

YEAR 4: LIFE IN ANCIENT ROME (8 lessons)



Contents Include:

The Roman City

Roman Sports

Pompeii

Christianity

The Fall of Rome

Suggested Teacher Resources:

- *A Little History of the World* by Ernst Gombrich (chapters 13, 15 and 17).
- The [BBC primary site](#) has Roman resources and information for pupils.
- [BBC History](#) has overviews of different aspects of Roman history.
- *Rome: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (History Channel) covers the period. Also, *The Romans Triple DVD Box Set* (BBC) by Mary Beard covers everyday life in Rome.

Lesson 1. Pax Romana

For 200 years following the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 AD), there was a period of history known as the Pax Romana (Roman peace). The strength of the Roman Empire, coupled with its large territorial reach, meant no civilisation could oppose Rome. Consequently, Europe experienced an unprecedented period of peace. Without having to put down continual rebellions, the Roman Empire was able to focus on building great cities and developing its famed technologies such as public baths, aqueducts and roads. During the Pax Romana, Roman civilisation reached the height of its sophistication.

See page 136-7 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand why the Pax Romana took place.</p>	<p>'Pax Romana' means 'Roman Peace', and refers to a two hundred year period in European history when there were few wars or rebellions.</p> <p>The reason that the Pax Romana took place was that the Roman army was so powerful, few other European powers were able to oppose them.</p> <p>During the Pax Romana, Roman civilisation reached its peak. This saw the building of a series of remarkable Roman cities across Europe, Asia and North Africa.</p>	<p>Have a class discussion about whether the Pax Romana was a good thing for those people living in the Roman Empire. In order to inform this discussion, pupils should sort a selection of features of the Pax Romana into 'good' and 'bad' features for people living under Roman rule (resource 1).</p> <p>Write an explanation of why Pax Romana occurred and describe how it impacted on people living under Roman rule.</p> <p>Discuss why Rome became known as the 'Eternal City'.</p>	<p>Pax Romana Eternal City</p>	<p><i>What does the Pax Romana mean?</i></p> <p><i>How was the Pax Romana achieved?</i></p> <p><i>What were the benefits of the Pax Romana?</i></p> <p><i>Who suffered from the Pax Romana?</i></p>

1. Pax Romana: good or bad?

People disagree over whether living under the control of the Roman Empire was a good thing. Read the following statements and decide whether each feature was good or bad.

Instead of fighting, the Romans could focus on building great cities with advanced technology. In lands that they conquered, the Romans built cities with sewers, public toilets, baths, running water and stadiums. This was normally a great improvement from what was there previously.

All territories in conquered areas had to pay taxes to Rome. For this reason, the city of Rome and its inhabitants grew fabulously rich. Other nations within the Roman Empire resented this, and wanted to stop paying so much tax.

Romans tolerated a certain level of local culture. Whilst some Roman customs would be enforced in new provinces, people would be allowed to continue worshipping their own gods and protect their local culture.

Romans would tolerate those of other religions living in their empire, provided that they did not also deny the validity of the Roman Gods. The Christians, who insisted that there was only one God, were heavily persecuted for this reason, and many Christians were enslaved.

Those who lived in conquered territories could become Roman Citizens, and reach the highest levels of power within the Roman empire. There were Roman Emperors who were originally from Spain, Gaul, North Africa and the Near East. Rome itself was a highly multicultural city.

Those living in lands conquered by the Romans were regularly forced into slavery. This could mean any number of cruel jobs, where slaves were worked into an early grave. Worst of all, slaves were fed to lions in the Coliseum to provide entertainment for Roman citizens.

The Roman army contained soldiers from all over the Roman Empire. Many of them were recruited for their particular skill, such as Spanish cavalry or Persian archers. People from around Europe were able to enjoy the benefits of a soldier's life, but also stood a high chance of dying young.

The Roman army was so strong that few people dared stand up to them. For this reason, there were far fewer wars and rebellions fought during the Pax Romana. The period that followed the fall of the Roman Empire was far more violent, and worse to live through.

Lesson 2. Roman Waterworks


Of all the Roman technologies, their waterworks were the most impressive. Large Roman towns were central to the control of their Empire, and the inhabitants needed a constant supply of fresh water. To provide this, Romans built enormous aqueducts, often tens of miles long, to redirect water flowing through rivers and springs into cities. In turn, these aqueducts would feed the Roman baths, public toilets and sewers, keeping the inhabitants clean and free of disease. Roman baths were central to their way of life, and provided not only a source of hygiene, but one of the main areas for socialising and relaxing.

See page 136 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand the importance of waterworks for Roman citizens.</p>	<p>Romans built large cities across their Empire, but these required a constant supply of fresh, clean water.</p> <p>The Romans invented the aqueducts, which were large bridge-like structures which redirected water flowing from rivers and springs to the centre of a town.</p> <p>Water from the aqueducts would then be used to feed public toilets, sewers, baths and fountains.</p>	<p>Explain the different waterworks technologies pioneered by the Romans: aqueducts; baths; sewers and public toilets. Show pupils images of Roman ruins (such as here, here, here, and here), and ask them to match them to the different waterworks.</p> <p>Study the process of a trip to a Roman Bath: the Apodyterium; Tepidarium; Caldarium and Frigidarium. This and this website provide a useful step by step guide. Complete a storyboard about a trip to the baths, explaining what would occur at each stage (resource 2).</p> <p>Horrible histories have some amusing videos on toilets, this documentary explains the building of the aqueducts, and this recreates a Roman bath.</p>	<p>aqueduct Roman baths sewers</p>	<p><i>What did Roman aqueducts do?</i></p> <p><i>Why did Roman cities need aqueducts?</i></p> <p><i>What happened at Roman baths?</i></p> <p><i>Why did Romans enjoy going to the baths so much?</i></p>

2. A trip to the Roman Baths


Study the process of taking a trip to the Roman Baths. Then complete the story board, making sure that you include the key stages: the Apodyterium; Tepidarium; Caldarium and Frigidarium.



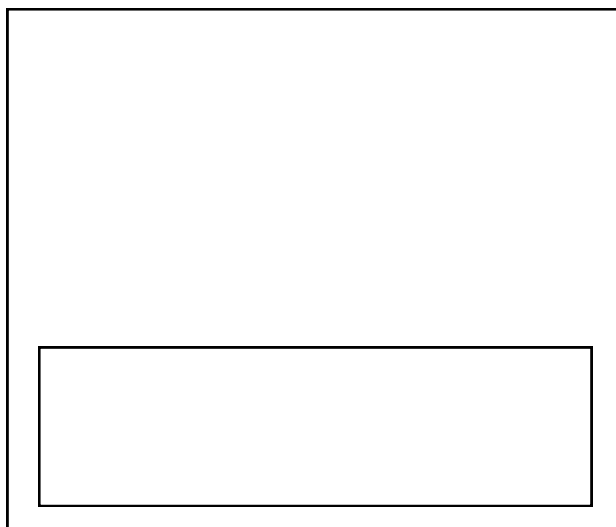
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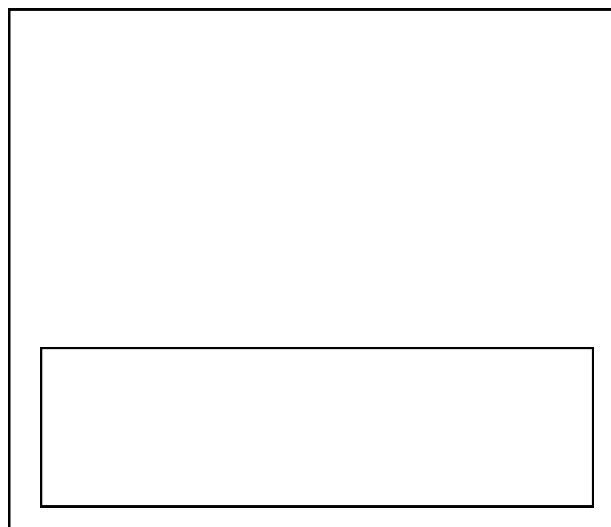
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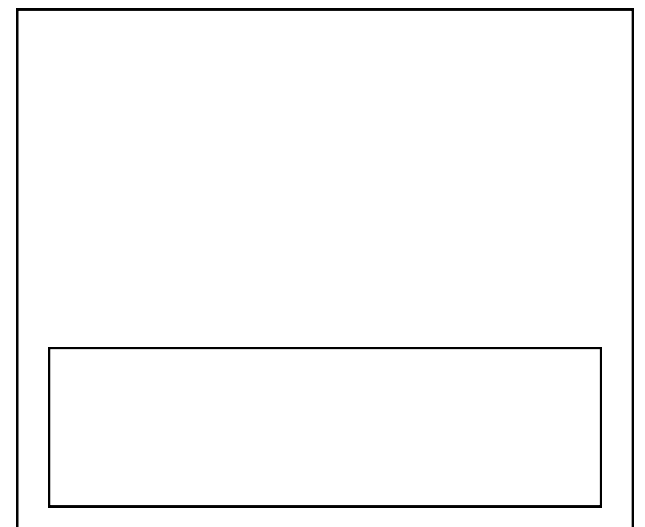
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2. A trip to the Roman Baths (complete)

Study the process of taking a trip to the Roman Baths. Then complete the story board, making sure that you include the key stages: the *Apodyterium*; *Tepidarium*; *Caldarium* and *Frigidarium*.

First, I did some exercise in the *palaestra*. This involved running, wrestling, boxing and ball games.

I then went to the changing rooms, known as the *apodyterium*, to strip completely naked, as was the rule!

From there I moved on to the *caldarium*, which had a very hot, steamy bath a bit like a sauna today.

Having got changed, I moved into the *tepidarium*, a warm room where I washed with olive oil and a strigil.

I then visited the *frigidarium*, a very cold bath. After the *caldarium*, the cold was a real shock but really woke me up.

Having done my bathing, I hung out with my friends, having a massage, buying food, and listening to poetry and music.

Lesson 3. The Roman Forum

At the centre of any Roman city was the ‘forum’. This was the hub of all civic and community life. People would come to the forum to shop, visit temples, attend law courts, or just catch up with their friends. The ruined forum in Rome is now one of the city’s main attractions, and is surrounded by the remains of many of the city’s greatest buildings, such as the Temple of Saturn, the Arch of Septimius Severus, and the Temple of Caesar. Having bought their food at the forum, Romans ate some extraordinary meals that we would never dream of having, such as pig udders, stuffed dormice and stuffed jellyfish.

See page 138-9 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand the central role that the forum played in Roman life.</p>	<p>The Roman forum was at the centre of all civic and community life, a place for worship, shopping, legal dispute and catching up with friends.</p> <p>The forum in Rome is one of the city’s main attractions, and is surrounded by ruins of many of the city’s greatest buildings.</p> <p>Romans ate some extremely strange foods, and enjoyed hosting banquets that continued for hours, where guests lay on flat couches to eat and drink.</p>	<p>Look at maps, here and here, of the Ancient Rome, watch a short video, and list all of the different things that could be found there. Pupils design a map of their own Roman forum, or write an imaginative description of walking through the forum in Rome.</p> <p>If pupils have the necessary device, they could download the Roman Forum walkthrough app, and tour the forum. A preview video can be seen here.</p> <p>Learn what was eaten at a Roman dinner party, and how guests behaved. Create an invitation to a sumptuous Roman feast. This should detail what food will be served, the time it will take place, what guests should expect will happen, and so on.</p>	<p>forum temple</p>	<p><i>What was the Roman Forum?</i></p> <p><i>What could you do at the Forum?</i></p> <p><i>What sort of food did Romans eat?</i></p> <p><i>What was it like to eat at a Roman feast?</i></p>

Lesson 4. Roman Sports

The Romans loved sports, in particular gladiator contests and chariot racing. Gladiator contests took place in large coliseums, and the biggest of all was in Rome. Remains of the Coliseum in Rome are still standing today, and it was a remarkable building, seating 50,000 people and with 76 different doorways. Second to gladiator contests were chariot races. The main racetrack in Rome was Circus Maximus, and chariot racers were the celebrities of Ancient Rome. Much like football teams today, chariot racers belonged to four different teams (red, white, blue and green) which won devoted support from their fans.

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Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know that sporting events were popular in Ancient Rome.</p>	<p>Entertainment was central to life in Ancient Rome, in particular sports. The Roman Emperor would often pay for chariot races and gladiator contests to keep his people happy.</p> <p>Roman gladiator contests were bloodthirsty fights to the death, which took place in a stadium called a coliseum.</p> <p>In addition, chariot racing was a much loved Roman sport, taking place in Rome in the Circus Maximus.</p>	<p>Watch footage of a gladiator contest or chariot race. This could include (sensibly vetted) scenes from <i>Gladiator</i> (2000), <i>Spartacus</i> (1960) or <i>Ben Hur</i> (1959). Pupils then write a detailed first hand account of what they have seen at the Coliseum or the chariot races.</p> <p>The BBC have an online game which involves dressing different Gladiators for different roles, and an online game for building the coliseum. The BBC documentary-drama <i>Colossem: A Gladiator's Story</i> (2003) is also excellent.</p> <p>Design a poster advertising a Roman Gladiator contest or chariot race. It should detail exactly what the spectator can expect to see at the event.</p>	<p>Coliseum Circus Maximus gladiator chariot</p>	<p><i>What sports did the Romans like to watch?</i></p> <p><i>What was a gladiator?</i></p> <p><i>What sort of a life did a gladiator lead?</i></p> <p><i>What happened during a Roman chariot race?</i></p>

Lesson 5. Pompeii: A City Frozen in Time

One of the most remarkable sources of evidence historians have about everyday life in Roman cities is Pompeii. In 79 AD, a volcano named Mount Vesuvius erupted, encasing the whole city in hot lava. Most of the population died, and the city was buried beneath layers of solidified lava. In 1748, modern archaeologists rediscovered the city. Most fascinatingly, they found that humans who were encased in molten rock had rotted away, leaving an empty impression of their body. These have been turned into plaster cast models which hauntingly show people in the dying moments of their life.

See page 141-143 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand that discoveries from Pompeii can tell us about Roman life.</p>	<p>Pompeii was a small but very wealthy port town where rich Romans went on holiday.</p> <p>In 79 AD, a nearby volcano called Mount Vesuvius erupted and encased the who town in burning ashes and molten rock.</p> <p>Beneath the molten rock much of Pompeii was perfectly preserved. Modern day archaeologists have been able to recover much of the city, and create plaster casts of inhabitants of Pompeii at the moment they died.</p>	<p>Make sure that pupils have a working understanding from science of what a volcano, lava, and molten rock are.</p> <p>Look at some of the casts that have been made of people killed by the lava, such as here, here, and here. Pupils then imagine who the person/people were, what job they did in Pompeii, what they were doing when the volcano erupted, in order to write a piece of creative writing.</p> <p>The book from the recent exhibition, <i>Life and death in Pompeii and Herculaneum</i> (British Museum) has many images of Pompeii. Clips from the BBC documentary <i>Pompeii: The Mystery of the People Frozen in Time</i> (2013) can be accessed here. This short video summarises what happened at Pompeii.</p>	<p>Pompeii volcano lava molten rock archaeologist</p>	<p><i>What happened to the city of Pompeii?</i></p> <p><i>How was so much of the city of Pompeii preserved?</i></p> <p><i>Why do historians find the city of Pompeii so interesting?</i></p> <p><i>What can we tell about life in Pompeii from archaeologists' finds?</i></p>

Lesson 6. Rome and Christianity

Jesus Christ was born in Galilee at a time when it was under the rule of the Roman Empire. It was a Roman governor of Judea named Pontius Pilate who tried and crucified Jesus. For the next three hundred years, Christianity spread through the Roman Empire. The Romans disliked this development, as Christianity threatened their own religion and their belief that Roman Emperors can become gods. However, in 312 AD a Roman Emperor called Constantine had a revelation during a battle, and converted to Christianity. From the end of the fourth century, Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire.

See page 144-146 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know that the Roman Empire converted to Christianity.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ lived in Galilee under Roman control, and was killed by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate.</p> <p>After his death, Christianity spread through the Roman Empire, but the Romans often persecuted and killed Christians.</p> <p>In 312 AD, a Roman Emperor named Constantine converted to Christianity, and welcomed the worshipping of Christianity in the Roman Empire.</p>	<p>Watch the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the Romans from <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> (1997) or <i>The Gospel of John</i> (2003). Write an eye witness account of a Jerusalem resident who witnessed Christ's trial and crucifixion.</p> <p>Create a story board for the story of Constantine's conversion to Christianity (resource 3). Ensure that pupils understand the significance of this event in world history, as it lead to Christianity spreading through the world . It also led to the creation of Roman Catholicism, and the Holy Roman Empire.</p>	<p>persecute crucifixion convert</p>	<p><i>What influence did the Roman Empire have on the life of Jesus Christ?</i></p> <p><i>What happened to Christians living within the Roman Empire?</i></p> <p><i>What decision did Constantine make in 312 AD?</i></p> <p><i>Why was Constantine's conversion of so much importance?</i></p>

3. Constantine converts to Christianity

In 312 AD, a Roman Emperor named Constantine converted to Christianity. This is one of the most important events in world history, as it led to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, and therefore spreading across the world.

3. Constantine converts to Christianity (complete)

In 312 AD, a Roman Emperor named Constantine converted to Christianity. This is one of the most important events in world history, as it led to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, and therefore spreading across the world.

Constantine was a leading figure in Rome, and became involved in a civil war over who should be next Emperor.

He came to fight Emperor Maxentius for rule over the Roman Empire at the River Mulvian Bridge in 312 AD.

Whilst going into battle, Constantine saw a cross of light in the sky, with the writing 'In this sign you will conquer'.

Constantine ordered his soldiers to paint a Christian cross on their shield. They won the battle.

Constantine saw this as a sign from the Christian God, and he converted to Christianity.

From the end of the 4th century onwards, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Lesson 7. Constantinople

Constantine was a very important Roman Emperor. Not only did he establish Christianity as Rome's official religion, he also split the Roman Empire in two. Rome had been divided up before, but a civil war led to the two halves of the empire being united under Constantine. Later Constantine split the empire again, this time it was permanent. The Western Roman Empire was to be ruled from Rome. However, the Eastern Roman Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire) was to be ruled from a new city named after himself: Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). The Byzantine Empire outlived the Roman Empire, and became famed for its beautiful art and its blend of Roman, Greek and Asian culture. The magnificent Hagia Sophia temple, and its exquisite Byzantine mosaics, can still be seen today.




Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know that Constantinople was an important world city.</p>	<p>Constantine split the Roman Empire in two: Rome became the capital of the Western Roman Empire and a new city called Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.</p> <p>Constantinople became a great artistic and cultural centre, and particularly for Christianity. It outlived Rome by nearly 800 years.</p> <p>Constantinople is home to Hagia Sophia, one of the world's most important historic buildings.</p>	<p>Shade in a map of the Roman Empire, showing the split between the Western and Eastern Empires at the time of Constantine (resource 4). This map shows how it should look. This shows how the empire was divided.</p> <p>Study the city of Constantinople, and in particular look at the great religious building Hagia Sophia. Pupils could study the history of the building, discovering how it changed from being a Christian church, to a mosque, to a museum today.</p> <p>The Byzantine Empire was particularly famous for its mosaics, see here. Pupils could create their own mosaic images with small squares of coloured paper.</p>	<p>Constantinople Byzantine mosaics</p>	<p><i>What happened to the Roman Empire during the reign of Emperor Constantine?</i></p> <p><i>What was the Eastern Roman Empire like?</i></p> <p><i>What was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire?</i></p> <p><i>What was the most famous building in Constantinople?</i></p>

4. Rome splits in two

When Constantine died in 337 AD, the Roman Empire was split into East and West. On the map, shade in the territory of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire. In addition, mark the two capitals: Rome and Constantinople.



Key

	Sea
	Western Roman Empire
	Eastern Roman Empire

Lesson 8. The Fall of the Roman Empire

By 400 AD the city of Rome bankrupt and losing control of its empire. In particular, tribes from Germany known as the Goths were attacking Rome, burning the city to the ground and looting its wealth. Rome suffered repeated attacks. Historians normally date the final fall of Rome to 476 AD when the city was overrun by a Gothic general named Odovacar and the last Roman Emperor was deposed. The names used for these tribes that overran Rome, such as barbarians and vandals are still used to describe violence and uncivilised behaviour today. After the fall of Rome, Europe entered the Dark Ages.

See page 138-9 of *What Your Year 4 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand how and when the Roman Empire finally came to an end.</p>	<p>In 476 AD, the last Roman Emperor was forced to give up his power. This date is usually given to mark the end of the Roman Empire.</p> <p>Rome was invaded and burnt to the ground by tribes from North Africa (Vandals) and Germany (Goths), known collectively as barbarians.</p> <p>After the fall of Rome, much of the civilisation and culture of the Roman Empire was lost. Europe entered a new period known as the Dark Ages.</p>	<p>This is an excellent video on the Fall of Rome. Pupils could write a short explanation of the factors leading Rome to fall. A good summary of these factors can be accessed here.</p> <p>Write an account from Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman Emperor, explaining the day that Rome was overrun by Visigoths and fell. Describe what he may have thought seeing the 'Eternal City' being overrun by barbarians, and a five hundred year empire being destroyed.</p> <p>Synthesise all that pupils have learnt studying the Romans by creating a large Roman timeline, spreading from the birth of Rome in 753 BC, to the fall of Rome in 476 AD. See p. 148.</p>	<p>barbarian goth vandal Dark Ages</p>	<p><i>How did the Roman Empire come to an end?</i></p> <p><i>Why did Rome fall in 476 AD?</i></p> <p><i>Who overran Rome in 476 AD?</i></p> <p><i>What happened in Europe after the fall of Rome?</i></p>