

Rome and Constantinople

Purpose

Students will analyze the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and explain the continuation and contributions of the eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire) after the fall of Rome, including its influence on the spread of Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Materials

For the teacher: chalk, chalkboard

For each student: social studies textbook, paper, pencil

For each group of students: copy of Black Line Master (BLM)

Imperial Scavenger Hunt, pencil, access to reference materials (e.g., encyclopedia, Internet access, etc.)

Activity

A. Reading and Discussion

1. Review with students the rise and achievements of the Roman Empire, including the Roman republic, emperors, and major political reforms.
2. Instruct students to read about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in their textbooks and to take reading notes as they go along.
3. Ask students to summarize the reasons for the empire's decline and fall. List students' suggestions on the chalkboard.
4. Discuss the reasons for the empire's fall, making sure to explain that internal turmoil left Rome susceptible to outside threats from invaders, such as the Huns and Visigoths. Ask students: "How could problems within the empire make it easier for outside invaders to conquer parts of the empire?"
5. Discuss the decisions by Theodosius to move the capital of the empire east to Byzantium and to separate the empire into two parts. Ask students: "Why would dividing the empire into two sections be beneficial?" Discuss students' responses.
6. Tell students that the Roman Empire gradually fell apart and explain that the Byzantine Empire continued on in the east, retaining some of the characteristics of the Roman Empire. Briefly discuss some of the defining characteristics of the Byzantine Empire with students.

(continued)



connecting across the curriculum

English/ Language Arts

Have students read an excerpt from the works of St. Augustine. Instruct students to identify one example and explain the effect of symbolism, imagery, and metaphor in the excerpt.



MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Have students who need a challenge draw a map reflecting the greatest extent of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, and the routes taken by invaders of the empires. Have these students write a short paragraph explaining how geography influenced the decline of the empire and the invasions.

Standards Links 6.1.2, 6.1.3

Activity (continued)

B. Religious Expansion

1. Explain that Christianity quickly became more popular because it had many more followers in cities. Say to students: “After the Roman Empire fell, the emperor Theodosius of the Byzantine Empire made Christianity the official religion and even influenced King Vladimir of Russia, an important trading partner, to accept Christianity.”
2. Tell the students that because of Vladimir’s conversion, the Byzantine Empire was able to use its new relationship with Russia to influence Eastern Europe in matters of international relations, such as trade, and that this relationship helped Russia become a stronger world power.
3. Explain Justinian’s views on Christianity and government to students and ask: “Why would it have been important for Justinian to make sure everyone was a Christian? How would this make his job easier?”
4. Instruct students to read in their textbooks about the Byzantine Empire and to take reading notes as they go.

C. Imperial Scavenger Hunt

1. Divide students into groups of three or four students.
2. Hand out one copy of the BLM *Imperial Scavenger Hunt* to each group. Explain that each group will be going on a research scavenger hunt to answer questions about the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Byzantine Empire. Inform student that the first group to correctly answer all the questions wins.
3. Allow students to visit the library to find the answers to the questions on the BLM if necessary.
4. Check each group’s BLM as it is returned to determine which group answered all the questions correctly first.

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

When all students have completed the BLM, review the following with them:

 Why did the Byzantine Empire promote Orthodox Christianity?



Why would it be important for an empire or country faced with internal turmoil to establish an official religion?

 Give an example of Byzantine art.

Name: _____

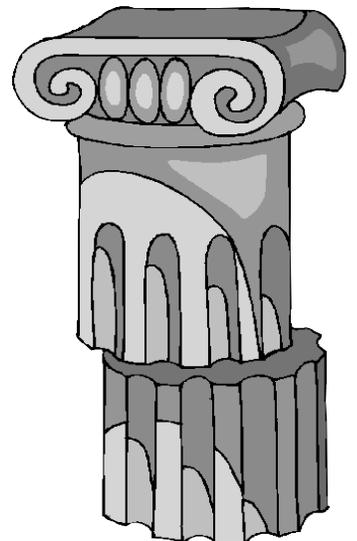
Imperial Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Use your reading notes or do additional research in the school library to find the answers to the following questions about the decline of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Byzantine Empire.

1. Whose death ended the Pax Romana? _____
2. The Greek town of Byzantium was renamed _____, in honor of _____.
3. The Roman government, trying to cope with falling incomes and rising prices, minted more coins. This led merchants to raise prices, which led to an economic condition called _____.
4. Name three tribes that invaded the Roman Empire between 410 and 476 C.E.

5. Which emperor willed that, upon his death, the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire should be divided into two separate empires, the Byzantine and the Roman? _____
6. Which leader of the Christian Church founded the church in Rome? _____
7. The Church of Hagia Sophia is one of the largest Byzantine churches still standing. Which emperor commissioned it to be built? _____
8. The Byzantines invented an art form called _____, in which small pieces of colored glass or stones are set into a mold of plaster.
9. Emperor Leo III of the Byzantine Empire ordered in 726 C.E. that all religious icons be removed from churches. The people who supported this policy were called _____.
10. Name three of the armies that attacked the Byzantine Empire.

11. After he was converted to Christianity by Theodosius, Prince Vladimir of Kiev ordered all his people to be baptized in the _____ River.
12. Christian monasteries were first founded in the Byzantine Empire. A famous missionary from a monastery, Cyril, devised an alphabet that is still in use today in Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Serbia. What is this alphabet called?



Imperial Scavenger Hunt

Teacher Directions

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Answer Key

1. Marcus Aurelius
2. Constantinople, Emperor Constantine
3. inflation
4. Visigoths, Huns, Vandals
5. Theodosius I
6. Peter
7. Justinian
8. mosaic
9. iconoclasts
10. Any three of the following: Arabs, Persians, Bulgars, Germanic Lombards, Slavs, Avars
11. Dnieper
12. Cyrillic