

Ancient Rome

The **civilisation** of ancient Rome lasted about 1300 years. At its heart was the city of Rome, a city first founded by the ancient Etruscans 2800 years ago. In 509 BCE, the inhabitants of Rome set up a republic. Fuelled by trade, alliances and the victories of its army, the republic of Rome grew in size and strength. By 201 BCE, it included today's mainland Italy and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica. Within another 300 years, the Roman army had conquered lands as far north as today's England and as far east as Azerbaijan. By this stage, Rome was an empire. Many of Rome's traditions, beliefs, cultural practices and technical skills have heavily influenced Western civilisation.



Source 1 A stone carving of members of the Praetorian Guard; a highly trained group of officers and soldiers assigned to protect emperors in ancient Rome

chapter 12

12A

How did geographical features influence the development of ancient Rome?

- 1 Ancient Rome's position at the centre of the Mediterranean world made it easy for them to make contact with many other societies and cultures. How might this have influenced the

12B

What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient Rome?

- 1 Only certain people could be citizens in ancient Rome. Who do you predict might not have been allowed to be citizens?

12C

How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Roman lifestyles?

- 1 The ancient Romans valued *virtus*, which means courage, honour and toughness. How do you think this might have influenced the development of the Roman army and its warfare practices?

12D

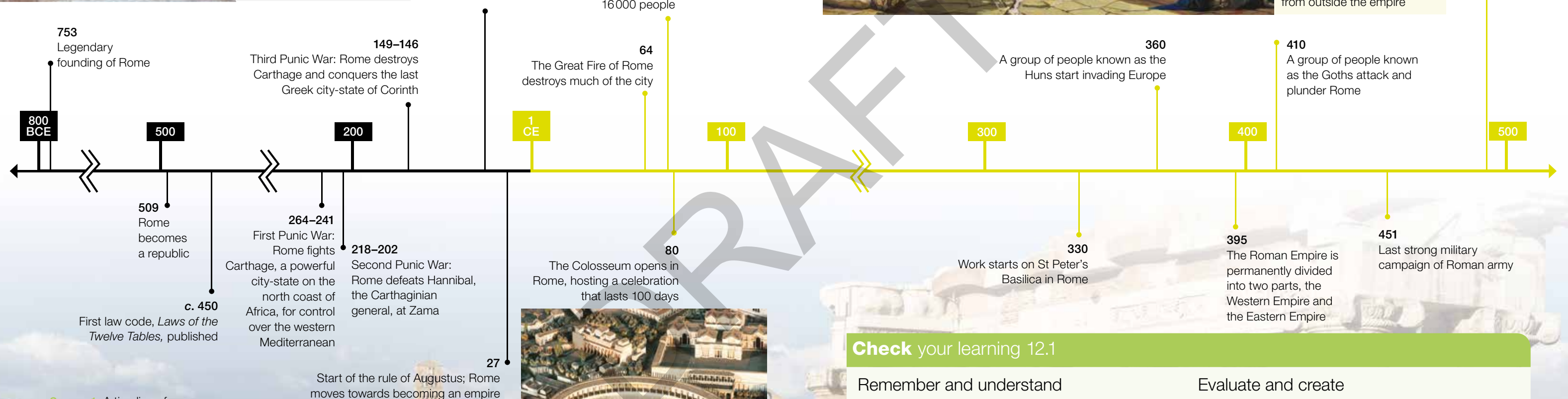
How did contacts and conflicts change ancient Rome?

- 1 Ancient Rome built a huge trading empire. How important do you think trade was for the success of ancient Roman society? Do you think it is likely that trade with the other civilisations led to conflict? If so, why?

12.1 Ancient Rome: a timeline



The foundation myth of Rome tells the story of Romulus and Remus – sons of the war god, Mars. The brothers were saved by a she-wolf before being raised by a shepherd and his wife. Romulus is said to have killed his brother Remus before founding the city of Rome and making himself king – hence the name Rome.



Source 1 A timeline of some key events and developments in the history of ancient Rome



An artist's impression of the Colosseum in Rome during its opening ceremony



An artist's impression of the sacking of Rome by invading 'barbarians' – a term used by Romans to describe people from outside the empire

Check your learning 12.1

Remember and understand

- 1 In what year does legend say Rome was founded, and who is said to have founded the city?
- 2 When did Rome become a republic?
- 3 When was the Roman Empire permanently divided into the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire?
- 4 Who was Julius Caesar, and in what year was he assassinated?

Apply and analyse

- 5 Use the timeline to calculate how many years in total the Punic Wars lasted.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Select four events on the timeline that you think might have been particularly significant in the history of ancient Rome. For each event, generate one or two related questions that you would like to find out the answer to. For example, if you select the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE, you might ask:

- What caused the fire?
- How many people were killed in the fire?

Record these questions in your notebook. Once you have finished working through the chapter, return to these questions and see if you are able to answer them. You may need to carry out some further research to find all the answers.

12.2 The Mediterranean Sea and the Tiber River

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND SURROUNDING AREAS



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press

The ancient Roman **civilisation** began in the region of Latium, in the central west of the Italian peninsula, around the 8th century BCE (see Source 1). A range of physical and geographical features contributed to people settling in Latium and establishing the city of Rome, which became the heart of the ancient Roman civilisation.

Most of the Italian peninsula is mountainous, but there is good farming land in a region known as Latium in the central west. The climate there is mild and wet in winter, and hot and dry in summer. The region is protected by the Apennines, a rugged mountain range that stretches down the centre of the peninsula (see Source 2).

The site on which the city of Rome was built was a strategic choice – it had seven hills that could be easily defended. The first settlers built their homes on these hilltops and farmed at the base of the hills. To the west of the city lay the Tiber River, which gave the Romans a vital trading route and, more importantly, easy access to the Mediterranean Sea.

THE ITALIAN PENINSULA



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

The Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea covers an area of about 2.5 million square kilometres. It has little tidal movement and mostly stable wind patterns, so it has very few bad storms. This made sailing and navigation very easy. Ancient Rome's position at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea allowed it easy access to a range of seaports and markets around the Mediterranean region. Trade made seaports busy centres, where people of different cultures exchanged goods, ideas, technologies and processes.

The Romans became expert seafarers and they developed a strong navy, which helped them conquer new territories. At its peak, ancient Rome grew to control all the ancient civilisations located around the Mediterranean coast. These included the Carthaginians in north Africa, the Celts on the Iberian peninsula (modern-day Spain and Portugal), the Greeks and the Egyptians. The ancient Romans became so dominant in the region that they called the Mediterranean Sea *mare nostrum* – meaning 'our sea'.

The Tiber River

The Tiber River begins as freshwater springs in the Apennines. It then flows west 400 kilometres across the Italian peninsula to the Tyrrhenian Sea (see Source 2). The city of Rome developed on the eastern bank of the Tiber.

At first, the river did little more than mark off the territory of tribes in the region. As the city of Rome developed, the river became more important as a transport route. Upstream from its mouth it could be navigated for about a quarter of its length. Vessels that sailed its waters included boats propelled by oarsmen and barges dragged along by men walking the banks.

The river also served as an outlet for a huge sewer, the *Cloaca Maxima*, built around 600 BCE. The sewer's remains can still be seen in Rome today.

A port, Ostia, was built at the river mouth. Later it became an important naval base. Through Ostia and other ports such as Pozzuoli and Portus, trade goods poured into and out of Rome.

The Tiber also caused some problems for Rome. Each year it flooded with snow melt from the Apennines, sometimes seriously. This led successive Roman rulers to erect structures to strengthen riverbanks to protect areas of the city from floods. Wharves were also built.



Source 3 The Tiber River in Rome, with the Vatican in the background

Check your learning 12.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Where did the civilisation of ancient Rome begin?
- 2 What did the ancient Romans call the Mediterranean Sea, and why?

Apply and analyse

- 3 In your notebook, construct an acrostic poem using the word TIBER. Your poem should reflect the impact of the river on ancient Rome. Here is an example to give you an idea of what is required:

Tumbling from the mighty mountains
Into the Mediterranean Sea
Barges on its waters
Enters the mighty Tiber –
Rome's lifeblood.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct photo research to create a four-page paper or digital album of *one* of the following: the Alps, the Tiber River, the Apennines, the Nile River or the Mediterranean Sea. Add suitable captions that help to explain how you think this feature may have influenced the growth of ancient Rome, and why.

12.3 Earthquakes and volcanoes

The moving tectonic plates under the Mediterranean region make it prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. One fault line travels the length of the Apennines. Another runs across the Italian peninsula north of Naples (see Source 1).

Over the course of history, a number of earthquakes and the eruptions of volcanoes such as Mount Vesuvius and Mount Etna have had major impacts on the human settlements of ancient Rome. One of the most significant volcanic eruptions took place in 79 CE, when Mount Vesuvius erupted and destroyed the ancient Roman towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum. An estimated 16 000 people were killed.

Pompeii and Herculaneum

Pompeii and Herculaneum were situated about 220 kilometres south-east of Rome. People settled in the area because it had a mild climate and some of the most fertile land in the Italian Peninsula, thanks to the minerals in the volcanic ash deposits from previous eruptions. There was a rich agricultural industry based on olive oil, wine, fruit, vegetables, wool and textiles. Fishing was also an important industry.

Many rich Romans had built luxurious houses there to enjoy the climate and the spectacular views across the Gulf of Naples.

Mount Vesuvius

Mount Vesuvius was only 9 kilometres away from Pompeii and 7 kilometres from Herculaneum. In 79 CE, local people did not see the volcano as a threat because it had not been active within living memory. On 24 August that year, however, Mount Vesuvius unexpectedly erupted.

It was a massive eruption, lasting up to 24 hours and consisting of two phases. During the first phase, the volcano spewed huge clouds of ash and pumice (light volcanic rock) high into the sky. The wind blew these clouds towards Pompeii, depositing a layer about 2.5 metres thick across the town. The

MAJOR FAULT LINES ON THE ITALIAN PENINSULA



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press

second phase involved avalanches of extremely hot ash, pumice and poisonous gases moving across the land at 100 kilometres per hour or more. These flows destroyed everything in their path. People suffocated and burned to death.

Pliny the Younger (c. 61–113 CE), a Roman writer, witnessed the eruption from the town of Misenum. He described the events in two letters to his friend Tacitus, a Roman historian (see Source 3).

By the end of the eruption, Pompeii was covered in up to 5 metres of ash and pumice, and Herculaneum was buried in 20 metres of volcanic deposits. After the eruption, Pompeii and Herculaneum were abandoned and never rebuilt.

Source 2 Part of the excavated city of Pompeii, with Mount Vesuvius in the background



12A How did geographical features influence the development of ancient Rome?

Source 3

We [Pliny and his mother] had hardly sat down when darkness fell, not like the dark of a moonless night, but as if a lamp had been put out in a closed room. You could hear the shrieks of women, the wailing of babies and the shouts of men ... Some were so terrified that they prayed for death. Many prayed to the gods for help, but even more were of the view that there were no gods left, and that the universe

had been plunged into eternal darkness ... The flames continued for a while, some distance away. Then the darkness returned and the ashes began to fall again, this time in heavy showers. We stood up every now and then to shake the ash off or we would have been crushed under its weight.

Translated extract of a letter to Tacitus from Pliny the Younger

keyconcept: evidence

The excavation of Pompeii

Today, Pompeii is a protected World Heritage site and one of Italy's most popular tourist destinations. This is because its ruins, when found, showed the city more or less exactly as it was in 79 CE. The excavations have provided a wealth of evidence for historians about ancient Roman lifestyles.

The excavation of Pompeii started in 1860. The excavated ruins provide evidence that Pompeii had a **forum** (with temples and markets) and paved streets. It also had a stone **amphitheatre** for gladiatorial shows and two theatres for drama performances. There were four public baths, two of which also had public toilets. In addition to these buildings, there were many luxurious villas.

During his dig, the **archaeologist** Giuseppe Fiorelli found many strange cavities. He soon realised they had contained human and animal remains. Over time, the bodies had been reduced to dust and bits of bone. He poured a type of plaster into the cleaned-out cavities to reveal shapes such as those shown in Source 4.

For more information on the key concept of evidence, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



Source 4 These plaster casts show Pompeians at the moment of their death.



Source 5 A paved street in Pompeii

Check your learning 12.3

Remember and understand

- 1 What physical feature caused the devastation of Pompeii in 79 CE? Explain in a few sentences what happened and how the geography of the region made such an event likely.
- 2 Who was Pliny the Younger? Why is he important in terms of our understanding of the eruption of Mount Versuvius.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Read Source 3 carefully. What evidence does this source provide about the reaction of the people of Pompeii to the eruption?

12A rich task

The legend of Romulus and Remus

The Tiber River was very important to the ancient Romans, for both transport and trade. The Tiber was also the setting for the famous legend of Romulus and Remus, which many ancient Romans believed explained how Rome was founded, and why it had the right to rule over other civilisations.

According to legend, Rhea Siliva, the daughter of King Numitor, was married to Mars, the Roman god of war. Rhea had twin sons named Romulus and Remus. She loved them, but soon discovered that there were plots by other dieties to harm her father and her sons. To protect the boys, she set them adrift in a basket on the Tiber, hoping someone would find and care for them. After a time, the boys were rescued from the river by a she-wolf who fed them with her own milk until a shepherd named Faustulus and his wife found them and raised them. Eventually they became shepherds like Faustulus.

One day, the boys discovered who they really were. They decided to build a city on the banks of the Tiber where they had been rescued by the she-wolf. Here they would rule as kings. They both wanted to be sole king of their city. They argued and, in a rage, Romulus picked up a rock and killed his brother. From this time on, Romulus ruled as king, naming the city Rome after himself.



Source 1 An artist's impression of a she-wolf nursing Romulus and Remus as they are discovered by Faustulus and his wife on the banks of the Tiber

skilldrill: Historical Significance

Creating a historical storyboard

A storyboard is the director's plan for a film. Storyboarding is also an important skill for any historian who is interested in communicating historical events in pictures or graphical form especially when retelling events from the past in a film.

A storyboard looks a bit like a comic book, but it provides a lot of important details about the planned filming process. Each panel of a storyboard represents a scene in the film and should contain the following elements:

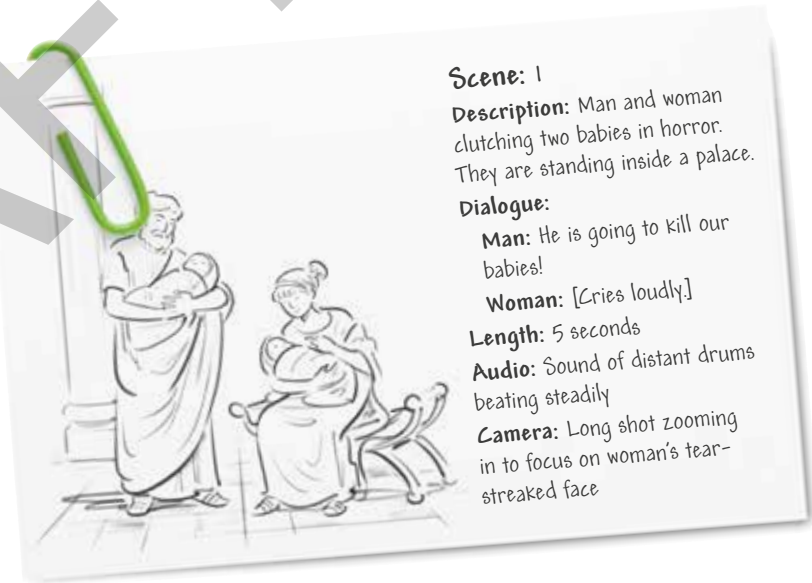
- scene number – ensure that a finished storyboard has scenes in numbered order. Panels may be drawn on cards that are shuffled around until you are satisfied with the order of scenes.
- description – include a description of what or who the camera is focused on in the scene.
- dialogue – details of any dialogue (if required) that takes place in the scene.
- length – give an indication of the number of seconds or minutes the scene should run for.
- audio – list any sound effects that will enhance the viewing experience for the audience.

- camera – provide notes and instructions on how the camera operator is to film the scene. Source 2 contains a few tips on how to get the most out of a number of different camera techniques.
- sketch – sketch only basic figures and props. Storyboards are not meant to be works of art!

Source 2 Camera techniques

| Camera angle or movement | Effect produced |
|--|---|
| Close-up – focuses on an object or part of a person, such as the face | Gives importance to the object or expression |
| Long shot – shows entire characters or objects in their surroundings | Makes audience feel part of the scene |
| High-angle shot – looks down on subject or action | Reduces significance of subject or action |
| Low-angle shot – looks up at subject or action | Magnifies size or importance of subject or action |
| Pan – films a scene by moving camera horizontally | Shows the vastness or size of something |
| Fade out – scene dissolves into nothing | Provides a way to move to a new scene or to create an emotional effect (e.g. a death) |
| Dolly shot – camera tracks the action along wheeled tracks, or from a moving vehicle | Films action (e.g. a person running); increases tension and sense of action |

Apply the skill



Source 3 Panel 1 of a sample storyboard

- 1 Using the legend of Romulus and Remus, complete a storyboard of six panels for a short historical film. The first panel has been completed (Source 3) to show you what is required. Create each panel on a separate card.

Extend your understanding

- 1 There are many famous myths and legends about ancient civilisations such as Rome and Greece. Myths are ancient traditional stories about gods, heroes and magic. Legends are old stories about real people and events in the past, which may have been exaggerated over time.

Develop your own legend about how Rome might have been founded and why it had the right to rule. Use another one of the geographical features discussed in this section (for example, the Mediterranean Sea or Mount Vesuvius) as the setting for your legend.

- Make sure your legend uses the following structure:
- an orientation – the main characters are introduced and the setting is described
 - a complication – the main character faces some sort of problem or conflict
 - a series of events – these occur while the character deals with the problem or conflict
 - a resolution – the problem or conflict is resolved
 - an ending – the outcome of the legend is summarised.

12.4 Key groups in Roman society

The social hierarchy of ancient Rome was guided by a complex set of rules and customs. There were clear distinctions between rulers and those they ruled; between free-born people and slaves; between the wealthy and the poor; and between men and women. Arguably, the biggest distinction was made between those who were citizens and those who were not.

Citizens

Only certain people in society could be citizens. Under Roman law, a boy was born a citizen if his father was a citizen and his parents were legally married. Roman citizens were divided into classes based on birth and property (that is, how much land they owned). This determined their role in society and, in turn, the type of lifestyle they could lead. Broadly, citizens were made up of two groups – **patricians** and **plebeians**.

Patricians

Patricians were usually people who could trace their line of descent back to the heads of those influential families that made up the original **Senate** of Rome. Patrician families were wealthy and typically owned huge estates. For a long time they held all the positions of political importance. Only they could interpret the laws. It was considered beneath them to be involved in commerce and trade.

Plebeians

Plebeians were the ordinary citizens of ancient Rome. They made up the bulk of the population and the army. They also included those who were involved in commerce and trade. They had some say in how they were ruled through their membership of the **Citizen's Assembly**.

However, this body was in reality dominated by patricians.

Wealthier plebeians were often responsible for government or administrative duties and finance. They were also commonly artisans and moderately rich landowners. The poorest of the plebeians owned no property at all.

Over time, the plebeians began to challenge the long-held authority of the patricians. Unrest grew. They made their first threat in 494 BCE when they refused Senate orders to attack an enemy force. Instead, they retreated to another hill near



Source 1 This statue of a patrician shows him wearing a toga and holding busts (stone heads) of his ancestors. Such busts were regarded with great respect.



Source 3 A wall painting showing a Roman carpenter at work

Rome. The patricians were very concerned because the plebeians greatly outnumbered them. They needed plebeian support and services to survive. And so began the first of many concessions made to the plebeians over the next 200 or so years. These included changes to the law.

The rulers of ancient Rome

During the years of the Roman Republic (509–27 BCE), ancient Romans were ruled by two elected consuls (comparable to prime ministers), who were advised by a Senate (see Source 2). New consuls were elected every year. One of the most famous and powerful consuls was Julius Caesar.

The transition of Rome from a republic to an empire did not happen on any particular date but is traditionally recognised as occurring in 27 BCE, when Julius Caesar's heir and successor Octavian (who later became known as Augustus) assumed total power. The Senate, which had been the supreme body during the



Source 4 An artist's impression of a consul following behind his guard of honour. His guards are 12 lictors (civil servants acting as bodyguards) who each carry the *fasces* – the symbol of the consul's power. The *fasces* was a bundle of rods encasing an axe, bound by a strip of leather. The *fasces* symbolised the consul's power to punish criminals by flogging (the rods) or beheading (the axe).

republic years, had lost much of its influence by then, and ruling power became increasingly concentrated in one person.

Historians often talk about the Roman Empire being ruled by 'emperors'. This is because it is the easiest way to refer to the role they had. However, the ancient Romans never used the word 'emperor'.

These rulers (hereafter called emperors) became so powerful because they took on – or were given by the Senate – so many rights, titles and official roles.

Many emperors ruled well and worked well with the Senate. Others were corrupt and brutally abused their power. Some, such as Augustus, were declared to be gods after their death. Others, such as Nero, declared themselves to be gods!



Source 2 An artist's impression of the Roman Senate

Check your learning 12.4

Remember and understand

- 1 Why were the patricians such a powerful social group?
- 2 Why would the patricians have feared the strike action of the plebeians in 494 BCE?
- 3 How did changes to the law and governing arrangements change the role of the plebeians over time?

12.5 Significant individual: Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was born into a patrician family in 100 BCE. He was a gifted Roman general and politician. Through various successful military campaigns he increased Rome's territories and power, especially in Western Europe. He played a critical role in the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire. He was also responsible for social and governmental reforms.

The early years

Caesar's father, Gaius Julius Caesar, was a *quaestor* (a financial officer) and governor. His mother, Aurelia Cotta, came from a politically influential family. Very little is known about Caesar's childhood. As the son of a patrician, he would have received a good education and would have been expected to follow his father into a political career.

Caesar became the head of his family at 16, on his father's sudden death. Though still young, Caesar already knew that in order to succeed in Roman politics he needed to increase his personal wealth and know influential people. In 84 BCE, at the age of 18, he married Cornelia Cinilla, who came from a distinguished family. Unfortunately, Caesar and his family were considered to be enemies of Sulla, the dictator of Rome at the time. Caesar was forced to leave Rome to avoid being persecuted and killed. While in exile, he joined the army, and for the next few years distinguished himself as a capable and courageous soldier.

On Sulla's death in 78 BCE, Caesar returned to Rome to build his political career. He quickly gained popularity and powerful positions by using his excellent oratory (public speaking) skills, and also by bribing the right people. By 68 BCE, he was elected as a *quaestor*. About four years later, he was made a *praetor* (an official who ran the law courts) and governor of the province of Spain.



Source 1 A bust of Julius Caesar

Caesar's rising popularity

On his return to Rome from Spain in 60 BCE, Caesar made a pact with two other leading political figures, Pompey and Crassus. They agreed to help get Caesar elected as a consul, one of two top governing positions in the Republic of Rome. They succeeded in 59 BCE, when Caesar was made a consul.

Consuls could only serve for one year. Once his consulship had ended, Caesar took up the position of governor of the Roman province of Gaul. This marked the beginning of his military career.

Caesar's military career

Caesar was considered a brilliant military commander who was popular with the people and his troops. As governor of Gaul (most of modern-day France), he fought the barbarian Celts. His victories in Gaul and elsewhere added large amounts of new territory to the Roman Republic.

THE REPUBLIC OF ROME AFTER CAESAR'S MILITARY CONQUESTS



Source 2

Source: Oxford University Press

Caesar's conflict with the Senate

The Senate in Rome was now led by Pompey. Pompey, however, no longer supported Caesar. He had begun to worry about Caesar's rising popularity and his military successes in Gaul. Caesar was also beginning to act without consulting the Senate! In 49 BCE, Caesar was ordered by the Senate to give up his command in Gaul, but he refused. Instead, he returned to Rome with his strong army to confront his enemies there. Pompey fled from Rome to what he thought would be refuge in Egypt, but Caesar and his men followed him there. Instead of being protected by the king of Egypt, Ptolemy III, Pompey was killed by him, and his head was presented to Caesar upon his arrival in Egypt. Ptolemy had hoped to gain Caesar's favour by presenting the head of Pompey to Caesar, but Caesar was disgusted by the murder instead.

Caesar and Cleopatra

King Ptolemy's older sister and co-ruler of Egypt, Queen Cleopatra, was more successful in winning Caesar's favour. They became romantically involved, and Caesar helped Cleopatra in her power struggle to gain the Egyptian throne for herself. Caesar and Cleopatra had a child, a boy named Caesarion, born in 47 BCE. The three of them returned that year to Rome to live. There, Caesar threw himself into reforms. He introduced a new currency and a new calendar (called the Julian calendar). He ordered that new Roman colonies be set up in Africa, Gaul and Greece, and started building what would become Rome's chief law courts – the *Basilica Julia*.

Caesar's death

In February 44 BCE, Caesar was appointed as 'dictator for life'. His success and ambition was too much for some republican senators. On 15 March in 44 BCE, a group of about 60 senators, which included some of his friends and former allies (such as Brutus), stabbed Caesar 23 times when he entered the Senate House – killing him. Caesar's death led to the outbreak of a civil war in Rome that lasted for about 15 years. His death marked the end of the Roman Republic.

Caesar's achievements

During his lifetime, Caesar held many important positions, including consul, tribune of the people,



Source 3 An artist's impression of the assassination of Caesar

high commander of the army and high priest. He made new laws, reorganised the army and improved the way the Roman provinces were governed. On the new Julian calendar, the month of July was named in his honour.

Although he had many political enemies, Caesar was popular with the ordinary people. He spoke publicly to them, promising to solve problems such as rising crime, high taxes and unemployment. Their support gave Caesar more power. In 42 BCE, he was officially deified (made a god) and a temple was dedicated to him in Rome.

Check your learning 12.5

Remember and understand

- 1 When was Julius Caesar born?
- 2 Why do you think historians regard Julius Caesar as a significant person in history?
- 3 Describe the roles of a *quaestor* and a *praetor*. You will need to use the glossary to do this.

Apply and analyse

- 4 Put yourself in the position of one of the senators who assassinated Julius Caesar. Try to understand his motives. Prepare and deliver a short oral presentation for the class, explaining why you participated in such a gruesome deed.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Based on what you have learned about Caesar, would you say he was a strong leader? Justify your answer by:
 - a creating a list of characteristics that you believe all good leaders have
 - b deciding which of these characteristics Julius Caesar possessed.

12.6 Other key groups in Roman society

Non-citizens

In addition to the citizens of Rome, there were also large numbers of non-citizens. These people could not vote and had very few rights.

Foreigners

Free men born outside the city of Rome had some rights, but they were not considered full citizens until the law was changed in 212 CE to allow this. A man in one of Rome’s colonies, for example, could not vote even though he held citizenship.

Slaves

Slaves in ancient Rome were not citizens and had no rights at all. However, if slaves were freed they were given a limited form of Roman citizenship and their sons could become citizens. Freed slaves were called freedmen, or *liberti*. Some *liberti* became wealthy and influential.

Most slaves were prisoners of war, though some were bought as ‘goods’. A few were abandoned children or people who could not pay their debts. Slaves had no choice in what they did. The less fortunate might be forced to fight to the death as gladiators, or to work in Rome’s mines or quarries. Punishments could be cruel.

As in most ancient societies, slaves provided a vital source of labour. Their efforts helped to increase the prosperity of Rome.



Source 1 These slaves are attending to their mistress’s hair. Domestic female slaves in ancient Rome could be asked to attend to every need of their mistress.

Women in ancient Rome

Although women in Rome were technically considered citizens, they had few rights when compared to men. Much of what we know about the lives of Roman women was written by men. According to many of the available sources, the main role of women in Roman society, especially those of the higher classes, was to raise children and run the household. In general, there are very few sources about the lives of poor women. We do know that the *paterfamilias*, a Latin term meaning ‘father of the family’ that refers to the oldest male in the household, had all the power.

A household in ancient Rome typically included parents, married and unmarried children, and slaves. The *paterfamilias* decided who his daughters married and whether any newborn children in the house lived or died. Women had to obey their husbands in nearly every aspect of their lives. Any property or money they brought to the marriage automatically belonged to their husbands.

The Punic Wars (see section 12.15) did much to change the lives of many women in Rome. With their men away fighting, many had to manage on their own (with their slaves). After these wars, the widows of soldiers often received large sums of money – similar to a war pension today. This further boosted their self-reliance.

Around the 2nd century BCE, conditions of marriage for women in ancient Rome changed, giving women more financial advantages and social freedom. With their husbands, many women attended dinner parties, gladiator fights, chariot races and religious festivals, and regularly went to the public baths. Not all men were happy about this.

Source 2

If you give women equal freedom with men, do you think this will make them easier to live with? Far from it! If women have equality, they will become men’s masters.

Translated extract from the writing of Livy, a Roman historian (59 BCE to 17 CE)

12B What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient Rome?

Source 3 The status of women in ancient Rome

| Restrictions on women | Opportunities for women |
|--|---|
| Could not vote or own property | Had greater personal freedoms than the women of other ancient civilisations, such as ancient Greece |
| Had no legal control over their children | Were taught how to read and write |
| Had to be escorted by a male guardian in public | Could become highly respected figures (e.g. Cornelia Gracchus – see Key concept: significance) |
| Most had a less formal education than boys (e.g. spinning and weaving rather than maths, history and philosophy) | Some were able to work or run their own businesses, or helped their husbands with their business, unlike Athenian women who were largely shut away in their homes |
| Had no active role in civic or political life | Could play an active role in preparing sons for civic life |



Source 4 A painting of Roman magistrate Terentius Nero and his wife from Pompeii (1st century CE)

Many upper-class women soon achieved a new prosperity and social standing. This encouraged many to further challenge the rules about women’s behaviour. This development worried Rome’s ruler Augustus (63 BCE to 14 CE). He believed Rome would be strong only if its people were moral. As part of his reforms, he introduced strict laws to restrict women’s behaviour. For example, women were banned from attending public spectacles. There were also harsh penalties for adultery (sexual relationships outside of marriage). The laws he created saw even Augustus’ own daughter, Julie, exiled.

keyconcept: significance

Cornelia Gracchus

Cornelia Gracchus (190–100 BCE) was a remarkable trailblazer for women’s independence in her time. She was the daughter of the Roman general Scipio. She and her husband, Tiberius Gracchus Major, had 12 children, only three of whom (two boys and a girl) survived.

When her husband died, Cornelia refused to remarry. Instead she took total control of her husband’s estate and her sons’ education. Later in life, she studied Latin and Greek language and literature, learning from Greek scholars she brought to Rome. She even set up a club where important literary and political figures could gather to share ideas. Cornelia also supported and advised her sons in their political careers.

She is significant because she was a woman ahead of her time. She was well regarded as a virtuous, ideal mother figure by ancient Romans. Yet she was also strong-minded and independent. For more information on the key concept of significance, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.



Check your learning 12.6

Remember and understand

- 1 How did the *paterfamilias* influence the role of women in ancient Rome?
- 2 What evidence does Source 3 provide of the limits placed on women in ancient Rome?
- 3 How did the Punic Wars help to change the role of women in ancient Rome?

Apply and analyse

- 4 The magistrate and his wife shown in Source 4 both hold writing materials. What do you conclude from this evidence?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Write a short letter that a modern women’s rights supporter might send to Cornelia Gracchus (if that were possible) explaining why she is regarded today as such a ‘trailblazer’.
- 6 Frame two questions that would guide your research in finding out more about Cornelia Gracchus.

Source 5 A sculpture of Cornelia Gracchus and her two sons

12B rich task

Four Roman emperors

The emperors of ancient Rome possessed great power and wealth. Some were great leaders and brave soldiers, while others were corrupt and abused their power. Four of the most famous emperors of Rome are profiled here. Some were celebrated for their achievements; others despised for their wickedness.

Augustus

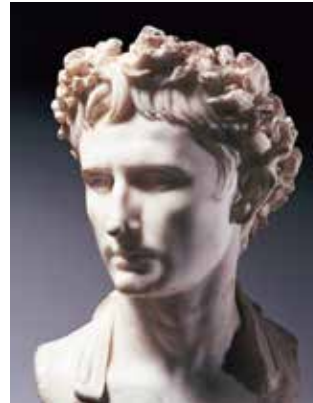
I am Augustus, Rome's first emperor (though I never called myself that). After my great-uncle Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE, I changed my birth name to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Julius Caesar was like a father to me and I was very upset that he was killed. My rule began in 27 BCE when I was 36 years old. The Senate renamed me Augustus, meaning 'exalted one'. As Rome's leader, I made it a better place to live. For a while, there was peace (after many years of civil war). I increased its territory to include countries you now know as France, Egypt and Spain. I built many roads, bridges and aqueducts, and encouraged trade (including with the country you would know as India). Art and literature flourished under my rule. After my death in 14 CE, the people worshipped me as a god.



Source 1 Augustus

Caligula

I am Caligula – Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus to be precise. I was Rome's third emperor, ruling from 37 CE until my death in 41 CE. Historians say I started well. I abolished sales tax, worked well with the Senate and put on lots of games at the Colosseum. I even fought a whale once during sea games there. In 37 CE I became very ill with what my doctors described as a 'brain fever'. Some historians think that's when I went mad. I suppose I did try to get my horse elected as consul. I loved money and riches, so much so that my extravagance caused a financial crisis in 39 CE. I had to introduce a lot of new taxes to raise more money and even made it law for wealthy men to leave their fortunes to me in their wills. In 40 CE I announced myself as a god and ordered several temples and statues in my honour. I was 29 when the Praetorian Guards murdered me, even though I paid them to protect me!



Source 2 Caligula

Nero

I am Nero. I became emperor in 54 CE when I was only 17. The first few years of my rule went smoothly. I was very interested in the arts, but I was also an excellent chariot racer, so good that I found it necessary to kill those I thought might be better than me. I had my mother killed when I was 21, but I made it look like a suicide. Then there were the military campaigns in Britain (60 CE) and Judea, modern-day Israel (66–70 CE). I'm probably remembered most for the fire in Rome that broke out in 64 CE. It almost destroyed the entire city. Some people said I started it, but I blamed the Christians – they made an excellent scapegoat. I ordered some of them be fed to the lions and had others painted with tar before setting them alight. I built a new palace for myself on Rome's burned ruins. In 65 CE, the Senate plotted to remove me from power, but did not succeed. A number of army revolts in 68 CE were the final straw. I lost the throne. I was so humiliated that I took my own life that year.



Source 3 Nero

Marcus Aurelius

I am Marcus Aurelius. I was 40 years old when I became emperor of Rome, ruling from 161 CE until my death in 180 CE. Historians say I ruled well – the last of five good rulers they say. I increased the size of the army and introduced many social reforms, such as giving more rights to women and slaves. I was a thinker and philosopher but, like other emperors before me, I persecuted Christians because their beliefs were undermining ours. In 162 CE, the second year of my reign, the Tiber broke its banks and destroyed much of Rome, causing a famine in the city. From 161 until 166 CE, I fought the Parthians with my co-emperor and stepbrother Lucius Verus. Unfortunately, his troops brought the plague back to Rome from Parthia (a region close to what you know as the Middle East). It spread through the empire from 165 CE until 180 CE, killing thousands of people. My son Commodus ruled after me, although he had already been appointed as co-emperor in 177 CE.



Source 4 Marcus Aurelius

skilldrill: Chronology

Plotting events on a timeline

Timelines are a very important tool for historians. They allow the reader to quickly identify what happened when, and how much time went by between events.

Follow these steps when creating a timeline:

- Step 1** Determine the type of timeline required, i.e. horizontal or vertical.
- Step 2** Establish the total time span you need to cover with your timeline. Consider:
 - the starting date of the timeline
 - the end date of the timeline.
- Step 3** Enter the most significant dates on the timeline and provide key facts and information about the events that took place on each date. Be sure your written text is clear and concise.
- Step 4** Make sure each event date is entered chronologically (in order) from left to right (for horizontal timelines) or bottom to top (for vertical timelines).

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.

Apply the skill

- 1 Following the steps provided, create a timeline for two of the Roman emperors above, including:
 - the date they were born
 - the date they died
 - key events in their lives or reign.
 Plot as many dates as you can identify from the information provided.

Extend your understanding

- 1 Create two Venn diagrams in your notebook to compare and contrast the profiles of:
 - a the emperors Augustus and Marcus Aurelius
 - b the emperors Nero and Caligula.
 To create a Venn diagram, features that are specific to one thing you are looking at should be recorded in the left circle. Features that are specific to the other thing you are looking at should be recorded in the right circle. Features that they have in common should be recorded in the overlapping area of the circles. (See 11A rich task for more information on creating Venn diagrams.)
- 2 What do you conclude about these four rulers? Write a paragraph to explain your findings.

12.7 Religious beliefs and practices

The values, customs and beliefs of ancient Romans were often a mix of those they had inherited from their ancestors and those adopted from societies they conquered. Together, these beliefs, values and practices had an impact on how the people of ancient Rome lived.

Beliefs and values in ancient Rome

The rulers of ancient Rome did not believe in one god, as Jews, Christians and Muslims do; instead, they believed in many. Most of their **deities** (gods) were adapted from ancient Greek gods and goddesses (see Source 2). It is believed that the Romans adopted many of the Greek deities because they much admired Greek traditions and culture. They also included deities of other conquered peoples, such as the Persian god Mithras and the Egyptian goddess Isis.

Roman deities were worshipped in temples and in the home. Sacrifices and offerings were made and festivals were held in their honour. Rituals and ceremonies were the most important part of Roman religious practice. For example, certain parts of sacrificed animals were burned as an offering to the gods. The Romans believed such practices would keep the gods happy.

The fact that Romans had traditionally worshipped many gods was the main reason why Roman rulers such as Nero feared Christianity with its worship of one God. This fear motivated Roman leaders to try to stamp out Christianity. For about 300 years, Romans who converted to Christianity were often tortured or killed. They might be crucified, burnt alive or fed to the lions, often in front of cheering crowds in the Colosseum (see Source 3).



Source 1 This Roman mosaic entitled *Triumph of Neptune* shows the god of the sea as the central image.

Source 2 Some Roman deities and their Greek equivalents

| Ancient Roman deity | Role | Ancient Greek deity |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Jupiter | king of the gods | Zeus |
| Juno | goddess of women and childbirth | Hera |
| Neptune | god of the sea | Poseidon |
| Mars | god of war | Ares |
| Venus | goddess of love and beauty | Aphrodite |
| Bacchus | god of wine and pleasure | Dionysus |
| Vesta | goddess of the hearth | Hestia |



Source 3 An artist's impression of Christians being burned at the stake and fed to lions in ancient Rome

Despite the efforts of many Roman emperors, Christianity continued to spread. By 394 CE, Emperor Constantine had made it Rome's official religion. Today, the traditions of Rome's early Christian church have gone on to influence the beliefs and practices of many people in the modern world. The Vatican (the seat of the Roman Catholic Church) and the Pope are located in Rome to this day.

Values

The ancient Romans lived by an unwritten (but very important) code of **values** that influenced their behaviours and attitudes in all aspects of their daily life (see Source 4). Every Roman was expected to practise these values at all levels of society – private, political and military.

| Key values in ancient Rome | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ● | <i>Industria</i> – willingness to work hard; diligence |
| ● | <i>Dignitas</i> – a sense of personal pride and self-worth |
| ● | <i>Virtus</i> – courage, honour, toughness, desire to excel |
| ● | <i>Fides</i> – honesty, trustworthiness, dependability |
| ● | <i>Gravitas</i> – self-control, dignity, seriousness, responsibility |
| ● | <i>Pietas</i> – respect, dutifulness, good living, devotion to worship and others |

Source 4 These key values of ancient Rome formed an unwritten code on which Romans based their behaviours and attitudes.

Check your learning 12.7

Remember and understand

- 1 Which Roman deities were equivalent to the Greek deities Poseidon, Dionysus, Hestia and Zeus?
- 2 Explain how the ancient Romans initially treated Christians. What did this have to do with Christian beliefs?
- 3 How did the ancient Romans attempt to keep the gods happy?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Conduct some Internet research into the spread of Christianity in ancient Rome. Write a brief report, ensuring you include information that answers the following questions:
 - a Who was Saint Paul, and what was his role in spreading the message of Christianity?
 - b Which emperor eventually made Christianity legal, and in what year?
 - c Which emperor later declared Christianity the state religion, and the worship of all other deities illegal?

12.8 Everyday life

Everyday life in ancient Rome varied widely according to people's position in society – whether they were citizens or not, freeborn people or slaves, wealthy or poor, and whether they were male or female.

Roman families

The society of ancient Rome was organised around the family (and extended family). As mentioned, it was headed and controlled by the *paterfamilias* (the oldest male, or 'father', of the family). Ancient Romans had great respect for the father figure. The emperor and senators of Rome were seen as 'fathers' of the people. The dominant role of men in Roman society was shaped by the religious belief that women, children and slaves did not have souls. They were therefore dependent on freeborn men for their social status and protection.

Women in ancient Rome were expected to be good wives and mothers. They had no active role in public or political life.

Roman housing

Wealthy Romans lived very differently from the poor, who usually lived very hard lives. In urban areas, the poor crammed into dark, tiny rooms in multi-storey apartment buildings called *insulae*. These rooms were often smelly and badly maintained. Water had to be carried in pots from wells that might be some distance away. People had to walk to a public toilet where, instead of toilet paper, they shared a communal sponge that was washed out after each use (see Source 2).

In contrast, the wealthy lived very privileged lives. Many wealthy families maintained homes in Rome as well as spacious country estates known as villas. The homes of the wealthy featured many modern conveniences such as running water and toilets. They often had many rooms, private baths and courtyards, and were decorated with beautiful artworks, mosaics and marble statues. They were surrounded by gardens and pools.

keyconcept: continuity and change

Weddings

Weddings in ancient Rome played a central role in the lives of many families – in much the same way they do today. The type of ceremony often depended on people's social status. Many of the traditions that we follow today date back as far as ancient Rome. Roman brides married in white, wore veils and carried flowers. A marriage contract was also drawn up and sealed with a kiss.

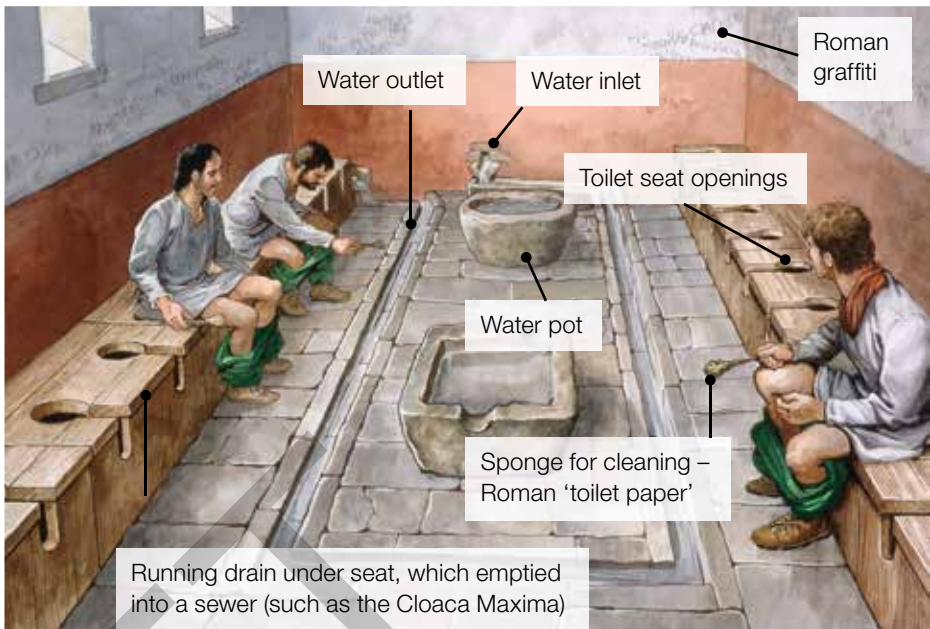
Many other Roman wedding traditions have changed. Generally, girls in ancient Rome were married

at around 14 years, sometimes younger. Marriages were arranged by the father of the bride, or the *paterfamilias*. The bride had no say in the matter. Fathers handed control of their daughters to their husbands on marriage. Echoes of this continue today – when the priest or minister asks, 'Who gives this woman away?', the father of the bride answers, 'I do'.

For more information on the key concept of continuity and change, refer to page XX of 'The history toolkit'.



Source 1 A stone carving of a wedding ceremony in ancient Rome. The groom holds the marriage contract.



Source 2 An artist's impression of a public latrine (toilet) in ancient Rome

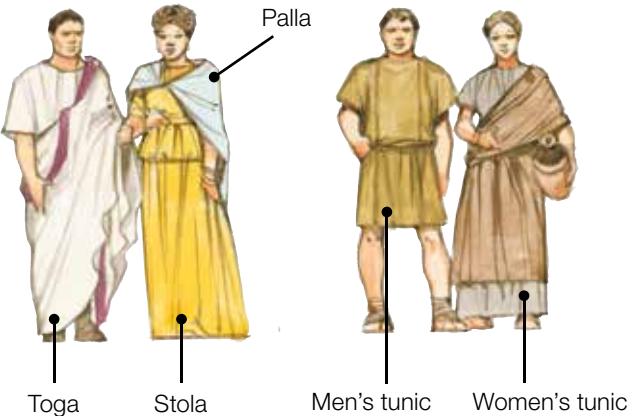
Fashion and grooming

The men and women of ancient Rome wore tunics (simple garments of various lengths both with and without sleeves). Tunics were made from linen or wool and could be a number of different colours. Women's tunics were ankle length; men's were shorter. Only male citizens could wear a **toga** over this. Togas consisted of around six metres of cloth that was wrapped around the body over a tunic. Togas were only worn in public.

Wealthy women wore *stola* (a garment similar to a toga) over their tunics. When in public they also wore a *palla* (cloak) and often covered their heads with a veil or part of the *palla* to mark their lower social status.

Slaves wore only tunics.

Wealthy women spent time caring for their hair and skin. Complexions were lightened with chalk and lips coloured with mulberry juice or the sediment from red wine. Wigs, made from the hair of slaves, were often worn by men and women. Blond and red were popular hair colours. The clean-shaven 'short back and sides' look for men became the fashion after the 2nd century BCE.



Source 3 Clothing of Roman men and women

Education

Education was a privilege of the wealthy, and then usually only for boys. Girls did learn to read and write, but most of their training related to domestic skills such as spinning cloth and weaving. Teachers in the home were often educated slaves (and frequently Greek). Subjects studied typically included music, history, geography, astronomy, mathematics, reading, writing, along with Greek and Latin. They were also taught the Roman values (see Source 4 on page XX) that would guide their behaviour and attitude throughout their life.

Boys generally completed their schooling around the age of 16. Their 'graduation' was celebrated by putting on a new toga and going out to register on the census (an official count of the population) as a full Roman citizen. The occasion was a family celebration.

Check your learning 12.8

Remember and understand

- 1 Name three wedding traditions today that are examples of continuity from those in ancient Rome.
- 2 Explain the differences between togas and stolas.

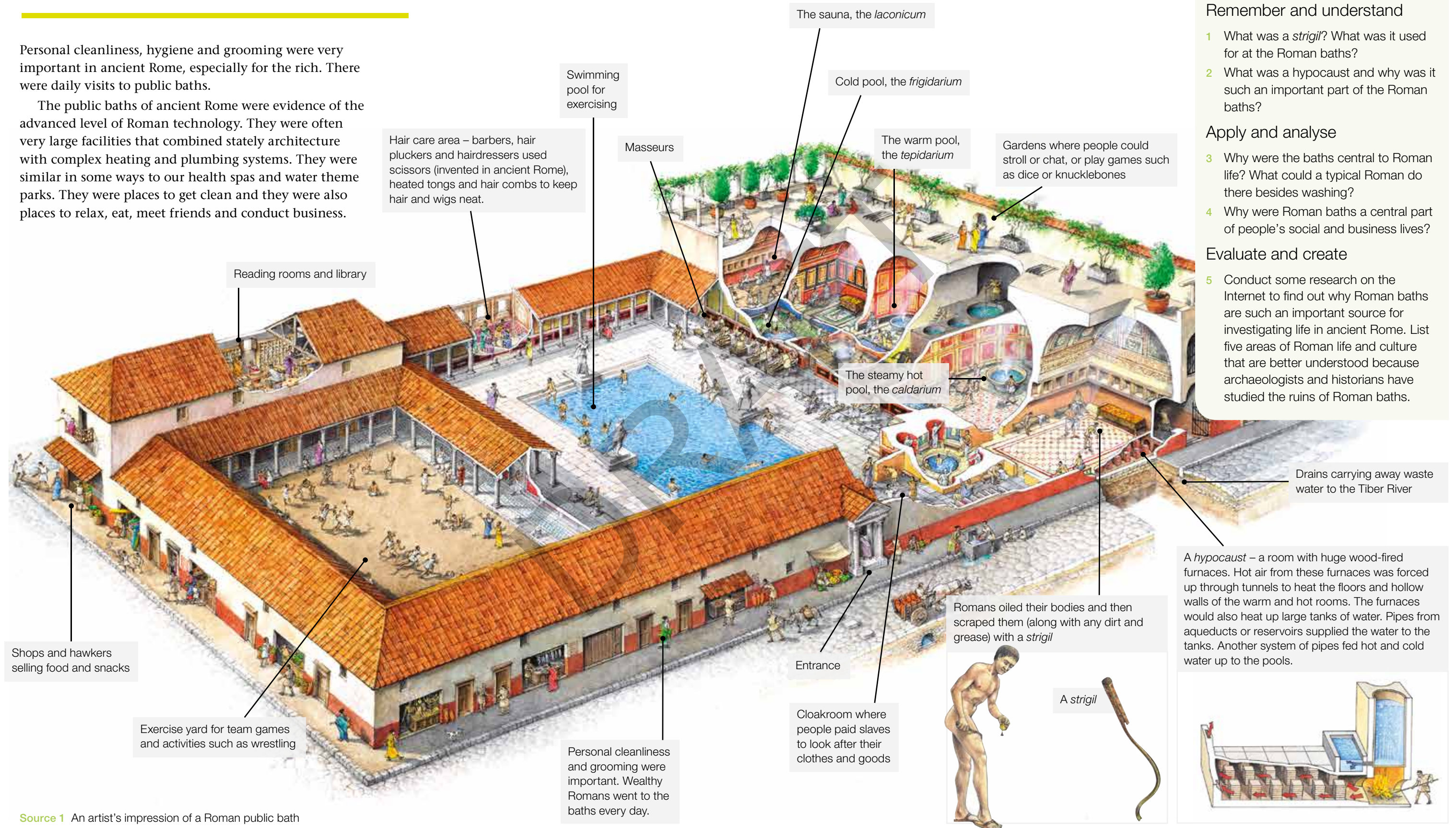
Apply and analyse

- 3 Study Source 2. What has changed in public toilet design since the days of ancient Rome? What has stayed the same?

12.9 Roman baths

Personal cleanliness, hygiene and grooming were very important in ancient Rome, especially for the rich. There were daily visits to public baths.

The public baths of ancient Rome were evidence of the advanced level of Roman technology. They were often very large facilities that combined stately architecture with complex heating and plumbing systems. They were similar in some ways to our health spas and water theme parks. They were places to get clean and they were also places to relax, eat, meet friends and conduct business.



Source 1 An artist's impression of a Roman public bath

Check your learning 12.9

Remember and understand

- 1 What was a *strigil*? What was it used for at the Roman baths?
- 2 What was a hypocaust and why was it such an important part of the Roman baths?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Why were the baths central to Roman life? What could a typical Roman do there besides washing?
- 4 Why were Roman baths a central part of people's social and business lives?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct some research on the Internet to find out why Roman baths are such an important source for investigating life in ancient Rome. List five areas of Roman life and culture that are better understood because archaeologists and historians have studied the ruins of Roman baths.

12.10 Public entertainment

Most ordinary Romans lived hard lives. At times, it was a source of envy and irritation for the poor to see how the rich lived and the privileges they enjoyed. To combat this, and keep the peace, Roman rulers organised free entertainment for the common people. This ensured that they did not become restless and rebellious.

By the end of the 1st century BCE, entertainment was provided for the people on 159 days of each year in Rome. A day out at the **Circus Maximus**, which could seat close to a quarter of a million people, meant watching horse-drawn chariots thunder around the track. Death and terrible injuries were common, but this was seen as part of the fun.

Fronto, an ancient Roman writer, said the people were kept happy and peaceful by two things – grain supply and shows. Another Roman writer, Juvenal, later expressed this as ‘bread and circuses’.

Gladiator games

Perhaps one of the most popular forms of ancient Roman entertainment were the gladiator games. The massive **Colosseum**, in the heart of ancient Rome, was the place to go for gladiator fights (see Source 1). Romans flocked here to watch gladiators fight and kill animals or each other. Gladiators were forced to fight to the death.

Most gladiators were unwilling participants. They were slaves, criminals or prisoners captured from around the empire. Popular gladiators who won many fights became famous in Rome and were treated in a similar way to sporting stars today. They were often granted their freedom after a time and became trainers of other gladiators.

Types of gladiators

In order to make fights interesting for the Roman audiences, there were several different types of gladiators. Most fought on foot. Others, such as the **equite**, fought on horseback. Some were heavily armoured, while others fought almost naked. Some gladiators were female. Often, female gladiators fought before the men. There were even ‘clown’ gladiators, known as the **andabatae**. Their helmets had no eye holes. They would be pushed towards each other, hacking wildly with their weapons, for the enjoyment of the crowd. Source 2 shows four of the most common types of gladiators.

keyconcept: contestability

Origins of the gladiator games

Some historians believe that the origins of gladiator fights in Rome date back to an Etruscan practice of holding fights to the death at the funerals of great rulers and kings.

Other historians contest this claim as there is little evidence to support it. Other scholars claim that the games began in 264 BCE when two brothers arranged for six slaves to fight to the death. This was done as a religious ritual to honour their dead father, Junius Brutus.

Regardless of how they began, the tradition of entertaining people with free gladiator fights was well established by the time Rome became an empire.

For more information on the key concept of contestability, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.



Source 1 The remains of the Colosseum. Gladiators, soldiers and animals were housed in the rooms and corridors under the arena until it was time to perform for the crowds.

A **retarius** was armed with a short dagger, a trident and a weighted net. The mesh was used to entangle the opponent's weapons, hands or feet. He had no armour but an arm guard. If he won the fight, he would kill his opponent with the dagger or trident.



A **secutor** carried a short sword or dagger and a shield. His right arm and left leg were covered. His helmet had small eye holes, a rounded top and protective lips at the neck. A **secutor** had to kill quickly before he tired from the lack of oxygen inside the helmet.

The **murmillo** was usually pitted against the **thraex**. His broad-brimmed helmet was fish-shaped. His left lower leg was protected by padding and a metal greave, and his right arm by armour. He carried a short, straight sword and a large curved shield.



A **thraex** carried a short, curved sword and a small shield. His lower legs were protected by greaves and his thighs with padding. The head of an eagle topped his brimmed helmet. The helmet's grille protected his face and eyes, and a deep collar protected his neck.

Source 2 An artist's impression of typical gladiator duels. Pairs were typically matched to make the fight fair. One gladiator's advantage was the other's disadvantage.

Check your learning 12.10

Remember and understand

- 1 Why did Roman rulers provide free entertainment for the common people?
- 2 For how many days per year was entertainment provided in Rome?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Historians disagree about when and where the tradition of gladiator fighting began.
 - a Why is this?
 - b What theories do different historians have?
 - c What theory do you believe is most reliable? Why?

- 4 Explain the meaning of the phrase ‘bread and circuses’.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Conduct some research into the different types of gladiators that fought for the entertainment of Roman crowds. Consider the different weapons and armour each gladiator had.
 - a If you were forced to fight in the Colosseum in Rome, which of these gladiators would you choose to be?
 - b Compare your choice with other students in your class. Which was the most popular choice? Why?

12.11 The Colosseum

The Colosseum building was started in 72 CE and completed in 80 CE. It could hold up to 80 000 people, and its external dimensions are longer and wider than Australia's largest stadium, the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

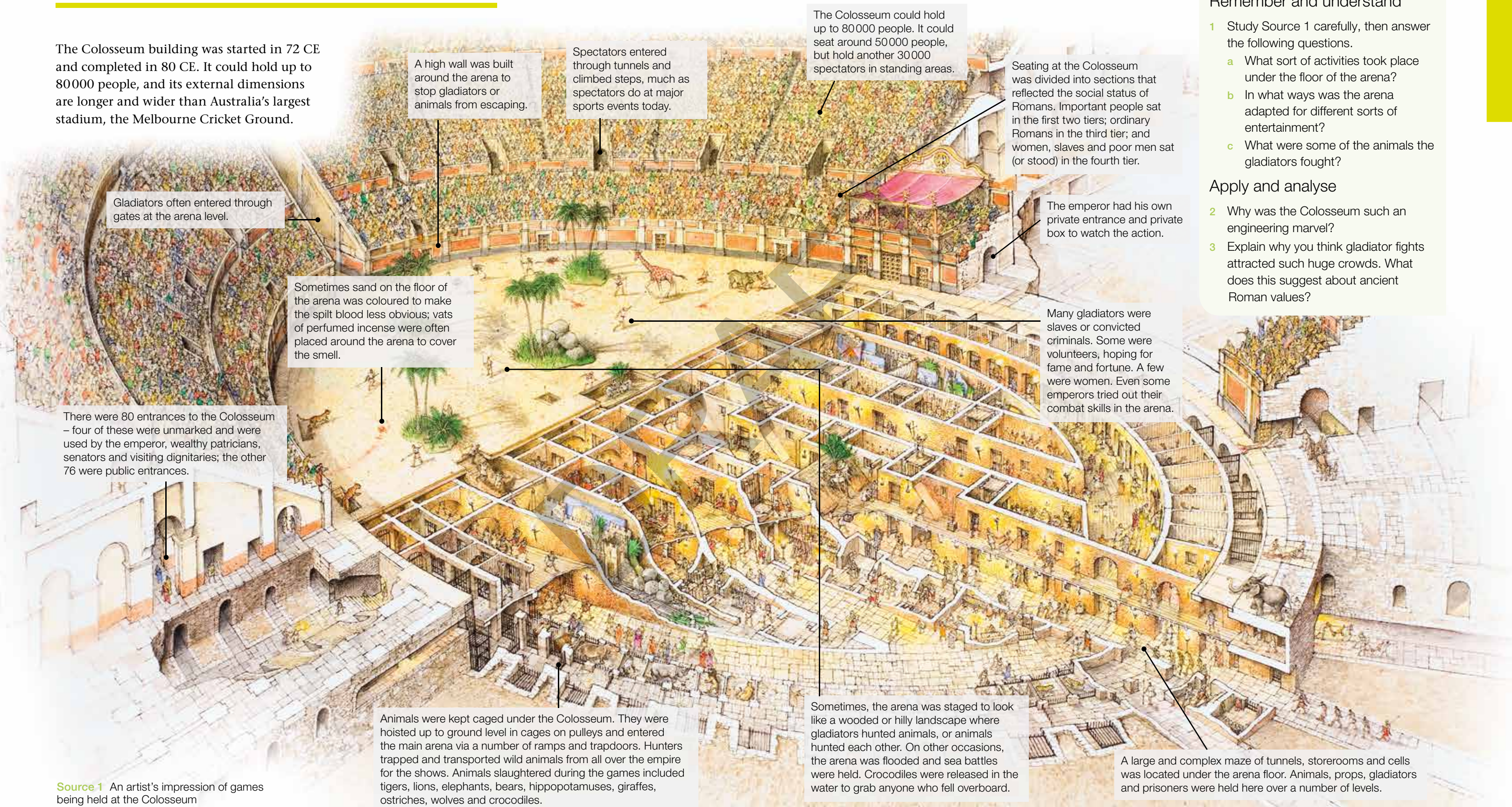
Check your learning 12.11

Remember and understand

- 1 Study Source 1 carefully, then answer the following questions.
 - a What sort of activities took place under the floor of the arena?
 - b In what ways was the arena adapted for different sorts of entertainment?
 - c What were some of the animals the gladiators fought?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Why was the Colosseum such an engineering marvel?
- 3 Explain why you think gladiator fights attracted such huge crowds. What does this suggest about ancient Roman values?



Source 1 An artist's impression of games being held at the Colosseum

12.12 Warfare

Military service was a part of life for Roman citizens. It was needed at first to help to increase Rome's territory and then to defend it. In fact, for a time the most important Roman god was Mars – the god of war.

Through intense and disciplined training, Rome's army became very strong. Later, the breakdown in order and self-discipline in the army was one of the reasons Rome's Western Empire eventually crumbled.

Early days

In the early days of the republic, men had to be landowners before they were allowed to enter the army. Some were wealthy enough to own horses and buy armour and weapons. These men formed the cavalry. By 260 BCE, the army gained control of the country that we now know as Italy. As its territory grew, Rome needed a larger and more permanent army. Around 10 BCE, a Roman consul, Marius, declared that men no longer had to own land to join the army. Consequently, thousands of men (including the very poor) joined up.

Army organisation

The Roman army was a very hierarchical and disciplined organisation. Roman soldiers were known as *legionaries*. The army itself was made up of around 30 **legions**. Each legion had between 4000 and 6000 soldiers led by a *legatus* (general). Each legion was made up of 10 groups known as cohorts. Each cohort was then broken down into six smaller groups of 80 to 100 troops. These groups were known as centuries. Each century was led by a soldier known as a *centurion*.

At first, only Roman citizens could be legionaries, the best soldiers and the best paid. Later, soldiers who were not Roman citizens were also allowed to join. These soldiers were known as **auxiliaries**. Auxiliaries often had special skills such as archery, and were expected to fight on the front line where it was most dangerous.



Source 1 A Roman legionary (soldier) in uniform



Source 2 The *testudo* (from the Latin word for 'tortoise shell') provided Roman soldiers with protection against enemy attacks. Their shields were sometimes held above their heads when approaching the walls of an enemy fort.

Roman soldiers in the 2nd century BCE were organised for battle according to age. At the front were the young men, the spearmen. Behind them were the *principes*; these were soldiers in the prime of their life. At the rear were the older soldiers.

A typical Roman foot soldier would be dressed in a red woollen tunic over which would be worn body armour. The armour for the torso was made up of overlapping iron plates. They also wore a helmet, a scarf to protect against chafing from their helmet and armour, a belt with studded leather strips for groin protection, and leather sandals. Their weapons generally consisted of a dagger, a sword, a javelin (spear) and a large shield (see Source 2).

Standards and standard-bearers

Each legion of the Roman army carried a standard into battle. A standard was a silver eagle called an *aquila* mounted on a pole that identified each legion. It was a symbol of their strength and therefore a matter of great shame if the standard was lost or captured. This could destroy the morale and discipline of a legion on the battlefield.

There were a number of **standard-bearers** in Rome's army who were chosen for their leadership qualities. They were known as *aquilifer*, because they carried the *aquila* (see Source 3).



Source 3 A modern artist's impression of an *aquilifer*, or standard-bearer, leading his men into battle

Siege warfare

Roman soldiers were very disciplined and many Roman generals were highly skilled military strategists. One military strategy that gave the Roman army an advantage over its enemies was **siege warfare** tactics. Siege warfare involved surrounding an enemy city and starving those inside into submission. It often involved slaughtering the enemy after they surrendered. A common approach was to build two parallel walls around the city. The inner wall was a barrier to stop food being brought into the city. The outer wall provided protection for the Roman troops in case warriors or supporters of those inside the city tried to attack.

Equipment such as **catapults** and **battering rams** was used during sieges. Catapults launched large stones, and even rotting carcasses of animals, over city walls in order to spread disease and force a surrender. Battering rams were long heavy logs with ram-shaped heads carved into the end – useful for breaking down the wooden gate of enemy forts and city walls.

Another strategy was to dig tunnels under a weak section of a wall to undermine it. The tunnel was propped up with wooden supports that were then set on fire. When the supports collapsed, so did the tunnel and the wall above it.



Source 4 A modern re-enactment of Roman soldiers loading a ballista, a type of catapult

Check your learning 12.12

Remember and understand

- 1 Which god was, for a time, the most important god of Rome? What does this suggest?
- 2 How did the decision of the consul Marius in 10 BCE change the make-up of the Roman army?
- 3 a Who were the *principes*?
b Why might they have fought where they did when in battle formation?
- 4 Why were auxiliaries sometimes called on to fight with the Roman army?

Apply and analyse

- 5 List some of the things that might have motivated those who were part of the Roman army.
- 6 Sometimes battering rams were pushed on wheeled devices. These devices were often covered with a long 'roof' layered with wet hides from freshly killed animals. What purpose do you think such a roof served?

Evaluate and create

- 7 Find out what a manipule was and how it worked as a strategy on the battlefield. Draw a sketch to illustrate your findings.
- 8 How were the standards of Rome's army like the flags carried by modern armies?

12.13 Death and funeral customs

Many Romans had no set beliefs about what happened after they died. At least this was the case until Christian beliefs began to dominate in the 4th century CE under Emperor Constantine. The beliefs and customs of the civilisations Rome conquered influenced some Romans in the way they dealt with death. These included the cults of Egypt's goddess Isis and Persia's god Mithras. Ancient Romans also had great respect for their ancestors. Often they kept wax death masks (or stone busts) of them in their homes, which they might display on special occasions (see Source 1 on page XX).

The influence of beliefs and traditions

A key influence on Roman beliefs about death was Greek **mythology**. Like the Greeks, many Romans believed that their souls were transported into the afterlife once they died. The souls of the dead went to the underworld, known as **Hades**. There were several sections in Hades. For example, wicked souls ended up in Tartarus – a place of everlasting torment and misery. The souls of the brave went to the Elysian Fields – a peaceful and happy place. Dead souls reached Hades by paying the ferryman, Charon, to row them across the River Styx.

Despite having no fixed beliefs about life after death, the ancient Romans were generally uneasy about death. Many believed the spirits (or souls) of the dead roamed the earth, haunting them, if certain rituals were not carried out. Hence, the people showed a great deal of respect towards those who had died.



Source 1 An artist's impression of the ferryman, Charon, rowing the soul of a dead Roman over the River Styx to Hades

Dealing with the dead

The ancient Romans regarded dead bodies as pollution, and those who tended to them as 'polluted'. Polluted people could not perform certain civic and religious duties until they had carried out purification rituals. This meant that funeral workers and executioners were constantly 'unclean'. As a result, they became social outcasts and had to live outside their cities and towns.

Cremation

Cremation (the burning of corpses) was the preferred method for disposing of dead bodies up until the end of the 1st century CE, when burial became more common.

Often, a person's belongings were burned with their body. The ashes and remains of bone were then placed in an urn, which was buried or placed in a tomb. Sometimes many people were cremated at once.

Graves

Those who could not afford a burial plot or tomb were usually buried in a mass grave on the Esquiline Hill outside Rome. Typically, the corpses of the poor were carried there at night, often by slaves. Each corpse might be wrapped in cloth or covered with a sack. They were not placed in coffins. When the grave started to fill up with corpses, it was filled in with dirt. Mass graves were also used for Roman soldiers who died bravely in battle, and a long way from home.

12C How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Roman lifestyles?



Source 2 Burial urns in a Roman tomb in Naples

Some people, though, did not receive the respect of even a 'bulk burial'. The corpses of outcasts, such as prostitutes and people who took their own lives, were left out in the open for wild animals to eat.

Funeral clubs

Poor people in ancient Rome often belonged to funeral clubs called *collegia*. Membership gave Rome's poor some comfort that they would have the honour of a decent burial. While still alive, members enjoyed social occasions, perhaps getting together for a few glasses of wine while discussing their funeral arrangements. The ashes of members, after being placed in an urn, were often stored in one tomb. Each person had a pre-arranged spot for his remains.

The influence of the law

One of the *Laws of the Twelve Tables* (a code of laws written in about 450 BCE) stated that people, other than small children, could not be buried or cremated within the city borders. This was partly for reasons of health, but also because burial spaces were very limited. This law was also designed to avoid excessive air pollution from cremations. As towns and cities grew, and their borders expanded, burial and funeral rites were pushed further and further away from built-up areas. Grave sites (and tombs) of the wealthy began to line roads outside towns and cities, especially the **Via Appia** (one of Rome's most important roadways).



Source 3 Monuments marking ancient grave sites along the Via Appia

The law also made it illegal for mourners to create too much noise and public spectacle at funerals. For example, women were forbidden to gouge their cheeks with their fingernails and wail for too long. The punishment for vandalising a grave or mutilating or disrespecting a corpse was death.

Festivals

Two festivals of ancient Rome honoured the dead. The *Parentalia* was a time in February when people remembered their ancestors, particularly dead parents. The *Lemuria* was an occasion on which to remember all those who had died.

Check your learning 12.13

Remember and understand

- 1 Where were the graveyards and crematoriums in ancient Rome? Why?
- 2 What was the purpose of the *Parentalia* festival?
- 3 a What might be the lot of a poor person who died in Rome?
b Why might a poor person fear such a fate, given Roman beliefs?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Make a papier-mâché or clay model of a mausoleum or monument you would have built in honour of an influential and respected person in society today. Explain what influenced your design.

12C rich task

Gladiators

Gladiator contests were bloody and violent, something that most of us today would find much less enjoyable than the Romans did. Yet the subject of gladiators is still one that intrigues us. Many books, TV programs, graphic novels and films have been created about the gladiators’ endurance and spirit. Award-winning films such as *Gladiator* (2000), for example, tell the stories of brave and honourable men who fought against injustice and cruel leaders.

As well as entertainment, films can be very useful secondary sources that give us a sense of historical periods or events. Writers, directors, set and costume designers – and even actors – often do a lot of research when making a film to gain as much accurate detail as possible. Of course, sometimes decisions are made to change the facts in order to make a better story; at other times, errors or oversights can lead to small inaccuracies.



skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Identify and locate relevant sources

Although historical films can be useful secondary sources, it is very important that you also use a range of other sources when conducting a historical inquiry. These will provide you with a more balanced picture of the topic you are investigating. To do this, refer to the list of possible primary and secondary sources provided. For each source listed, brainstorm an example that relates to the question or topic you are investigating.

Primary sources:

- physical remains of buildings or houses
- weapons
- armour or costumes
- remains of clothing
- tools
- official documents such as laws and treaties
- personal documents such as diaries and letters
- paintings and artworks

Secondary sources:

- writings of historians
- encyclopaedia entries
- documentaries
- history textbooks
- websites
- photographs

Take the first type of primary source listed above (physical remains of buildings or houses). If you were researching gladiators, an example of this type of primary source might be the remains of the Colosseum.

An example of the second type of primary source listed (weapons) might be gladiatorial equipment such as swords.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.

Source 1 A still from the 2000 film *Gladiator*. Maximus, the hero of the film, fights an opponent in the Colosseum.

Apply the skill

- 1 Imagine you are making a film or TV program about gladiators. What sort of information would you need to make it as historically accurate as possible? Use the process described to brainstorm possible examples of sources about gladiators. Copy the table below into your notebook. Provide at least one example for each source. The first two examples have been done for you.

| Types of sources | Possible examples of this type of source related to gladiators |
|--|--|
| Primary sources | |
| • physical remains of buildings or houses | • remains of the Colosseum |
| • weapons | • swords |
| • armour or costumes | |
| • remains of clothing | |
| • tools | |
| • official documents such as laws and treaties | |
| • personal documents such as diaries and letters | |
| • paintings and artworks | |
| Secondary sources | |
| • writings of historians | |
| • encyclopaedia entries | |
| • documentaries | |
| • history textbooks | |
| • websites | |
| • photographs | |



Source 2 A still from *Gladiator*. Set and costume designers do a lot of research to achieve historical accuracy in modern re-enactments.

Extend your understanding

Once you have brainstormed possible sources of evidence, you can begin your Internet search. For a detailed description of this skill refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.

- 1 Work with a partner and use your ICT skills to locate examples of the types of sources you have listed above. Try to use a variety of websites to locate these sources – for example, don’t just use free online encyclopaedias; instead, try some more reputable sites such as the ABC or educational institutions. Simply typing ‘gladiators’ into a search engine might not locate the best source. Use other key words to make your search more specific.
- 2 Find five sources online that provide relevant and accurate information about gladiators. For each site, record:
- a the title, author, date of publication and URL (web address)
 - b a brief outline of the kind of information it contains
 - c a brief evaluation of the reliability and usefulness of the source.
- 3 Choose the best site you were able to find. What factors make it the most relevant and reliable?

12.14 Change through trade

Ancient Rome's development from a small farming settlement to a massive empire was due to a number of factors. Trade played a significant role. Warfare, too, was vital to Rome's growth. Alongside this were the more subtle changes brought about by contact with different peoples. These contacts introduced new ideas about religion, new fashions and new ways of doing things.

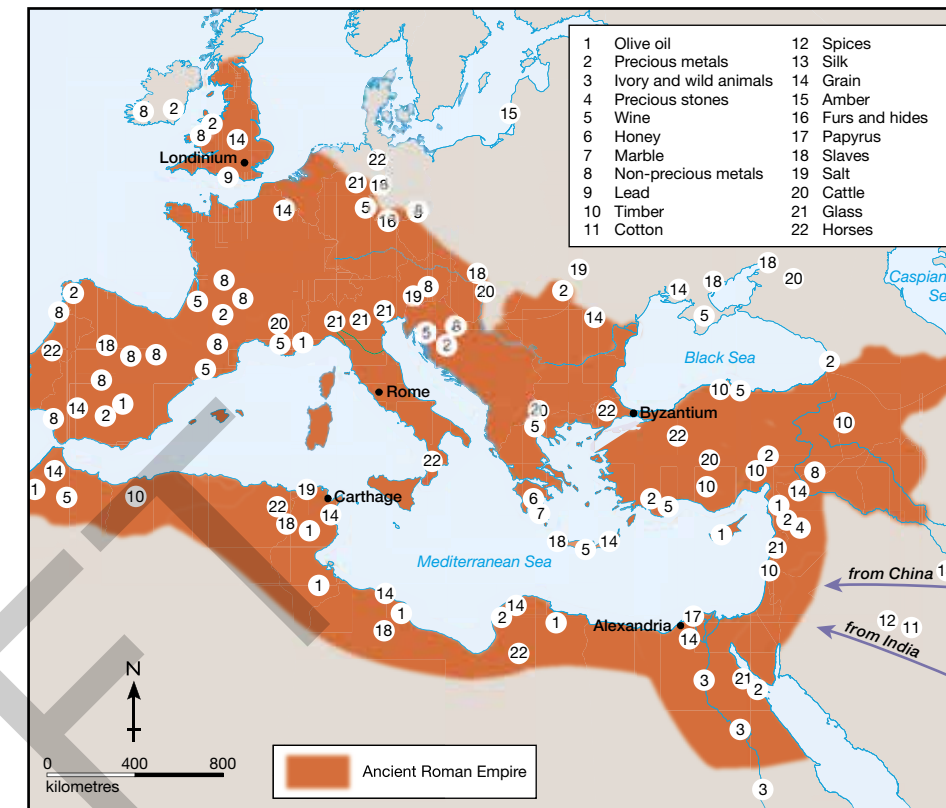
Ancient Rome's trading empire

As it expanded, ancient Rome had a need for many goods including grain, tools and materials for building temples, bridges and aqueducts, and weapons. This demand caused Rome to build a large trading empire, where huge volumes of goods were imported. As many ancient Romans became rich, there was an increased demand for luxury imports such as animal skins, gold, ivory and amber.



Source 2 A stone carving showing a woman selling fruit and vegetables in the Roman harbour town of Ostia

SOME COMMON ROMAN IMPORTS AND WHERE THEY CAME FROM



Source: Oxford University Press

Source 1 Ancient Roman glassware, made in the Roman port city of Pompeii. Glass was one of the many products that the Romans exported.



Trade networks

Ancient Rome was well situated and was in contact with a large number of civilisations around the Mediterranean Sea. Sea transport was cheaper and faster than land transport, especially for large, bulky loads such as timber, metals and grain. Harbours, lighthouses and ports were built to service Rome's growing sea trade. Many Roman ports grew into thriving cities.

In addition to trade by sea, ancient Rome also traded over land. The empire was connected by land to mainland Europe. Beyond, Europe was connected by way of the **Silk Road**, to distant lands such as China and India. When expanding Rome's territory (through conquest), Roman leaders had used the army to establish a vast network of well-built roads. These began to be used by travellers and merchants after their completion. Goods were carried on the backs of donkeys and camels, and in carts pulled by oxen.

Loaded donkeys and carts became a common sight in the streets of many Roman towns and cities. They became bustling places, full of the noise of buying and selling.

Check your learning 12.14

Remember and understand

- 1 Study Source 3.
 - a List three metals, three foods and three clothing items that Rome imported.
 - b Suggest some ways in which the three goods you have listed might have been used by the Romans. How might these have changed people's lifestyles?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Use an atlas to name the modern countries from which ancient Rome once imported the following: marble, ivory, timber, horses.

Evaluate and create

- 3 Draw an exports–imports diagram to depict the flow of some of the goods that made up ancient Rome's trade with its various markets.

12.15 Change through conflict

The ancient Romans understood the importance of a strong army. From around 300 BCE onwards, they built up powerful forces. In fact, most of the territory the Romans gained was through land battles. However, until the First Punic War of 264–241 BCE, Rome did not have warships. This had to change if Rome was to have any chance of defeating Carthage, then a large empire and a strong sea power in the Mediterranean world.

The ancient Greek historian Polybius reported that the Romans learned how to build warships by finding a stranded Carthaginian vessel and using it as a model. Very quickly, they built about 140 ships. Given their lack of experience in sea warfare, Rome's early defeats at sea were not surprising. This changed when the Romans invented the *corvus* (see Source 1). When it was hooked in place, Roman sailors could quickly board an enemy ship and do what they were very good at – fight in hand-to-hand combat.

The Punic Wars

The Punic Wars were fought between Rome and Carthage from 264 BCE to 146 BCE. This conflict eventually gave Rome supreme control of the Mediterranean Sea.

The port city of Carthage was founded around 900 BCE as a **colony** of the Phoenicians (Punics). It became the centre of a large trading empire. As such, it was a major threat to the stability of ancient Rome.

First Punic War

The First Punic War involved battles on land and sea between 264 and 241 BCE. This was the war that forced Rome to build a navy. There were heavy losses on both sides. Carthage's ships were better, and their sailors more experienced. But Rome won in the end. It took from Carthage the territory we know as Sicily.

Second Punic War

The Second Punic War was fought between 219 and 202 BCE. Carthage's leader at that time, Hannibal, was a very strong military commander. He was also good at developing battle strategies. His stated motive for war



Source 1 An artist's impression of a Roman sea battle. Devices such as the *corvus* (boarding ladder that hooked into the deck of the enemy ship) and the battering ram (at the front of the hull) were used to good effect in its victories.

was that he hated the Romans with a passion. Since the time Hannibal was a boy, his father had fuelled this hate because of what Carthage had lost in the First Punic War. Hannibal's military campaign began in southern Spain in 221 BCE. This campaign included his famous march in 218 BCE across the Pyrenees and the Alps into the Italian peninsula in order to attack the Romans in their own territory.

But the Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio was a military match for Hannibal. Scipio won the battle against Hannibal in 202 BCE at Zama in north Africa. It is thought Hannibal died about 20 years later, still fighting the Romans.

Third Punic War

By the middle of the 2nd century BCE, Rome had defeated the kingdom of Macedon, to Greece's north. In 146 BCE, it looted Corinth, the last Greek city-state to hold out against Roman rule. That year, the Romans also decided to destroy Carthage, their troublesome rival. Its people were killed, taken captive or sold as slaves. The outcome of all these conflicts was that Rome greatly increased its territory.

Barbarian invasions

After many further conquests around the Mediterranean and beyond, the Roman Empire reached its peak early in the 2nd century CE. As the empire grew, it became too large to govern effectively. There was growing corruption in the army, and there were growing economic problems such as unemployment and inflation. Rome fell into a long, slow period of decline. Instead of focusing on protecting their borders, Roman armies began fighting each other. As a result, many outside invaders were able to enter Rome and cause great destruction. These invaders included the Huns, Goths, Franks, Vandals and Saxons. The Romans referred to these people collectively as barbarians.

The ancient Romans tried to solve some of these problems by splitting the Roman Empire in half (see Source 3), hoping that would make the empire easier to manage.

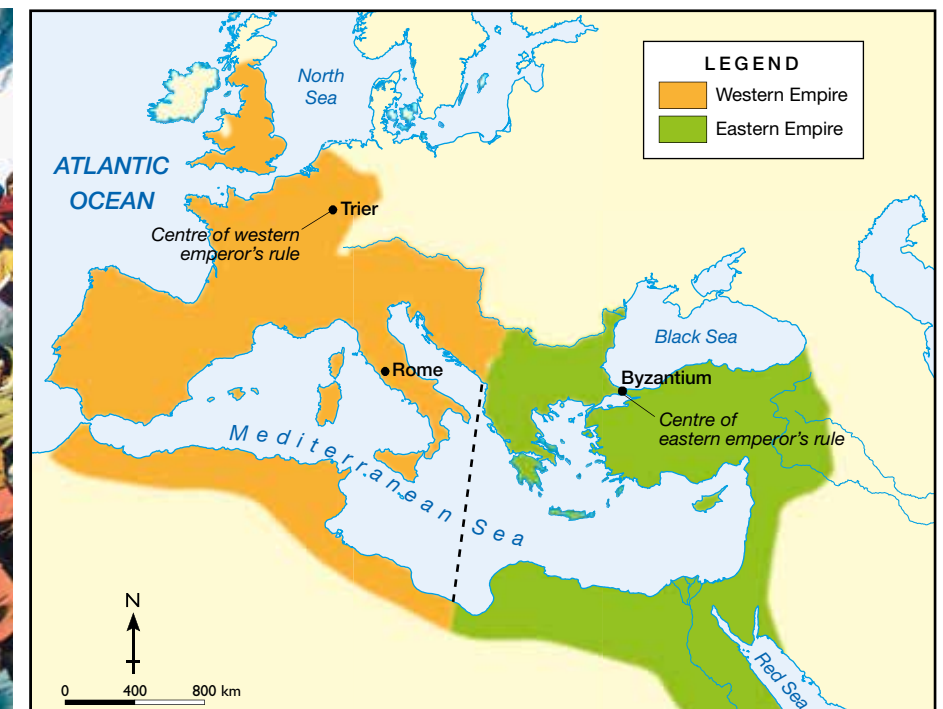
The Western Empire did not do well. Instead of getting stronger, it became weaker. The barbarian invasions continued until, eventually, the Goths took over Rome in 476 CE. This is known as the 'Fall of Rome' and the time at which Rome entered a period in history known as the Dark Ages.

The eastern half of the Roman Empire, with its capital Byzantium (later renamed Constantinople), received a new name – the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire lasted for another 1000 years.



Source 2 An artist's impression of Hannibal's troops crossing of the Alps

WESTERN AND EASTERN EMPIRES OF ANCIENT ROME



Source 3

Source: Oxford University Press

Check your learning 12.15

Remember and understand

- 1 When did the First Punic War take place?
- 2 How did the ancient Romans learn to build their first warships?
- 3 What was the *corvus*, and why did its invention increase the success of the ancient Romans when fighting at sea?

Apply and analyse

- 4 How did the Punic Wars change the territory of ancient Rome and of ancient Carthage?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Prepare and role-play a discussion between an ancient Roman centurion and a modern army sergeant. Your discussion will be about how significant you think your roles are as 'social changers'. You may need to conduct some research.

12D rich task

Tacitus’ *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*

Gnaeus Julius Agricola was a Roman general who lived from 40 to 93 CE and was responsible for much of the Roman conquest of Britain. Most of what is known about him comes from a historical text called *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*, which was written by his son-in-law, Publius Cornelius Tacitus. Publius Cornelius Tacitus was a Roman senator, consul and historian who lived from 56 to 117 CE. He wrote several historical works that examined the reigns of Roman emperors.

In *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*, Tacitus outlines the military achievements of his father-in-law against the Britons (Celtic people living in what is now England). Tacitus explains at the beginning that his purpose, like that of other historians, is to record these significant events for future generations. He admits, however, that he also wishes to commemorate his recently deceased father-in-law.

In the following extract, Tacitus describes Agricola speaking to his Roman troops before they go into battle. You may wish to read and discuss the text as a class to help you understand it.



Source 2

Agricola, who, though his troop were in high spirits and could scarcely be kept within the entrenchments, still thought it right to encourage them, spoke as follows:

‘If unknown nations and an untried enemy confronted you, I should urge you on by the example of other armies. As it is, look back upon your former honours, question your own eyes. These are the men who last year under cover of darkness attacked a single legion, whom you routed [defeated] by a shout. Of all the Britons these are the most confirmed runaways, and this is why they have survived so long. Just as when the huntsmen penetrates the forest and the thicket [thick bushes], all the most courageous animals rush out upon him, while the timid and feeble are scared away by the very sound of his approach, so the bravest of the Britons have long since fallen; and the rest are a mere crowd of spiritless cowards. You have at last found them, not because they have stood their ground, but because they have been overtaken. Their desperate plight [situation], and the extreme terror that paralyses them, have riveted their line to this spot, that you might achieve in it a splendid and memorable victory. Put an end to campaigns; crown your fifty years’ service with a glorious day; prove to your country that her armies could never have been fairly charged with extending a war or with causing a rebellion.’ While Agricola was speaking, the ardour [eagerness] of the soldiers was rising to its height, and the close of his speech was followed by a great outburst of enthusiasm. In a moment, they flew to arms.

Tacitus, *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*

Source 1 Agricola and his soldiers built many structures in Britain, such as this amphitheatre in Wales.

skilldrill: Historical sources as evidence

Identifying purpose and point of view

Whenever you select a source to use in descriptions or essays, you need to evaluate its usefulness and accuracy. One aspect of this is to find out who created it and when, and what sources *they* have used. We also have to work out *why* the source was created. Most primary sources are created for specific purposes; for example, a letter might be intended to share news with a friend, and a statue might be created as a gift to the gods. Even sources that are intended to inform us about the past, such as a history website or documentary, can have another purpose, such as to entertain or make money. Therefore, we need to be able to identify the point of view or attitude presented in a source, and then decide whether it is useful and relevant.

Ask yourself:

- Why was the source written or produced?
 - Are there personal motives?
 - Are there political reasons?
 - Is it propaganda?
- How was it written or produced?
 - Does it give a particular point of view?
 - Does it give a detached, balanced account?
 - Is it biased either for or against the issue?

Remember, just because a source is biased does not automatically mean that it is not useful. It may be extremely useful if you are investigating the opinions of a particular group at a particular time. However, if you are investigating ‘the facts’ of an event, a biased source may be much less useful. To make a conclusion about whether a source is useful, you need to be very clear about *what* you want to use the source for.

For a detailed description of this skill, refer to page XX of ‘The history toolkit’.

Apply the skill

- 1 What were Tacitus’ two purposes of writing *Life of Gnaeus Julius Agricola*?
- 2 How might these two purposes interfere with each other?
- 3 What does the excerpt reveal about Tacitus’ attitude towards Agricola?
- 4 Does knowing that Tacitus wanted to commemorate his father-in-law make you think that this source is unreliable? In what ways is it still useful?



Source 3 An engraving of Gnaeus Julius Agricola

Extend your understanding

- 1 Circle the adjectives below that you would use to describe Agricola’s speech in Source 2.

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| inspiring | boring | frightening |
| condescending | rough | eloquent |
| comforting | understated | persuasive |
| complimentary | | |
- 2 If you were a soldier listening to this speech, would you find it inspiring? Explain your view.
- 3 Write a brief explanation of the point of view or attitude that might be presented by each of these possible sources:
 - an ancient Roman comedy about foolish political leaders
 - a portrait of the wife of a Roman emperor, commissioned by her husband
 - an article about a new discovery about ancient Rome, published in *Archaeology Alive!*, a magazine for children.