Interpretation** — a historian’s reasoned account of the past, built from evidence. An interpretation is not a guess, and it is not “the one right answer”: it is a reading that can be argued for. Two careful historians can read the same evidence and reach different views, because they ask different questions of it or give different weight to the same records.
- **Primary source** — a source made at (or very near) the time being studied: a letter, an inscription, a coin, a skeleton. **Secondary source** — a source made later by someone studying that time, such as a historian’s book. Section 6C builds these ideas; section 6D’s evidence tests sit under every judgement in this section.
- **Emperor** — the one-man ruler of the Roman world, holding power for life. The word comes from *imperator*, a title first given to victorious generals.
- **Province** — a land outside Italy that Rome ruled through a governor it sent out. By Nero’s day Rome held about thirty of them, from Britain’s edge to Egypt.

2. From evidence to judgement: how readings of Rome are made .E09

Everything a historian or archaeologist says about Rome rests on what survives — the ruins, the writings, the objects in the ground. An **archaeologist** is a person who studies past life by digging up and reading its physical remains. But evidence never speaks for itself: someone has to ask it questions. Figure 1 shows the move from evidence to interpretation, using one live example you will meet in part 6: *when did the volcano Vesuvius bury Pompeii?*



Model of how an interpretation of the Roman past is made: surviving evidence on one side, a historian's questions in the middle, and the finished interpretation on the other, with a worked example in which the same site gives two different answers to the question of when Vesuvius erupted

Figure 1. From evidence to interpretation: same site, different questions, different answers.

Notice what the example shows. Both answers come from the same buried city. The difference is the **evidence chosen** and the **weight given to it**: a letter written about 25 years afterwards, or a scrap of writing in charcoal found on a wall in 2018. Sorting out which reading the evidence supports is exactly the skill this section builds — and the skill section 6D calls weighing the value of evidence.

3. Five famous sites .E09

.E09 names five Roman sites that historians and archaeologists use to read the Roman world. Figure 2 sets out what each one is and how it came down to us.

The five sites of .E09 — what each is, and how it reached us

Site	What it is	How it reached us
Pompeii	A busy town at the foot of Vesuvius, buried under about 4 m of ash and pumice in 79 CE; houses, shops, streets and wall-writing much as they stood.	Dug from the 1740s on; plaster casts of victims from the 1860s; new digs from 2018 (Regio V). UNESCO listed 1997.
Herculaneum	A smaller town buried about 20 m deep by hot volcanic material in 79 CE; wood, food and books charred and preserved instead of burned away.	Found by chance in 1709 by well-diggers; conservation partnership at work since 2001. UNESCO listed 1997.
Ostia Antica	Rome's harbour town at the mouth of the Tiber: apartment blocks, shops, warehouses and docks; about 50,000 people at its peak.	Covered by sand dunes after it was given up, which kept it safe; large-scale digs 1939–1942.
The Roman Forum	Rome's public square: temples, law courts, the speakers' platform (Rostra) and the senate house.	For centuries a cow field (Campo Vaccino) under rubble; digging began in earnest in 1803, state-led work from 1898.
The Colosseum	The huge arena opened in 80 CE, seating tens of thousands, built on the site of Nero's palace lake.	Never lost — still standing; cleaned and repaired 1993–2000 and again 2013–2016 (a €25 million project).

Three towns buried and preserved; two monuments in Rome itself. Each keeps a different slice of Roman life.

Table of the five sites named in .E09 — Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia Antica, the Roman Forum and the Colosseum — each with what it is and how it survived or was found

Figure 2. The five sites of .E09: what each is, and how it reached us.

Three of these sites are towns buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE — Pompeii, Herculaneum and the harbour town of Ostia Antica (buried by sand and silt, not by the volcano). The other two stand in Rome itself: the Forum, the city's public square, and the Colosseum, the huge arena opened in 80 CE. Each preserves a different slice of Roman life: Pompeii and Herculaneum give homes, shops and streets much as they stood; Ostia gives working life — apartment blocks, warehouses and docks; the Forum gives politics and religion; the Colosseum gives public shows on a giant scale. Section 3B looked at the society these sites belonged to; this section asks how we read them, and what they mean.

4. Methods: how the sites are examined .E09

“Digging” is only one method, and it is no longer done with picks and barrows alone. Figure 3 sets out six methods used on the five sites, and a named example of each.

Six methods for examining a site — and what each one shows

Method	What it is	Named example from the five sites
Excavation	Careful digging, layer by layer, recording what each layer holds.	The Roman Forum: a cow field under rubble until Carlo Fea began digging in 1803; state-led work under Giacomo Boni from 1898. Ostia Antica dug on a large scale 1939–1942.
Casts	Pouring liquid plaster into hollows left in the ground by things that decayed.	Pompeii: Giuseppe Fiorelli, from 1863, cast the hollows left by victims' bodies and recovered their shapes.
Reading inscriptions	Reading words cut in stone, painted on walls or scratched in plaster.	Pompeii's thousands of wall writings, including painted election notices (part 5).
Scientific tests	Dating finds; scanning objects without opening them; studying bones and seeds.	Herculaneum: CT scans and new reading tools are opening charred scrolls no hand can unroll.
Digital recording	Laser scanning and 3D pictures that rebuild rooms on screen.	Pompeii and Herculaneum: rooms rebuilt in 3D so study can go on even where foot traffic must stop.
Conservation	Keeping what survives standing: cleaning, repair, drainage, shelter.	The Colosseum repaired 1993–2000 and again 2013–2016 (€25 million); Herculaneum's conservation partnership at work since 2001.

Digging is only one method — and who digs, and why, can shape what gets dug (Ostia's 1939–42 digs served a dictator's image of Rome).

Table of six methods used to examine Roman sites — excavation, plaster casts, reading inscriptions, scientific tests, digital recording, and conservation — each with what it shows and a named example from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Ostia Antica, the Roman Forum or the Colosseum

Figure 3. Six methods for examining a site — and what each one shows.

- **Excavation** — careful digging, layer by layer, recording what each layer holds. The Roman Forum was for centuries a cow field called *Campo Vaccino*, with its ruins under rubble; digging began in earnest under Carlo Fea from 1803, and state-led work followed under Giacomo Boni from 1898. Ostia Antica was dug on a large scale from 1939 to 1942 — under Italy's dictator, who used Rome's past glory to support his own rule (the sources section at the end names him). Notice that last point: **who digs, and why, can shape what gets dug**.
- **Casts** — at Pompeii, Giuseppe Fiorelli from 1863 poured liquid plaster into the hollows left in the ash by decayed bodies, and so recovered the shapes of the victims themselves.
- **Reading inscriptions** — an *inscription* is writing made on a hard surface: cut in stone, painted on a wall, scratched in plaster. Pompeii's walls carry thousands.
- **Scientific tests** — at Herculaneum the hot volcanic material buried the town about 20 metres deep and charred wood, food and books rather than burning them away; CT scans and new reading tools are now opening scrolls no hand can unroll.
- **Digital recording** — laser scanning and 3D pictures let researchers rebuild rooms on screen, and let visitors walk streets that may one day have to be closed to protect them.
- **Conservation** — keeping what survives standing. The Colosseum was cleaned and repaired from 1993 to 2000, and again from 2013 to 2016 in a €25 million project; at Herculaneum a conservation partnership funded by the Packard Humanities Institute has worked since 2001.

5. Close study — a voice from a Pompeii wall (primary source) . E09

Here is a primary source: one of the painted election notices from Pompeii's walls, recorded in volume IV of the standard collection of Latin inscriptions (the collection's short title is *CIL*). Townspeople called these notices *programmata*. Figure 4 shows the text and how to read it.

Close study: an election notice from Pompeii's walls

**A. VETTIUM FIRMUM
AEDILEM DIGNUM REI
PUBLICAE
ORO VOS FACIATIS**

*Painted in red on a wall at eye level
on a busy street, like hundreds of
other notices put up before elections.*

Latin, reading left to right as we do.
Recorded in Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum IV.

What it says (adapted translation)

"Please make Aulus Vettius Firmus aedile — I ask you; he is worthy of public office."

An aedile was a local official who looked after markets, streets and public games.

The notice is signed by no one office and paid for by no state: a supporter's voice, painted for all to see.

Site held by the Archaeological Park of Pompeii.

Who put it there?

A supporter of the candidate — notices like this were painted by the hundred before elections.

Who is it for?

Every voter walking past: it sits at eye level on a busy street.

Why paint it on a wall?

Walls were the town noticeboard — a painted message was public and free.

What does it show?

Local elections were contested, and "worthy of public office" was a claim that had to be made in public.

One notice is a voice, not the vote count — its limit as evidence.

The close study source laid out as a wall panel: the Latin of a Pompeii election notice, an adapted English translation, and four questions with short answers — who put it there, who it speaks to, why it was painted on a wall, and what it shows about ordinary Roman life

Figure 4. Close study: an election notice from Pompeii's walls.

A. Vettium Firmum aedilem dignum rei publicae oro vos faciatis. "Please make Aulus Vettius Firmus aedile — I ask you; he is worthy of public office." — election notice painted on a wall at Pompeii (adapted translation); recorded in *CIL* IV, the standard collection of Latin inscriptions; site held by the Archaeological Park of Pompeii; accessed 25 August 2026.

An *aedile* was a local official who looked after markets, streets and public games. Now run section 6D's questions over it. **Who made it?** A supporter of the candidate — notices like this one were painted by the hundred before elections, some signed by whole groups of neighbours or workers. **Who is it for?** Every voter walking past: it sits at eye level on a busy street. **What does it show?** That local elections were contested, that ordinary free men voted, and that being "worthy of public office" was a claim that had to be made in public. **Its limits?** It tells us what one supporter wanted people to think — not whether Firmus was any good at the job. A single notice is a voice, not the vote count.

6. When did the mountain erupt? An interpretation changes .E09

For centuries the answer looked settled. Pliny the Younger — a Roman official who watched the eruption as a young man — described it in two letters to the historian Tacitus, written about 25 years afterwards. The best-known copies of his letter give a date that works out to **24 August 79 CE**. But other old copies disagree, some giving dates as late as November, and archaeologists long pointed to autumn signs in the ruins. Figure 5 sets the two readings side by side.

Two readings of one question: when did Vesuvius bury Pompeii?

Reading 1 — the letters

Pliny the Younger watched the eruption of 79 CE as a young man.

He described it in two letters to the historian Tacitus, written about 25 years afterwards.

The best-known copies give a date that works out to 24 August 79 CE.

But other old copies disagree — some give dates as late as November.

And archaeologists long pointed to autumn signs in the ruins: fruit that ripens in autumn, warmer clothing.

Verdict held for centuries.

Reading 2 — the charcoal note

October 2018: diggers in a fresh part of Pompeii (Regio V) find a one-line date note scratched in charcoal on the wall of a house being done up.

It reads XVI K NOV — Roman shorthand for “the 16th day before the Kalends of November”: that is 17 October.

Charcoal rubs off fast — so the note was almost certainly fresh when the ash buried it.

The house was mid-renovation — so the eruption came after 17 October.

A fresh witness from the wall itself.

A joint study of 2022 brought the evidence together and settled on 24–25 October 79 CE.

Pliny's letter was not thrown away — it was reweighed. Fresh evidence can move even a centuries-old answer.

The eruption-date debate set out as two columns of evidence: on the left, Pliny's letters written about 25 years after the event with the best-known copies pointing to 24 August and other copies disagreeing; on the right, the charcoal date-note found in 2018 reading XVI K NOV, the 16th day before the Kalends of November, meaning 17 October — with the modern reading that the eruption fell on 24–25 October 79 CE

Figure 5. Two readings of one question: when did Vesuvius erupt?

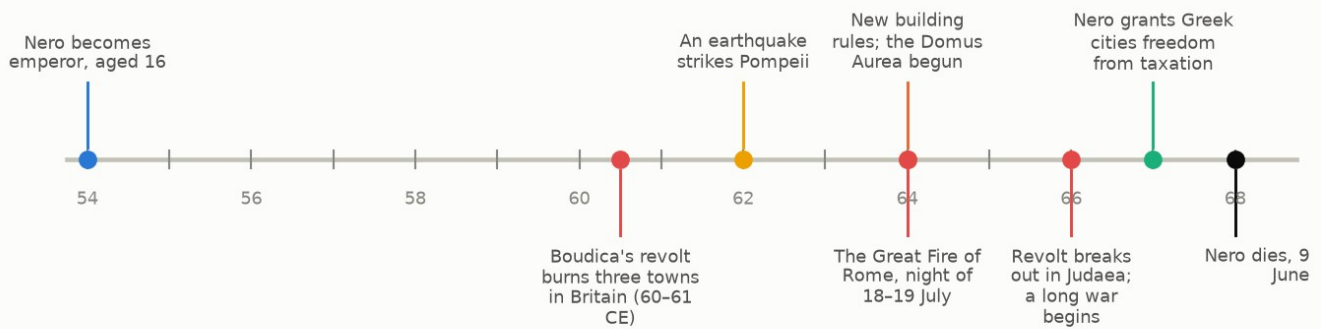
Then, in October 2018, diggers in a fresh part of Pompeii (Regio V) found a one-line date note scratched in charcoal on a wall of a house being done up. It reads **XVI K NOV** — Roman shorthand for “the 16th day before the Kalends of November”, which is **17 October**. The reasoning goes like this: charcoal writing rubs off fast, so the note was almost certainly fresh when the ash buried it; the house was mid-renovation; so the eruption came **after** 17 October. A joint study in 2022 brought the evidence together and settled on **24–25 October 79 CE**.

This is .E09's key idea in action: **archaeologists' understanding of a site can change** — not because anyone was careless, but because fresh evidence arrived and the older reading had to be reweighed. The letter of Pliny remains precious; it is just no longer the only witness. Section 1C met this pattern at other sites; section 2F's companion study gathers more such re-readings.

7. Nero and the Great Fire .E10

.E10 turns from a society's significance to an individual's: **Nero**, emperor from 54 to 68 CE — he took power at sixteen. His impact on Rome and the provinces is one of the sharpest cases in this chapter, because the evidence about him is rich and the writers who survived him hated him.

Nero's reign, 54–68 CE: fire, rebuilding and revolt



One reign, many impacts: disaster and rebuilding at home, revolt and gifts in the provinces. All dates are CE.

Timeline of Nero's reign from 54 to 68 CE: Nero becomes emperor aged 16; Boudica's revolt burns three towns in Britain in 60–61; an earthquake strikes Pompeii in 62; the Great Fire of Rome begins on the night of 18–19 July 64; new building rules and the Domus Aurea follow; revolt breaks out in Judaea in 66; Nero grants freedom from taxation to Greek cities in 67; Nero dies on 9 June 68

Figure 6. Nero's reign, 54–68 CE: fire, rebuilding and revolt.

The defining event was the **Great Fire of Rome**. It began on the night of **18–19 July 64 CE** and burned for days: three of the city's fourteen districts were destroyed and seven more badly damaged. Afterwards Nero pushed through new building rules — houses set apart, built of brick, along wide streets, with covered walkways in front — rules that changed how Rome looked for centuries. But on the cleared ground he also began a vast palace for himself, the **Domus Aurea** (Golden House), with parkland, a lake and a 30-metre statue of himself.

In the provinces his reign hit hard in two places. In **Britain**, in 60 or 61 CE, Queen **Boudica** led the Iceni and other tribes in revolt after Roman officials seized her family's lands; the rebels burned three towns before the governor Suetonius Paulinus beat them — ancient writers counted the dead in the tens of thousands. In **Judaea**, revolt broke out in 66 CE, the start of a long war. On the other hand, in **Greece** Nero gave whole cities freedom from taxation — a gift the Greeks long remembered. The same reign could look very different depending on which province you stood in.

One famous story needs a test before you repeat it: that Nero “fiddled while Rome burned”. The fiddle did not even exist in Roman times. Our nearest writer, **Tacitus**, says Nero was away at Antium when the fire started and came back to organise relief; two later writers, **Suetonius** and **Cassius Dio**, say he sang a poem about the fall of Troy while watching the flames. The fire itself is certain; the lyre-playing story grew up later and reads as legend, not record.

8. Two readings of Nero .E10

The historians of Nero's own upper class — Tacitus, Suetonius, Cassius Dio — wrote after his family line had ended, under emperors who gained by blackening his name. Their Nero is vain, cruel and mad. Modern historians have re-read that picture against the rest of the evidence. Figure 7 sets the two readings side by side at their strongest.

The Nero debate at its strongest: two readings, and the ground they share

Reading A — the ancient writers

Tacitus · Suetonius · Cassius Dio

Wrote after Nero's family line had ended, under emperors who gained by blackening his name.

Their picture: vain, cruel and mad — rivals and family members killed, enormous spending, a palace rising from a burned city.

The singing-while-Rome-burned story appears in the later two writers.

Steelman: Tacitus is among the finest historians Rome produced, and he had records we have lost.

Reading B — the modern re-read

Miriam Griffin (1984) · Edward Champlin (2003)

The hatred came mostly from the upper class.

Ordinary Romans and provincials stayed “loyal to the end and beyond”: crowds mourned him, people kept bringing flowers to his tomb for years, and impostors claiming to be Nero appeared for decades.

Champlin reads him as a showman-emperor who played to the crowds — not a madman but a performer whose audience wrote no history books.

Steelman: the loyalty markers are real evidence, not invention.

Ground both readings share:

the fire of 64 CE really happened · the building rules really were made · the Domus Aurea really rose on burned ground · Britain and Judaea really suffered

The task is not to pick a hero or a monster. It is to say which evidence carries which claim — and whose eyes each writer wrote for.

Two readings of Nero set side by side: Reading A, the picture from the ancient writers Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio, who wrote under the emperors who replaced him and describe cruelty, vanity and the singing story; Reading B, the modern re-readings of Miriam Griffin and Edward Champlin, pointing to ordinary Romans who mourned him, kept laying flowers at his tomb, and produced would-be Neros for decades; below, the ground both readings share

Figure 7. The Nero debate at its strongest: two readings, and the ground they share.

Reading A — the ancient picture. The surviving Roman writers describe an emperor who killed rivals and family members, spent enormously, and let his own palace rise from a burned city. These writers are not nobodies: Tacitus is among the finest historians Rome produced, and he had records we have lost.

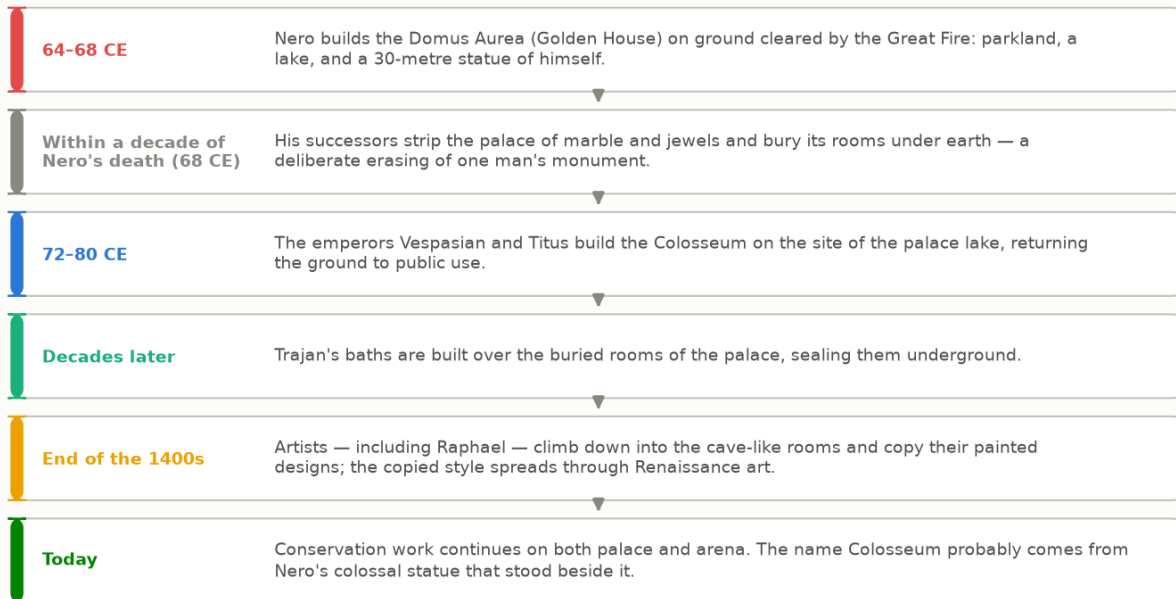
Reading B — the modern re-read. Miriam Griffin, in her 1984 study *Nero: The End of a Dynasty*, notes that the hatred came mostly from the upper class, while ordinary Romans and provincials stayed “loyal to the end and beyond”: crowds mourned him, people kept bringing flowers to his tomb for years, and for decades impostors appeared claiming to be Nero alive. Edward Champlin, in his 2003 book *Nero*, reads him as a showman-emperor who played to the crowds and was loved for it — not a madman but a performer whose audience wrote no history books.

Ground both readings share: the fire of 64 CE really happened; the building rules really were made; the Domus Aurea really was built on burned ground; the provinces really suffered in Britain and Judaea. Evaluating these readings does not force you to pick a hero or a monster — it forces you to say **which evidence carries which claim**, and whose eyes each writer wrote for. That is exactly what the achievement standard asks for: analysis of different interpretations.

9. A legacy in stone: from Nero's palace to the Colosseum .E10

Here is a legacy you can walk through. After Nero died in 68 CE, his successors turned his private grounds back into public ones — and one of the world's most famous buildings rose on the site of his lake. Figure 8 traces the chain.

The chain of a legacy: Nero's Golden House becomes the Colosseum's ground



A palace meant to glorify one man became the ground of a building for tens of thousands. A legacy can run through ruin as much as through survival.

The legacy chain from the Domus Aurea to the Colosseum: the palace built 64–68 CE on fire-cleared ground with its 30-metre statue; stripped of marble and jewels within a decade of Nero's death and buried under earth; Vespasian and Titus building the Colosseum on the site of the palace lake from 72 to 80 CE; Trajan's baths built over the buried rooms decades later; artists rediscovering the cave-like rooms at the end of the 1400s and copying their designs; and today's conservation work — with the note that the name Colosseum comes from Nero's colossal statue

Figure 8. The chain of a legacy: Nero's Golden House becomes the Colosseum's ground.

Read the chain as an argument about significance. The emperors after Nero built public buildings on his private ones on purpose — the Colosseum on his lake's site, public baths over his buried halls — which was a way of saying: *this ground belongs to the people now*. Nero's palace was meant to glorify one man; its destruction became part of the story of a building that seated tens of thousands. The name **Colosseum** itself probably comes from the colossal statue of Nero that stood beside it. Even the palace's painted rooms, rediscovered as “caves” at the end of the 1400s, handed something down: artists including Raphael climbed down to copy their designs, and the copied style spread through Renaissance art. A legacy can run through ruin as much as through survival.

10. Rome's legacies today .E09 .E10

A society's significance is measured in part by what is still alive of it. Figure 9 sets four of Rome's legacies beside where you can see them now — and one reminder that legacies are not always gifts.

Four of Rome's legacies — and where they live today

Legacy	What Rome handed down	Where you can see it now
Law	In 529–534 CE the eastern emperor Justinian ordered the mass of Roman law gathered into one collection, the <i>Body of Civil Law</i> .	Rediscovered and taught in European universities from about 1100; shaped Europe's great law codes — France's civil code among them — and through them the law of much of the world today.
Language	Latin, the language of Roman government, law and army.	Grew into French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, and gave a large share of its words to English — school, justice and calendar are all Roman property.
Building	Arches, domes and concrete that let builders span spaces earlier builders could not.	The Colosseum stands after nearly 2,000 years; Roman sea concrete, studied by modern scientists, hardens in salt water.
The calendar	Julius Caesar's calendar of 46 BCE: 365 days, with a leap day every fourth year.	Adjusted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, it is the calendar on your wall; the months July and August carry the names of two Roman leaders.

And the honest half:

Rome also handed down conquest, slavery and war, and people under its rule paid for its order. A full reckoning with Rome's significance holds both columns at once.

Table of Rome's legacies: law — Justinian's collection of 529–534 CE feeding into Europe's great law codes such as France's civil code; language — Latin growing into French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, and giving words to English; building — arches, domes and concrete, with the Colosseum standing after nearly 2000 years; the calendar — Julius Caesar's 365-day calendar with a leap year every fourth year, still ours in modified form, with July and August named for Roman leaders; and a closing note that conquest, slavery and war were also handed down, and are part of the reckoning too

Figure 9. Four of Rome's legacies — and where they live today.

- **Law.** In 529–534 CE the eastern emperor Justinian ordered the mass of Roman law gathered into one collection, the *Body of Civil Law* (its Latin title is given in the sources section at the end). Rediscovered and taught in European universities from about 1100, it shaped the great law codes of Europe — France's civil code among them — and through them the law of much of the world today.
- **Language.** Latin grew into French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, and gave a large share of its words to English. Every time you say *school*, *justice* or *calendar* you are borrowing Roman property.
- **Building.** Roman arches, domes and concrete let builders span spaces earlier builders could not. The Colosseum stands after nearly 2,000 years; Roman sea concrete, studied by modern scientists, hardens in salt water.
- **The calendar.** Julius Caesar's calendar of 46 BCE — 365 days, with a leap day every fourth year — is the direct ancestor of the one on your wall, adjusted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. The months July and August carry the names of two Roman leaders.

And the honest half: Rome also handed down conquest, slavery and war, and people under its rule paid for its order. A full reckoning with Rome's significance holds both columns of the table at once.

11. Judging Rome's significance .E09 .E10

Now put the pieces together using the four significance tests from part 1. Figure 10 applies them to Rome.

Four tests of significance, applied to Rome		
Test	What it asks	Rome's score
People	How many lives did it touch?	Tens of millions lived under Roman rule across Europe, North Africa and western Asia.
Depth	How much did it change those lives?	Roman law, language and city life reshaped how later societies governed, spoke and built.
Duration	How long did its effects last?	The western empire ended in the 470s CE, but the effects run for about 2,000 years — from our calendar to our law.
Relevance	Can we still see it today?	Visible today in months, words, buildings and legal ideas still in daily use.
A caution before you judge: Significance is a judgement, and judgements have frames. From the centre of the empire, Rome reads as law, order and great works. From a conquered province — Boudica's Britain, or the towns of Judaea in 66 CE — it reads as taxation, lost land and war. Both frames rest on real evidence; a strong interpretation says which frame it is using.		

The four significance tests applied to Rome: people — tens of millions lived under Roman rule across Europe, North Africa and western Asia; depth — Roman law, language and city life reshaped how later societies governed, spoke and built; duration — the western empire ended in the 470s CE but the effects run for about 2000 years, from our calendar to our law; relevance — visible today in months, words, buildings and legal ideas — with a final caution box that significance is a judgement, and that the same story reads one way from the centre of power and another way from a conquered province

Figure 10. Four tests of significance, applied to Rome.

One caution closes the section, and it is the lesson of the whole chapter. **Significance is a judgement, and judgements have frames.** From the centre of the empire, Rome's significance looks like law, order and great works. From a conquered province — Boudica's Britain, or the towns of Judaea in 66 CE — it looks like taxation, lost land and war. Both frames rest on real evidence; a strong interpretation says which frame it is using, and admits what the other frame can see.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — scaffolded: applying the four significance tests to the Colosseum (.E09)

Use Figure 10's four tests to judge the significance of the Colosseum. Take each test in turn.

Working	Comment
People. Opened in 80 CE, it seated tens of thousands — estimates run from 50,000 to 80,000 — and shows ran for days.	Already in its own time it touched a huge slice of the city's population.
Depth. It stood on the site of Nero's private lake, returned to public use — a statement about who the city belongs to.	Its meaning was political, not just entertainment.
Duration. Nearly 2,000 years on, it still stands; it was	Few buildings keep working across two millennia —

Working	Comment
repaired in the 1990s and again 2013–2016.	even as a ruin it does work.
Relevance. It remains the symbol most used for Rome, draws millions of visitors, and shapes how films and games picture the ancient world.	Its significance is still being made, in how later ages use it.

∴ the Colosseum scores highly on all four tests — and the last one matters most: significance lives on when later generations keep using a thing.

Worked example 2 — scaffolded: weighing the two readings of Nero (.E10)

Read the two claims below, then answer the parts in the table.

- **Reading A (the ancient writers):** “Nero was vain and cruel: he sang of Troy’s fall while Rome burned, and built himself a palace on the ashes.”
- **Reading B (Griffin and Champlin’s re-read):** “The hatred came from the upper class. Ordinary Romans mourned Nero, kept laying flowers at his tomb, and would-be Neros appeared for decades after his death.”

Working	Comment
(a) What does each reading claim?	A: Nero was a vain, cruel emperor who put himself before the city. B: he kept the loyalty of ordinary people, and the black picture comes from hostile upper-class writers.
(b) What evidence does each lean on?	A: the surviving histories of Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio. B: signs of popular loyalty — mourning, flowers at the tomb, the impostors — weighed against the writers’ known bias.
(c) Give one point where the readings must agree.	The fire of 64 CE happened, the building rules were made, the Domus Aurea was built on burned ground, and the provinces suffered in Britain and Judaea.
(d) What decides between them?	Not loudness — whose claims the evidence carries, and whose eyes each writer wrote for.

∴ evaluating an individual means sorting claim from evidence, and asking who had reason to tell the story that way.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

Q1. (.E09) Copy Figure 2’s five-site table into your book. Add one column: *one thing this site teaches us about Roman life*. Use part 3 to fill it.

Q2. (.E09) Using Figure 3, match each method to its named example: plaster casts; CT scans of charred scrolls; the €25 million Colosseum repair of 2013–2016; Ostia’s large digs of 1939–42; the election notices of Pompeii.

Q3. (.E09) Use Figure 4 and part 5. (a) What job did an *aedile* do? (b) Who put the notice on the wall, and who was it for? (c) Give one limit of an election notice as evidence.

Q4. (.E09) Use Figure 5. (a) What date did the best-known copies of Pliny’s letter give? (b) What did the 2018 charcoal note read, and what modern date is that? (c) Why does charcoal make the note strong evidence for the time just before the eruption? (d) What date did the 2022 study settle on?

Q5. (.E10) Put these events of Nero’s reign in date order using Figure 6: the Great Fire of Rome; Nero becomes emperor; Boudica’s revolt in Britain; Nero’s death; revolt in Judaea; the Domus Aurea begun.

Q6. (.E10) Use Figure 7. Give one piece of evidence Reading A leans on, one piece of evidence Reading B leans on, and one thing both readings agree about.

Un scaffolded

- Q7.** (.E09) “New evidence can change even the most settled-sounding facts.” Explain this statement using the story of the eruption date from part 6. Use at least three dated pieces of evidence.
- Q8.** (.E10) Analyse how Nero’s reign affected **one** of the following: the city of Rome, or the provinces. Give at least two effects and say who gained and who lost by each.
- Q9.** (.E10) Evaluate the two readings of Nero from part 8. Say clearly which claims the ancient writers’ hostility weakens, which it does not touch, and what evidence you would want before settling the matter.
- Q10.** (.E09 .E10) Choose one legacy from Figure 9. Trace it: where it began, how it was handed down, and where you can see it in Australia today.

Source-based inquiry task

- Q11.** (.E09; links to the source skills of Chapter 6) Read the adapted source and answer the parts below.

“A cloud had appeared, of unusual size and shape. ... Its general shape was closest to a pine tree: it rose very high, like a trunk, and then spread out into branches — my guess is that a fresh blast lifted it, and then, as the blast died, the cloud spread out under its own weight. ... My uncle was watching from a spot with a clear view. He wanted to get closer. He ordered boats made ready. ... As he left, he received a letter from Rectina, terrified by the danger that threatened her estate below the mountain — she could escape only by ship. He changed his plan: where he had started out as a man of learning, he now set out as a rescuer.” — Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 6.16, to the historian Tacitus, about the death of his uncle Pliny the Elder in 79 CE (adapted)

- (a) What does the cloud description tell us about the kind of eruption Vesuvius produced?
 - (b) Pliny wrote about 25 years after the event. Give one strength and one limit that this gives him as a witness.
 - (c) Give one part of this account that scientists or archaeologists could check against physical evidence today.
 - (d) Is this a primary or a secondary source? Give one reason for your answer. (A *primary source* is one made at (or very near) the time being studied; a *secondary source* is one made later, using primary sources.)
-

Answer guide (for the teacher)

- Q1.** Sample additions: Pompeii — homes, shops and streets as they stood, plus election notices showing public life; Herculaneum — charred wood, food and books, showing diet and daily comfort; Ostia Antica — apartment blocks, warehouses and docks, showing working life and the grain trade; the Roman Forum — temples, law courts and speakers’ platforms, showing politics and religion; the Colosseum — public shows on a giant scale, and the politics of giving them.
- Q2.** Plaster casts — Pompeii victims’ hollows, from Fiorelli’s work of the 1860s. CT scans of charred scrolls — Herculaneum’s buried library. €25 million repair of 2013–2016 — conservation of the Colosseum. Ostia’s large digs of 1939–42 — excavation under Mussolini’s regime. Election notices of Pompeii — reading inscriptions.
- Q3.** (a) An aedile looked after markets, streets and public games. (b) A supporter of Aulus Vettius Firmus put it up; it was for every voter walking past. (c) It shows one supporter’s claim, not the result of the vote — praise is not proof.
- Q4.** (a) A date that works out to 24 August 79 CE. (b) XVI K NOV — “the 16th day before the Kalends of November”, which is 17 October. (c) Charcoal rubs off fast, so the note was almost certainly fresh when the ash buried it — it points to the weeks just before the eruption. (d) 24–25 October 79 CE.
- Q5.** Nero becomes emperor (54 CE) → Boudica’s revolt (60–61 CE) → the Great Fire (64 CE) → the Domus Aurea begun (from 64 CE) → revolt in Judaea (66 CE) → Nero’s death (9 June 68 CE).
- Q6.** Reading A: the surviving histories of Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio. Reading B: ordinary Romans mourning him, flowers laid at his tomb for years, impostors claiming to be Nero appearing for decades. Shared ground (any one): the fire of 64 CE happened; the building rules were made; the Domus Aurea rose on burned ground; Britain and Judaea suffered under his rule.

Q7–Q10 — see the model responses below.

Q11. (a) The tall trunk spreading into branches fits a tall eruption column — the kind modern scientists call a Plinian eruption, named for this very account. (b) Strength: he was there and watched it himself, and he wrote to a careful historian who asked him for exactly this. Limit: he wrote about 25 years afterwards, from memory, about an event no one had studied before. (c) Any of: the shape and height of the eruption column against the volcano's deposits; ships being used to escape along the coast; ash and pumice layers at Pompeii and Herculaneum. (d) Primary — written by a witness of the events, within the lifetime of people who saw them, even though it was set down decades later; a full answer notes the date gap as a limit without changing the kind of source.

Model responses

Q7. The date of Vesuvius's eruption shows how fresh evidence can move a fact that looked settled. For centuries the answer came from Pliny the Younger's letters to Tacitus: the best-known copies give a date working out to 24 August 79 CE. But the case was never quite shut — other old copies give different dates, some as late as November, and autumn signs in the ruins made some archaeologists doubt August. Then in October 2018 diggers at Pompeii's Regio V found a date note scratched in charcoal on a wall: XVI K NOV, the 16th day before the Kalends of November, meaning 17 October. Because charcoal rubs off quickly, the note was almost certainly fresh when the town was buried — so the eruption came after 17 October. A joint study in 2022 brought the strands together and settled on 24–25 October. The lesson is not that Pliny was careless; it is that one witness, however good, is not the last word, and new finds can force a reweighing.

Q8. On the city of Rome, Nero's reign had two lasting impacts, one destructive and one constructive. The Great Fire of July 64 CE destroyed three of the city's fourteen districts and badly damaged seven more — a disaster for the families who lost homes and businesses. But the rebuilding that followed was also Nero's doing: new rules set houses apart, required brick, widened streets and added covered walkways, which made the city safer from fire for centuries. In this reading the losers were the burnt-out householders of 64 CE and the neighbours displaced by the Domus Aurea, and the gainers were later generations who lived under the safer rules. A third impact cuts the other way: on the cleared land Nero built a private palace with a lake and a 30-metre statue of himself, and the gain was his alone — until the emperors after him turned the lake's site into the Colosseum and gave the ground back to the public. So one reign could injure a city and improve it at once, which is why analysing impact means naming who gained and who lost.

Q9. The ancient writers' hostility weakens the claims that serve them most. The singing-while-Rome-burned story appears only in writers later than Tacitus, and our nearest witness says Nero was away at Antium and returned to organise relief — so the lyre story reads as legend built to flatter the new emperors who replaced Nero's line. But the hostility does not touch everything: the fire itself, the new building rules, the Domus Aurea on burned ground, the harsh treatment of the British tribes that led to Boudica's revolt, and the war that opened in Judaea in 66 CE all stand on firmer ground, and modern re-readers like Griffin and Champlin accept them. On the other side, the popular-loyalty reading has real markers too: mourning at his death, flowers kept at his tomb, and impostors claiming to be him for decades — signs that ordinary people's view of Nero was not the senators' view. To settle the matter I would want two kinds of evidence the literary sources cannot supply on their own: more archaeology of the fire layer itself, and inscriptions or coins showing how ordinary people and provincials spoke of him while he lived. Judging between the readings is a question of which claims the evidence carries — not which writer sounds most certain.

Q10. One legacy of Rome visible in Australia today is the calendar. It began in 46 BCE, when Julius Caesar replaced the old Roman calendar with one of 365 days and a leap day every fourth year. It was handed down through the Roman Empire, kept by the Church after the empire's western half ended, and adjusted in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII into the form the world now uses — which is why Australia's school year, tax year and public holidays all sit inside a Roman frame. The months carry Roman names too: July for Julius Caesar and August for Augustus. Even the word *calendar* comes from the Roman *kalends*, the first day of the month. So the most ordinary thing on a classroom wall — the date — is a Roman artifact still in daily use: a legacy of depth and relevance at once.

Q11 (extended model). Pliny's letter is a primary source with a date gap inside it: he was there in 79 CE and saw the cloud and the rescue attempt himself, but he wrote the account about 25 years later, for the historian Tacitus. Its value is that it gives a first-hand, dated description of the eruption's opening hours — the tall trunk-shaped column, the ships sent out, the panic along the coast — and it is the account that gives modern science the name *Plinian* for this kind of eruption. Its limits are equally clear: memory over 25 years can smooth and sharpen, Pliny was writing to

honour his uncle, and no one in 79 CE knew what a volcano was doing or why. Scientists can check parts of it anyway: the height and shape of the column against the eruption's deposits, and the use of ships against what excavation shows of the coast. Weighing value against limits is exactly the move section 6D teaches — and it is the same move this whole section has applied to Pompeii's date, to Nero's reputation, and to Rome's place in the modern world.

Sources used in this section

Every source examined or quoted here is a real, citable artifact (D4). The checkable modern facts below are sourced to the named pages, all retrieved 25 August 2026.

- **Election notice for Aulus Vettius Firmus** (part 5 close study; Figure 4) — painted wall notice (*programma*) from Pompeii; recorded in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* volume IV, the standard collection of Latin inscriptions (corpus at cil.bbaw.de); the site is held by the Archaeological Park of Pompeii. The translation above is adapted in my own words from the Latin.
- **Pliny the Younger, Letters 6.16** (part 6 and task Q11) — letter to the historian Tacitus describing the eruption of Vesuvius and the death of his uncle Pliny the Elder, written about 25 years after 79 CE. The extract in Q11 is rendered in my own adapted English from the Latin.
- **The five sites and their histories** (parts 3–4; Figures 2–3) — Pompeii (excavation from the 1740s, Fiorelli's plaster casts from 1863, the Regio V digs from 2018, UNESCO listing 1997); Herculaneum (found by well-diggers in 1709, buried about 20 metres deep, charred wood, food and books, CT scanning of the scrolls, the conservation partnership funded by the Packard Humanities Institute at work since 2001, UNESCO listing 1997); Ostia Antica (the large-scale digs of 1939–1942 under Mussolini's regime); the Roman Forum (the Campo Vaccino cow field, Carlo Fea's digging from 1803, Giacomo Boni's state-led work from 1898); the Colosseum (opened 80 CE, repairs 1993–2000 and again 2013–2016, the latter a €25 million project) — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompeii, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herculaneum, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostia_Antica, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Forum, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum.
- **The eruption-date debate** (part 6; Figure 5) — the date working out to 24 August 79 CE from the best-known copies of Pliny's letter, the disagreeing copies (some as late as November), the charcoal date-note XVI K NOV found in Regio V in October 2018, and the joint study of 2022 settling on 24–25 October 79 CE — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompeii; Pliny's letters to Tacitus — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny_the_Younger.
- **Nero's reign** (parts 7–9; Figures 6–8) — the Great Fire beginning the night of 18–19 July 64 CE, the damage to the city's fourteen districts, the new building rules, the Domus Aurea, Boudica's revolt of 60–61 CE, the revolt in Judaea from 66 CE, Nero's grant of freedom from taxation to Greek cities in 67 CE, his death on 9 June 68 CE, the singing story and its writers (Tacitus nearest, then Suetonius and Cassius Dio), Miriam Griffin's 1984 study *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (ordinary Romans and provincials "loyal to the end and beyond") and Edward Champlin's 2003 book *Nero*, the mourning, the flowers kept at his tomb and the would-be Neros of the following decades — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero; the dating of Boudica's revolt to 60–61 CE — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boudica.
- **The Domus Aurea's afterlife** (part 9; Figure 8) — the stripping and burial of the palace within a decade of Nero's death, Trajan's baths built over the buried rooms, the rediscovery of the cave-like rooms at the end of the 1400s and the artists (including Raphael) who copied their designs — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domus_Aurea; the Colosseum built on the site of the palace lake, opened 80 CE, and the origin of its name from Nero's colossal statue — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum.
- **Rome's legacies** (part 10; Figure 9) — Justinian's collection of Roman law of 529–534 CE (the *Corpus Juris Civilis*), its rediscovery and teaching in European universities from about 1100, and its influence on later European law codes including France's civil code — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_law; the Julian calendar of 46 BCE, its 365 days and leap-year rule, the Gregorian reform of 1582 under Pope Gregory XIII, and the months July and August — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar.
- All dates follow the BCE/CE conventions taught in section 6B. No First Nations content appears in this section (none exists in this CD or its elaborations).