

WORLD HISTORY

GREEKS AND ROMANS

ROME REPUBLIC

GEOGRAPHY OF ITALY

Rome is found on the western coast of the Italian peninsula. This location was beneficial to Rome because it gave the Romans access to the Mediterranean Sea and the Tiber River. The sea and the river were used for water sources, irrigation, and trade. Italy has a few mountain ranges but they can be easily traveled.

SETTLEMENT

Rome was settled by the Latins, the Greeks and the Etruscans.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY

Rome created a republic, a society where citizens with the right to vote choose their leaders. This is different from a democracy because in a democracy ALL people can vote in a republic only some people can vote.

Romans valued family and gravitas (strength and seriousness) above all other things. Families were headed by the eldest male, however, the opinions of women were valued. Women did NOT have the right to vote, though.

Roman men were divided into social classes: Patricians were the privileged upper class. Their ancestors were said to have originally founded Rome. Patricians were citizens with the right to vote and the authority to make laws. Patricians held all political offices. The common farmers, merchants and artisans were plebians. Plebians had the right to vote but they could not hold political office.

Roman religion was very similar to Greek religion. The Romans borrowed the Greek gods and goddesses as their own. The Romans gave the Greek gods and goddesses new names but their personalities and myths remained the same.

Rome also created an army and began to conquer lands around them this created a large Roman Empire.

ROME CREATES A BALANCED GOVERNMENT

Over time plebians became unhappy with not being able to hold political offices. Plebians made up the majority of the Roman army, so they refused to serve in the army until they were given more political power. As a result, several political reforms took place:

1. Twelve Tables: all Roman laws were written so that everyone could read them and understand them. The laws were equally applied to patricians and plebians.
2. The office of Consul was created: two consuls ruled Rome (almost like kings) they could veto decisions made by the Senate and the Assembly
3. The Senate was created: usually senators were patricians and they were in charge of creating foreign and domestic policy
4. The Assembly was created: made up of plebians and their primary task was to make laws

THE PUNIC WARS

1. First Punic War: Rome and Carthage went to war over Sicily. Carthage had a huge army and a huge navy but Rome still had the advantage. Rome's army was large and it was more loyal than Carthage's army. Carthage used mercenaries in their army, whereas Rome used Roman citizens. This usually meant that the Romans were more loyal to their army. Rome also copied Carthage's ships and built a huge navy. Rome won this war.
2. Second Punic War: Carthage invaded Rome led by Hannibal. They attacked Rome from the north, and they were able to destroy most of Italy. However, Rome was able to defend itself and not be destroyed. Rome sent an army to attack Carthage which meant Hannibal had to send some of his troops back to Carthage to defend the homeland. As a result, Rome won this war.
3. Third Punic War: Rome attacked Carthage and destroyed the city.

RESULTS OF THE PUNIC WARS

- Many Roman soldiers died
- The homes of most soldiers had been destroyed in the Second Punic War and they could not afford to rebuild their homes
- Most patricians/landowners chose to use slaves for workers rather than hire out of work soldiers because they didn't have to pay slaves anything
- This new class of landless, poor became known as the proletariat