

# The Roman Republic

509 B.C.—30 B.C.



▲ The Roman eagle on an onyx cameo



A Roman legionary ▶

509 B.C.  
Romans set up  
republic

450 B.C.  
Twelve Tables  
are written

264 B.C.  
Punic Wars  
begin

46 B.C.  
Julius Caesar  
appointed  
dictator of Rome

31 B.C.  
Octavian becomes  
sole ruler of  
Roman Empire

# Chapter Focus



## Read to Discover

- How the government of the Roman Republic was organized.
- How the Roman Republic was able to expand its territory.
- How the effects of conquest changed the Roman economy and government.
- How reformers attempted to save the Roman Republic.



## Terms to Learn

republic  
patricians  
plebeians  
consuls  
legionaries  
dictator  
triumvirate



## People to Know

Tarquin the Proud  
Hannibal Barca  
Tiberius  
Gracchus  
Julius Caesar  
Mark Antony  
Octavian



## Places to Locate

Carthage  
Sicily  
Gaul  
Corinth

**Why It's Important** In 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew Tarquin (tar' kwin) the Proud, their Etruscan king, and set up a **republic**. Under this form of government, people choose their rulers. However, not everyone had an equal say in the Roman Republic. The **patricians** (puh trish' uhnz)—members of the oldest and richest families—were the only ones who could hold public office or perform certain religious rituals. Poorer citizens, known as **plebeians** (pli bē' uhnz), paid taxes and served in the army. Yet they could not marry patricians or hold office. If they fell into debt, they could be sold into slavery.

In later years, reformers would take steps to make the Roman Republic more democratic. The idea of a government chosen by the people would serve as a model for future generations, including the founders of the United States.



## Chapter Overview

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at [humanheritage.glencoe.com](http://humanheritage.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 14—Chapter Overviews** to preview this chapter.



CLICK HERE



## Reading Check

What is a **republic**?  
Who were the **patricians** and the **plebeians**?

## SECTION 1 The Government

At the head of the Roman Republic were two **consuls** (kon' suhlz) who were chosen each year. They were administrators and military leaders. Each had the power to **veto**, or say no to, the acts of the other. Both had to agree before any law was passed.

Next in importance was the Senate. It was made up of 300 men called senators who were chosen for life. The Senate handled the daily problems of government. It advised the consuls.




## Reading Check

How long did the **consuls** hold power? How did the **veto** prevent a consul from becoming too powerful?



**ROMAN SENATE** This painting shows the famous orator Cicero making a speech attacking a political opponent. **What duties did the Senate perform in the Roman Republic?**

 **Reading Check**  
What role did the **tribunes** play in Roman government?

It discussed ways to deal with other countries, proposed laws, and approved public contracts for building roads and temples.

Judges, assemblies, and **tribunes** (trib' yūnz), or government officials who protected the rights of plebeians, were also part of the Roman government. All Roman citizens belonged to the assemblies, which could declare war or agree to peace terms.

Until about 450 B.C., Roman laws were not written down. In that year, laws were carved on 12 bronze tablets known as the Twelve Tables. These were placed in the Forum. The laws applied to both patricians and plebeians. Most were about wills, property rights, and court actions. The laws on the Twelve Tables became the foundation for all future Roman laws.

The election of tribunes and recording of laws were the first steps to a more democratic government. Later, more plebeian demands were met. By about 250 B.C., no one could be sold into slavery because of debt. Plebeians could hold public office.

## Section 1 Assessment

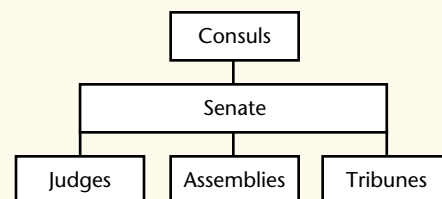
1. **Define:** republic, patricians, plebeians, consuls, veto, tribunes.
2. What were some restrictions placed on the plebeians during the early years of the Roman Republic?

### Critical Thinking

3. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment**  
Why do you think it was important for the Romans to have laws written down?

## Graphic Organizer Activity

4. Draw this diagram, and use it to describe each part of Roman government.





## SECTION 2 Roman Expansion


Once the Romans had set up a republic, they worked to protect it. They were afraid that the Etruscans would try to regain control of Rome. To prevent this, the Romans crossed the Tiber River and conquered several Etruscan cities. Roman land now bordered that of other Italian people. To protect their new boundaries, the Romans either conquered their neighbors or made alliances with them. By 290 B.C., Rome was the leading power in central Italy. By 275 B.C., it ruled the whole peninsula. By 146 B.C., Rome ruled most of the Mediterranean world.

The Romans were able to gain territory because they had a strong army that was organized into **legions** (lē' juhnz). Each legion contained some 5,000 soldiers called **legionaries** (lē' juhner ēz) and was divided into groups of 60 to 120 soldiers.

The legion had several advantages over the phalanx. The legion was smaller and could move faster. Soldiers in a phalanx fought as a group and attacked from only one direction. Each legionary depended on his own fighting ability. The groups within a legion could split off from the main body and attack from the sides and the rear as well as the front.

### Then... & Now

**Rank and File** The basic unit of the Roman legion was the *maniple*—120 soldiers standing side by side in ranks of 10 and lined up one behind another in files of 12. The term *rank and file*, which refers to the ordinary members of an organization, comes from this military system.

 **Reading Check** How did Roman **legions** differ from the phalanx? How many **legionaries** were in each legion?

## Linking Across Time

**Citizen-Soldiers** During the early years of the Roman republic, all male citizens were required to serve in the army (below). Today military service continues to be an important responsibility of citizenship in democratic nations such as the United States (right). **Why did the use of citizen-soldiers help ensure the loyalty of legionaries to Rome?**





Roman Bronze Lamp

Legionaries were well trained. They spent hours practicing with their double-edged iron swords. They went on long marches every day. Before going to sleep, they had to build complete fortified camps, even when the legion would stay in an area only one night. They built roads out of lava blocks so soldiers and supplies could move forward more rapidly.

The Romans were mild rulers. At first, they did not tax the people they conquered. They let the conquered people keep their own governments and take care of their own affairs. Some were even allowed to become Roman citizens. In return, the conquered people were expected to serve in the Roman army and to support Rome's foreign policy. As a result, many enemies of Rome became loyal Roman allies.

## Section 2 Assessment

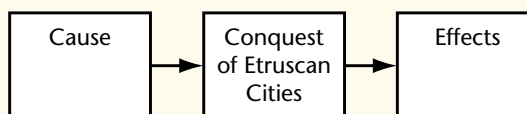
1. **Define:** legions, legionaries.
2. Why were the Romans able to gain territory?
3. What was life like for a Roman legionary?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Drawing Conclusions** How would you describe the way the Romans treated people they conquered, and do you think this was wise? Explain.

## Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a chart like this one, and use it to show the cause and effects of Roman conquest of Etruscan cities.



## SECTION 3 The Punic Wars

By 264 B.C., the Romans had conquered some Greek city-states in southern Italy. This brought them into contact with the Phoenician city of Carthage. Carthage controlled most of North and West Africa, most of what is now Spain, and some islands off the coast of Italy. Carthage also ruled the western half of Sicily (sis' uh lē), a large island at the toe of the Italian "boot." The Romans felt threatened by the Carthaginians (kar tuh jin' ē uhnz). They also wanted Sicily's granaries.

**The First Punic War** In 264 B.C., the Romans and Carthaginians clashed. The war that broke out lasted for 23 years. It was the first of three wars between Rome and Carthage that came to be known as the Punic (pyū' nik) Wars.

Carthage's military strength lay in its navy, while Rome's lay in its army. At first, the Romans had no navy. They built

their first fleet to fight the Carthaginians. The Romans modeled their ships after a Carthaginian warship they found abandoned on a beach. They made one improvement on the Carthaginian model. They added a *corvus* (kor' vuhs), or a kind of movable bridge, to the front of each ship. The Romans knew they could not outsail the Carthaginians, but believed they could outfight them. The *corvus* allowed soldiers to board an enemy ship and fight hand-to-hand on its decks. In a sense, it changed a sea war into a land war.

The Romans lost many ships and men in storms during the First Punic War. Yet, in the end, they defeated the Carthaginians. In 241 B.C., the Carthaginians agreed to make peace and left Sicily.

**Hannibal and the Second Punic War** In 218 B.C., the Second Punic War began. At that time, the Carthaginians, led by General Hannibal Barca (han' uh buhl bar' ka), attacked the Roman army by land from the north. Hannibal and his troops surprised the Roman army by marching from Spain through southern Gaul (gol), or present-day France, and then crossing the Alps into Italy. They brought elephants with them across the snow-covered mountains to help break through the Roman lines.

Winning victory after victory, Hannibal's army fought its way to the gates of Rome. When the Carthaginian army got to Rome, however, it did not have the heavy equipment needed to

## Fun Facts

**Carthage** Marcus Portius Cato, a prominent statesman and writer, believed that Carthage posed a great threat to Rome. He reportedly ended every speech—no matter what the subject—with “Carthage must be destroyed!”

**HANNIBAL** Hannibal's army, with elephants, faced many dangers in its attack on Rome. The elephants had to be floated on barges across rivers and brought over the snow-capped Alps. **Why did Hannibal's attack on the city of Rome fail?**



CLICK HERE

**HISTORY**  
*Online*

### Student Web Activity

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at [humanheritage.glencoe.com](http://humanheritage.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 14—Student Web Activities** to find out more about the Punic Wars.



## Fun Facts

### Hannibal's Strength

Hannibal began crossing the Alps with about 46,000 troops and 37 elephants. He emerged with 26,000 troops and almost no elephants. A Roman general proclaimed: "They are ghosts and shadows of men already half dead. All their strength has been crushed and beaten out of them by the Alpine crags." The general was wrong. The Gauls, who were enemies of the Romans, joined Hannibal and boosted his army to almost 50,000.

batter down the city's walls. It could not get more supplies because the Roman navy controlled the sea.

Unable to capture Rome, Hannibal and his troops roamed the countryside of southern Italy for 15 years. They raided and burned towns and destroyed crops. Then, the Romans attacked Carthage, and Hannibal was called home to defend it. Hannibal lost his first battle—and the war—at the town of Zama (zā' muh). The power of Carthage was broken.

In 201 B.C., Carthage agreed to pay Rome a huge sum of money and to give up all its territories, including Spain. The Spanish resources of copper, gold, lead, and iron now belonged to the Romans.

**The Third Punic War** Following the Second Punic War, there was peace for about 50 years. Then, Carthage began to show signs of regaining power. To prevent this, the Romans attacked in 149 B.C., the Third Punic War. They burned Carthage and plowed salt into its fields so nothing would grow. They killed the Carthaginians or sold them into slavery.

That same year, 146 B.C., the Greek city-state of Corinth (kor' inth) and some of its allies refused to obey a Roman order. The Romans attacked Corinth and burned it to the ground. Rome already controlled Macedonia and Syria. Now, it added Greece to the areas under its rule. Thus, Rome became the leading power of the Mediterranean world.

## Section 3 Assessment

1. What territory did Carthage control in 264 B.C.?
2. What happened to Carthage in the Third Punic War?
3. How did Rome become the leading power of the Mediterranean world?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Predicting Consequences** What

might have happened to Rome if it had lost the Punic Wars?

### Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw a chart like this one, and use it to summarize the outcome of each of the Punic Wars.

Punic Wars	Outcome
First	
Second	
Third	

## SECTION 4 Effects of Conquest

The conquests and the wealth that came with them changed Rome's economy and government. Among the changes were the replacement of small farms with large estates, the use of enslaved people, a movement from farms to cities, and the decline of the Roman Republic.

## Agricultural Changes

Rome's conquests brought changes in agriculture. One change was in the size and purpose of farms. Most Romans had been small farmers who believed in hard work and service to Rome. Now, the small farms were replaced by large estates called **latifundias** (lat uh fuhn' dē uhs). The small farms had grown wheat for food. Latifundias, on the other hand, produced crops, sheep, and cattle for sale at market. Some contained olive groves and vineyards. Because they no longer grew their own wheat, the Romans began to import wheat from such conquered areas as Sicily and North Africa.

The main reason for this change in Roman agriculture was Hannibal's invasion. While his soldiers were in Italy, they lived off the land. To prevent them from getting food, Roman farmers burned their fields and crops. By the time the Second Punic War was over, much of the land was ruined. Most Roman farmers did not have money to fix up their farms or restore the land. Only patricians and rich business people had that kind of money. They bought the small farms and combined them to make latifundias.

Another change in agriculture was in who worked the land. When Rome first began expanding, the Romans did not enslave the people they conquered. By 146 B.C., that was no longer true. The Romans were impressed by the wealth of Greece, Syria, and Carthage. Since those areas had widespread slavery, the Romans sent thousands of prisoners to Rome as enslaved people. Most lived and worked on latifundias.

## From Farm to City

The farmers who had sold their land had few choices. They could stay and work the land for the new owners or move to the city. Almost all of them moved to Rome.

There the farmers crowded into wooden apartment buildings six or more stories high. Living conditions were terrible. The aqueducts that brought water to the city were not connected to apartment buildings. Neither were the sewers that carried away waste. Buildings often caught fire or collapsed. Diseases such as typhus (tī' fuhs) were common.

Most farmers could not earn a living in the city. Except for construction, Rome had almost no industry. Most businesses were staffed by enslaved people from Greece. About the only way the farmers could get money was by selling their votes to politicians.

## Decline of the Roman Republic

As Rome's rule spread beyond Italy, the Romans began to demand taxes, as well as enslaved people, from the areas they conquered. Tax contracts were sold to people called **publicans** (pub' luh kuhnz). They paid Rome ahead of time for the contracts. Then, they collected taxes from the conquered people. The amount of taxes collected was supposed to be no more than 10 percent above the price paid for the contract. Most publicans, however, made extra money.



### Reading Check

What was the purpose of the latifundias?

Sculpture of Roman Consul



### Reading Check

Why did Rome sell tax contracts to the publicans?





#### ROMAN APARTMENTS

Wealthy Romans built brick and stone apartments. They decorated the floors with mosaics and the walls with paintings. These apartment dwellers owned only a few pieces of furniture, most of which were simple in design. What sort of buildings did poor Romans live in during the Republic?

By about 135 B.C., Rome was in a great deal of trouble. Because farmers had lost their land, they had also lost their economic and political independence. Merchants had become poorer because rich Romans could get luxuries elsewhere. Artisans had lost business because rich Romans wanted goods from Greece and Syria. Government officials were too busy getting rich to worry about solving the republic's problems.

The gap between rich and poor grew greater. The poor hated the rich for what the rich had done to them. The rich hated and feared the poor. Rome was no longer politically stable.

### Section 4 Assessment

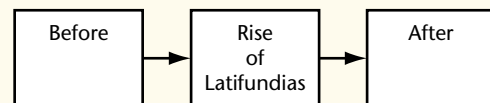
1. **Define:** latifundias, publicans.
2. How was Roman agriculture influenced by Hannibal?
3. What was life like in Rome during the decline of the republic?

#### Critical Thinking

4. **Identifying Central Issues** Why might a large gap between rich and poor present problems for an empire?

### Graphic Organizer Activity

5. Draw this diagram, and use it to compare Roman agriculture before and after the rise of the latifundias.



## SECTION 5 Roman Leadership

Over the next 100 years, many different popular leaders tried to improve conditions in Rome. Some were reformers, while others were generals.

**The Reformers** Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (tī bir' ē uhs sem prōnē uhs grak' uhs) was the first reformer. He thought making small farmers leave their land had caused Rome's troubles.

When he became a tribune in 133 B.C., Tiberius Gracchus wanted to limit the amount of land a person could own. He wanted to divide up public lands and give them to the poor. Another tribune vetoed his idea. Tiberius Gracchus then talked the assembly into putting his idea into effect and getting rid of that tribune.

Tiberius Gracchus ran for a second term as tribune, although it was against the law. To stop him, the Senate staged a riot and had him and hundreds of his followers killed.

In 123 B.C., Tiberius Gracchus's younger brother Gaius (gī' yuhs) Sempronius Gracchus was elected tribune. He thought moving the poor from the city back to the countryside was the answer to Rome's troubles.

Gaius Gracchus improved and extended the reforms of his brother. He had the government take over the sale of wheat and sell it to the poor below market price. Soon, however, wheat was being given away rather than sold. Nearly one out of every three Romans was receiving free wheat. Meanwhile, the Senate began to feel threatened by some of Gaius Gracchus's ideas and in 121 B.C. had him killed.

**The Generals** After the reformers came the generals. In 107 B.C., General Gaius Marius (mar' ē uhs), a military hero, became consul. The son of a day laborer, Marius was the first lower-class Roman to be elected to such a high office. He was supported by many ex-soldiers who felt the rich and the government had taken advantage of them. Many of the ex-soldiers had been farmers who had lost their farms when they left to serve in the army.

Marius thought he could end Rome's troubles by setting up a professional army. Until this time, only property owners could become legionaries. Marius opened the army to everyone. He convinced the poor to join by offering them pay, land, pensions, and *booty*, or things taken from the enemy in war. Marius's plan helped Rome by providing jobs for many out-of-work Romans. At the same time, it hurt the Roman Republic. Instead of giving loyalty to the government, the soldiers gave it to the general who hired and paid them.



Sculpture of Tiberius Gracchus

## Reading Check

What power does a **dictator** hold? What kind of government exists under a **triumvirate**?



## MAP STUDY

**PLACES AND REGIONS** By what year did the Roman Republic expand to include Gaul?

Marius was opposed by another general, Lucius Cornelius Sulla (kor nēl' yuhs suhl' uh). Sulla had been given a military command that Marius wanted. Marius tried to get the assembly to take the command away from Sulla and give it to him. An angry Sulla marched his army on Rome and seized the city. It was the first time a Roman commander had led his soldiers against the capital.

Civil war broke out. When it was over, Sulla made himself **dictator** (dik' tā tuhr), or absolute ruler, of Rome. Sulla believed the way to end Rome's troubles was to increase the power of the Senate. So, he doubled the Senate's size. He gave the senators more duties and weakened the power of the tribunes. At the same time, he stopped generals from holding the same army command for more than one year at a time.

**Julius Caesar** When Sulla retired, a new group of generals fought for control of Rome. In 60 B.C., political power passed to a **triumvirate** (trī um' vuhr it), or a group of three persons with equal power. This First Triumvirate was made up of Marcus

## The Expansion of the Roman Republic





Licinius Crassus (mar' kus luh sin' ē uhs kras' us), Gnaeus Pompeius (guh nā' uhs pom pē' uhs), and Julius Caesar (jūl' yuhs sē' zuhr). Pompeius, who was also known as Pompey (pom' pē), and Caesar had different ideas about how Rome should be ruled. Pompey believed in a republic that was ruled by upper-class senators. Caesar believed in one-man rule.

After Crassus's death, the two remaining rulers fought for power. Caesar finally gained control after Pompey was murdered in 48 B.C. Caesar was a well-educated politician who had become a soldier. He had both military strength and strong family alliances to back him.

In 58 B.C., Caesar was named governor of a Roman province. There, he built up a large, strong army that was loyal to him. Within seven years, he conquered what is now northern France and Belgium (bel' juh-m) and invaded Britain. The Senate began to fear he was growing too strong. So, in 50 B.C., it ordered Caesar to break up his legions and return to Rome. Instead, Caesar entered the city at the head of his troops. By 46 B.C., he was dictator of Rome.

Caesar brought about many reforms. He redistributed state lands in Italy and founded new colonies overseas. This gave land to thousands of ex-soldiers who had none. He began public works projects such as building roads and buildings and draining the marshes around Rome. This gave jobs to thousands of Romans who had not been able to find work. He planned and paid for gladiatorial games that were free to the public. This kept the poor and the idle from turning into unhappy and angry mobs. He doubled the size of the Senate. Although this made each senator less powerful, it gave business people a chance to become senators. He cut back the activities of the publicans. He gave Roman citizenship to Greeks, Spaniards, and Gauls. He adopted a new calendar based on the Egyptian calendar. Called the Julian (jūl' yuhn) calendar, a form of it is still in use today.

Caesar did a great deal for Rome and its people. Still, some Romans were afraid that Caesar planned to make himself king. About 60 men, most of them senators, worked out a plan to kill him. As he entered the Senate on the Ides (ī dz) of March, or March 15, 44 B.C., Caesar was stabbed to death.

**End of the Republic** Angered by Caesar's death, the Roman people turned against those who had killed him. Political power passed to another triumvirate. Marcus Antonius (an tō' nē uhs), or Mark Antony, Caesar's closest follower and a popular general, took command of Rome's territories in the East. Octavian (ok tā' vē uhn), Caesar's grand-nephew and adopted son, took charge of the West. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus (uh mēl' ē uhs lep'uhd uhs), one of Caesar's top officers, took over the rule of Africa. All three shared control of the Italian homeland.

## People in History



**Julius Caesar**  
102 B.C.–44 B.C.

### Roman General/ Statesman

Born into one of the oldest patrician families in Rome, Gaius Julius Caesar knew politics could be a dangerous job. Even so, he had a big advantage—the loyalty of the legions who served him. The legions helped Caesar become the reform-minded ruler of Rome, but they could not save him from murder by the senators who felt his popularity and power threatened the republic.

For a while, the triumvirate worked. Then, fights broke out among the three leaders. When the fighting ended in 31 B.C., Octavian had won. Within four years, he became sole ruler of the Roman Empire.

## Section 5 Assessment

- 1. Define:** dictator, triumvirate.
- 2.** Why did civil war break out in Rome?
- 3.** Why did a group of Roman senators murder Julius Caesar?

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment**  
How effective do you think a triumvirate is as a form of government? Explain.

## Graphic Organizer Activity

- 5.** Draw this chart, and use it to summarize the reforms supported by popular leaders during the closing years of the Roman Republic.

Leader	Reform	Effect

# Chapter Summary & Study Guide

- 1.** In 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew the Etruscans and set up a republic.
- 2.** About 450 B.C., leaders wrote down Roman laws in the Twelve Tables.
- 3.** By 275 B.C., well-trained Roman legions had taken control of Italy.
- 4.** Between 264 and 146 B.C., Rome and Carthage fought three wars known as the Punic Wars.
- 5.** The organization of Roman lands into large estates forced many small farmers off the land and into the cities.
- 6.** By 135 B.C., Rome faced many serious political and economic problems.
- 7.** A series of reform-minded leaders tried various ways to improve conditions in Rome, but political rivalries prevented any leader from holding power for long.
- 8.** After Julius Caesar was killed by Romans who feared he might become king, power was divided among three leaders.
- 9.** Fights among the three-way rule of Mark Antony, Octavian, and Marcus Lepidus led to the collapse of the Roman Republic.
- 10.** In 31 B.C., Octavian became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire.



### Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *Human Heritage* Web site at [humanheritage.glencoe.com](http://humanheritage.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 14—Self-Check Quiz** to assess your understanding of this chapter.

**CLICK HERE**

# CHAPTER 14 Assessment

## Using Key Terms

Imagine that you are writing a “Citizenship Handbook” for the new Roman citizens of 46 B.C. Write one sentence explaining the importance of each of the following terms.

republic	patricians	plebeians
consuls	veto	tribunes
legions	legionaries	latifundias
publicans	dictator	triumvirate

## Understanding Main Ideas

1. What changes were made in Rome’s government as a result of demands by the plebeians?
2. Why was the Roman legion so effective in battle?
3. Why did Rome decide to fight three wars against Carthage?
4. How were the Romans able to overcome the navy of Carthage?
5. What effect did latifundias have on Rome’s small farmers?
6. Who won the struggle for political power after the death of Julius Caesar?
7. What effect did Marius’s reforms have on the loyalty of the legionaries?
8. Why did the Senate order Julius Caesar to break up his legions?

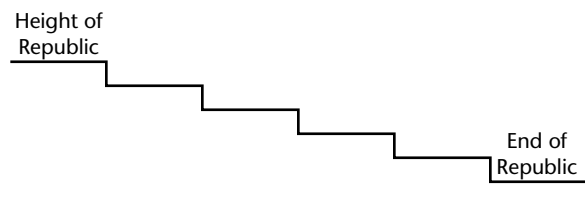
## Critical Thinking

1. How wise do you think the Romans were to enslave the people they conquered? Explain.
2. Do you think the Romans were wise or foolish to start taxing the people they conquered? Explain.
3. If you had lived in Rome after 135 B.C., what would you have done to solve its problems?

4. If you had lived when Caesar was killed, how would you have felt about his murder? Explain.

## Graphic Organizer Activity

**History** Create a chart like this one, and use it to show steps in the decline of the Roman Republic.



## Geography in History

**Human Systems** Refer to the map on page 228. Imagine you are a government representative who must travel from Rome to Cyprus. Describe how you would travel and what route you would take. Then draw a map showing your route.

## Using Your Journal

Review any details you may have noted about the contributions made by Romans to world civilization. Write a paragraph explaining what part of the government of the Roman Republic can be seen in the United States government today.