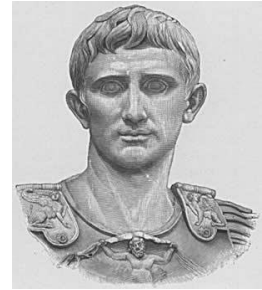


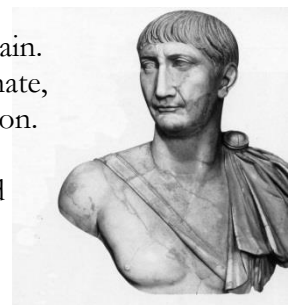
## Information for Emperor Cards

**AUGUSTUS CAESAR** (27 B.C. - 14 A.D.) has been called the greatest emperor in all of Roman history. After the assassination of Julius Caesar, war broke out among the many groups who wanted to take over Rome. The most powerful men seeking control were Marc Antony and Octavian (Caesar's grandnephew and adopted son) and Brutus and Cassius, both of whom were involved in the assassination. Once Brutus and his supporters were defeated, Octavian, Antony and one of Caesar's generals, Marcus Lepidus, joined together to rule Rome once again as a triumvirate. The trio ruled in peace for several years, but their government did not last. Octavian gradually increased his power and in 31 B.C., he challenged the other two for control of Rome. Lepidus was forced to retire, and Marc Antony, with the aid of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, fought to regain his position. However, the two were defeated in a naval battle off the coast of Greece, and Octavian became the sole leader of Rome, as his uncle before him had been. The Senate gave Octavian the title of "Augustus," meaning "sacred or exalted leader," so he was known from then on as Augustus Caesar. Considered the first emperor of Rome, he never actually used that title, perhaps fearing a replay of his uncle's demise. Instead, he kept the assemblies of the Republic and made a show of asking the advice of the Senators on many matters. He treated other politicians with respect, allowing others to appear to have more power than they really did. In reality, Augustus held tremendous power by controlling the army. All soldiers swore loyalty to Augustus, not Rome. During his reign of 45 years, Augustus defended the borders of the empire and ushered in a period of peace and prosperity called the Pax Romana, or "Roman Peace." His reformed army sent to keep order in the Empire spread Roman language and culture throughout Europe. He put the provinces under Rome's control in the hands of intelligent, less ambitious, and honest men. For the first time since Rome began to build its empire, the outlying territories settled into peace and prosperity.



When he first became emperor, **NERO** (54 - 68 A.D.) said he would rule according to the principles of Augustus, and on many occasions he showed great generosity and mercy. He was known to be very friendly to people from all stations of life and possessed the ability to remember almost everyone's name who he met. He was a great supporter of the arts and staged elaborate productions for the people's enjoyment. He even enjoyed performing himself. Perhaps most infamously, it has been said that Nero "fiddled" while Rome was burning during the massive fire of 64. Nero, however, may not have been in Rome at the time of the fire. When he returned to Rome, Nero organized a relief effort, which he paid for from his own funds. Nero's contributions to the relief extended to personally taking part in the search for and rescue of victims of the blaze, spending days searching the debris. After the fire, Nero opened his palaces to provide shelter for the homeless, and arranged for food supplies to be delivered in order to prevent starvation among the survivors. As his reign continued, though, his behavior became more bizarre. He killed, among others, his mother, and he had clearly become insane. After unsuccessfully ordering members of the Senate to kill themselves, he committed suicide.

**TRAJAN** (98 - 117) was born in the part of the Roman Empire that is now Spain. The chief feature of Trajan's administration was his good relations with the Senate, which allowed him to accomplish whatever he wished with little or no opposition. He promised he would always keep senators informed about what was happening in the government. He even said that the emperor's right to rule had to be balanced with the freedom of the people who were ruled! Trajan is



## Information for Emperor Cards

remembered as a successful soldier-emperor who presided over the greatest military expansion in Roman history, leading the empire to attain its maximum territorial extent by the time of his death. As a civilian administrator, Trajan is best known for his extensive public building program which reshaped the city of Rome and left multiple enduring landmarks such as Trajan's Forum, Trajan's Market and Trajan's Column. One notable act of Trajan during this period was the hosting of a three-month gladiatorial festival in the great Colosseum in Rome. Combining chariot racing, beast fights and close-quarters gladiatorial bloodshed, this gory spectacle reputedly left 11,000 dead. While sailing back to Rome, Trajan fell ill and died of a stroke in the city of Selinus. He was deified by the Senate and his ashes were laid to rest under Trajan's Column. His reign is considered to be the standard to which later Roman rulers aspired.



**DIOCLETIAN** (284 - 305) came to power at a difficult time in the Empire's history. There were civil wars in the provinces, and the Empire's economy was near collapse. He was able to establish peace and stabilize the economy. Born to a family of low status in the Roman province of Dalmatia, Diocletian rose through the ranks of the military to become cavalry commander to the Emperor Carus. After the deaths of Carus and his son Numerian on campaign in Persia, Diocletian was proclaimed emperor. He divided the empire in two to administer it more effectively, the first step toward the creation of separate Eastern (Byzantine) and

Western (Roman) Empires. It was also during his reign that the Roman Senate as an imperial governing body ceased to exist. Yet he is also known for intensifying the persecution of Christians, who still refused to worship an emperor or official Roman gods. He imposed severe penalties for this by issuing a series of edicts.

**CONSTANTINE** (307 – 337) was the first emperor to profess to himself a Christian. He lived in the Eastern Roman Empire and chose his capital to be the small town Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople. The western side of the Empire including the city of Rome itself became less important to Constantine and those in the Eastern portion. Constantine concluded that Rome was no longer a practical capital city since the emperor could not control distant territories from there. Byzantium was located on the trade routes with the East and the West. Rather than send traded goods to Rome, Constantine kept most of the goods, and thus the Empire's wealth, in the Eastern Roman Empire. He also spent a great deal of money to support and rebuild his new capital, Constantinople.



**VALENS** (364-378) also came to power at a difficult time. Years of warfare had left the empire poor, and a great deal of money had been diverted to Constantinople. The road system was in bad repair, affecting the military and making trade more difficult. The citizens were not receiving the goods they expected, and the empire was under almost constant attack by "barbarians." At that time anyone who did not speak Latin was considered a barbarian. The major tribes of these were the Huns, Franks, Vandals, Saxons, and Visigoths. Valens made peace with the Visigoths, and the two worked together to create problems among the

other tribes to cause wars. However, after Valens did not keep his end of the bargain, the Visigoths renewed their warfare. Valens was killed at the Battle of Adrianople, a battle widely considered the worst defeat in Rome's history. The Western Roman Empire finally fell in the year 476 A.D.

**EMPEROR - AUGUSTUS CAESAR**

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_

Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?

**EMPEROR - NERO**

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_



Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?

## EMPEROR - TRAJAN

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_



Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?



## EMPEROR - DIOCLETIAN

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_

Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?



## EMPEROR - CONSTANTINE

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_

Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?

## EMPEROR - VALENS

Years of Rule \_\_\_\_\_



Important accomplishments or contributions:

Weaknesses:

Best known for:

Anything else?



# LAST DITCH EFFORTS

**DIRECTIONS:** Evaluate each effort, listing the positives and negatives of each.

Emperor Diocletian split the empire into two parts, each with its own ruler. The West was ruled from Rome the East from Byzantium (in modern-day Turkey).

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Emperors began to enact strict government control over the economy, such as price controls. These laws and reforms were VERY harshly enforced by the government.

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After his conversion, Emperor Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire and extended tax exemption and favors to members of the Church.

+

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# EPILOGUE ...

Despite the best efforts of strong leaders like Diocletian and Constantine, the Roman Empire continued to decline throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the end of the 300's, pressure from invaders at the borders increased as Germanic tribes moved in to escape the Huns of Asia. As the Huns pushed the Germans, the Germans pushed the Romans and eventually the Roman army was beaten at Adrianople (in modern day Turkey).

The Germans were led by Alaric who led his army into the streets of Rome. For the first time in history, the capital of the once-mighty empire was out of Roman control. Alaric and his men left after they looted the capital, but the Senators who remained there sent messages throughout the empire, warning that the government was no longer able to function so the outlying areas would have to defend themselves.

The invasions continued throughout the western half of the empire, as the barbarians overran Spain, Britain, and Gaul (France) by the mid 400's. Finally, the end officially came in 476 A.D. when the last Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was forced off his throne by a Germanic chief. The Western Roman Empire was then gradually split among various Germanic kingdoms. The invaders were not as civilized and artistic as the Romans, so many of the advancements of the era were lost. Meanwhile, the Eastern Empire survived and became known as the Byzantine Empire.

## & SUMMARY

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the graphic organizer with information from this lesson and/or other sources.



**CAUSES OF THE DECLINE & FALL OF ROME:**

**EFFORTS TO REFORM AND SAVE THE ROMAN EMPIRE:**

**IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE DECLINE & FALL OF ROME:**