ANCIENT ROME G.R.A.P.E.S. NOTES

GEOGRAPHY—

* Italy is a rocky, mountainous peninsula 600 miles long and 150 miles wide- made it difficult for enemies to attack.
* Three major bodies of water surround it: Adriatic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Ionian Sea which was good for trade and interaction.
* Mountain ranges included- Apennines (running from north to south) and the Alps (running from east to west in the northern part of the civilization). These mountain ranges protected the civilization from invaders.
* The Tiber River was the major river that flowed through the civilization.
* Climate was hot and dry.
* The first people to settle in Italy were the Latins. They were early ancestors of Romans.
* The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by Romulus.
* At the height of the Roman Empire, the conquered territories included: Italy, Gaul (France), Spain, Carthage, Egypt, Greece, Britain, and part of Asia.

RELIGION—

* Ancient Romans practiced polytheism.
* As Rome expanded, they adapted the religions of conquered people (like the Greeks).
* They changed the names of Greek gods and goddesses but left the powers mostly the same:
  + Zeus = Jupiter
  + Hera = Juno
  + Athena = Minerva
  + Demeter = Ceres
  + Aphrodite = Venus
  + Aries = Mars
* Rome also had Jewish people and Christian people,
* The three religious beliefs would often cause conflict.
* **CHRISTIANITY--**
* Origin- grew as an extension of Judaism
* Founder- Jesus Christ
* Principles-
  + Believe Jesus was God in bodily form, died on the cross, and resurrected to forgive man’s sins
  + Salvation is by the grace of God- not earned
  + Christianity led to peace but also persecution of Christians
  + Basilicas were public buildings turned into churches
* Text- Bible
* Spread-
  + Spread by the teachings of Paul throughout the Middle East and the world
  + Adopted as official religion of the Roman Empire
  + Basis of Byzantine Empire by Emperors Constantine and Justinian
  + Spread through Crusades and European exploration and colonization

ACHIEVEMENTS—

* Latin- the basis for all “Romance” languages such as Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Romanian.
* Names of medicines, plants, animals, and law terms are written in Latin.
* Roman Numerals (I, V, X, L, C, D, M)
* Invented concrete/cement
* Architecture and engineering: solving problems of everyday life
* Arches allowed the building of taller, more stable structures such as the Roman Coliseum and the aqueducts that moved fresh water in and out of Rome and other cities.
* Domes- Pantheon
* Roads- allowed for the quick and easy movement of soldiers and trade; also unified the empire
* Sewer systems, public restrooms and public baths
* Socks and Shoes fit to each foot
* Medicine-
  + Fenugreek (plant) cured pneumonia
  + Great emphasis on personal hygiene and taking care of one’s body
  + Created hospitals for recuperation
* Arts and literature-
  + Virgil- wrote the poem *The Aeneid*- about a Trojan war hero named Aeneas
  + Much of Roman literature was inspired by Greek literature
* Mosaic Art
* Sundials (invented by the Indians and Egyptians, perfected by the Greeks, stolen by the Romans)
* Coins with emperors’ heads on the front

POLITICS—

* First settlers and rulers of Rome were Etruscans (also known as Tarquins) who established monarchies.
* Because of the cruel treatment at the hands of the Etruscans, the Roman people rebelled and created a Republic government that lasted 500 years.
  + **Republic**- people elect representatives to make decisions (basis for our government)
  + **Senators**- officials that represented the interest of various wealthy groups
* **Tribunes-** represented plebeians
* **Assemblies**- used for public meetings including the Senate
* **Consuls**- served for 1 year and had civil and military authority
* **Checks and balances**- no one group had too much power (The United States uses this in our own government!)
* Twelve tables- code of laws on public display
* **Julius Caesar**- responsible for Rome’s move toward a dictatorship and the creation of the first Triumvirate.
  + A dictatorship is a form of government in which power is monopolized by one person or political group and enforced to keep that one person or group in power.
  + A triumvirate is an alliance between three powerful people.
  + Killed on March 15, 44 B.C.E. by members of the Senate and Consul
  + Changed the calendar to what we use today- 365 days and a leap year.
* **Octavian or Augustus Caesar** (great nephew of Julius Caesar) ended a second Triumvirate and emerged as sole leader and signaled the end of the Republic.
* Pax Romana- (also called Pax Augustus)
  + 200 years of peace
  + Rome protected and governed the empire allowing individual provinces to make and administer own laws. However, Rome still collected taxes from them.

ECONOMICS—

* Trade was aided by the central location of the city of Rome and the road system that was put into place.
* Trading led to conflicts with other powerful empires of the day, such as Carthage.
* Main crops were olives, grapes, and grains.
* Even though it had a lot of achievements, Rome never developed a major economy. Their biggest concern was feeding citizens and soldiers so they spent most of their time on agriculture.
* Farmers were heavily taxed. They were forced to give most of their surplus to the government so that the government could give it to poor free citizens.
* Rome went to war many times and accumulated great wealth. Even though it expanded the empire:
  + It was expensive to control such large, vast territory.
  + High taxes had to be paid to pay for the cost of the wars and for all of the poor, unemployed, and conquered people who lived in the cities.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE—

* Over one (1) million people lived in Rome and 1/3 of them were slaves.
* **Emperor**: Large and in Charge.
* **Patricians**: Wealthy upper class, land owners.
  + Could be leaders and Senators
  + Officers in the army; merchants; and engineers
  + Had a lavish lifestyle
* **Plebians**: Lower class (everyone else in Ancient Rome)
  + Many lived on government support
  + Could join army (foot soldiers- no horses)
  + Lived in crowded apartment buildings
  + Worked on many public works (aqueducts, roads, etc.)
* IT WAS ILLEGAL FOR THESE TWO CLASSES TO MARRY, EVEN IF A PLEBIAN WAS ABLE TO BECOME WEALTHY.
* Citizen men: had all rights of movement and participation
* Women: were citizens but could not vote; single wealthy women could own property
* Latin Right: These were limited rights given to citizens of the empire who were not Roman.
* Freedmen: freed slaves.
  + Not citizens but their children were full citizens.
* Slaves: not citizens.
  + Lacked legal rights.
  + Descendants of debtors and prisoners of war.

REASONS FOR THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE—

* There are several reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire. Keep in mind that they occurred over the course of years, not overnight.
  + Fast expansion of the empire
  + High cost of war, feeding poor, high taxation, failing economy
  + Corrupt officials and constant fighting between the Emperor and the Senate
  + Division of Eastern (Byzantine Empire) and Western empires
  + Barbarian invasions of the Visigoths and the Vandals when the Western empire became weaker.
  + Decline in traditional moral values:
    - Morals decay and stop caring about others
    - Used hired soldiers who lacked loyalty to Rome
    - Increase in crime and corruption
    - “Mob” mentality and Gladiator games- thirst for someone else’s blood
    - Christianity increased moral values but decreased loyalty to Rome and the emperor
  + Succession of poor rulers and lack of stability

SEPARATION OF ROMAN EMPIRE—

* Official split began in 285 A.D. because the emperor at the time decided the empire was too big to control.
* Over the next 100 years, Roman Empire returned to one, split again, returned and split for the final time in 395 A.D.
* Western Roman Empire ruled from Rome and Eastern Roman Empire ruled from Constantinople.
* Fall of the Roman Empire refers to the fall of the Western half which ushered in the Middle (Dark) Ages.
* The Eastern Roman Empire remained as the Byzantine Empire for over 1000 years.
  + One important emperor was Justinian (was emperor during several revolts and plagues and tried to reunite the split empires)

HOW ARE THE UNITED STATES AND ANCIENT ROME SIMILAR?—

* Both had to throw off a foreign power to establish a nation.
* Controlled land outside of their borders
* Controlled large land mass.
* Had a legislative, executive and judicial branches
* Religion was a central part of each society, but religious intolerance also existed to some level. (The US has had its dark moments of religious intolerance, too.)
* Apathy of many of the common people in politics and in life.
* Each had a large numbers of poor and unemployed and the government has used welfare and other aid packages to help the people causing a great drain on the finances of the government.
* After hundreds of years, imports greater than exports, so money is rolling out and the government/economy is looking at rising debt.
* Any law that seemed unreasonable or grossly unfair could be set aside.  In the US this is similar to declaring something unconstitutional.
* Both have many similarities in individual freedoms like writ of habeas corpus, trial by jury, innocent until proven guilty, right of appeal, and many others.
* Senate - In Rome these were the wealthy and were self-serving. In the US, many are career senators and from the elite in America, and focused often on pork-barrel money bills.
* System of checks and balances to see that no single branch of government was stronger than another. The veto is idea taken from the Romans.

HOW ARE THE UNITED STATES AND ANCIENT ROME DIFFERENT?—

* Rome conquered, kept, and controlled by subjection and force. The US tries to include people into the nation. True, it does have territories, but then it grants the people citizenship unlike the Romans.
* Had a Caesar (king, emperor, dictator) who ran most things without control by others
* Romans also used the entertainment of the coliseum to keep the mobs happy.
* In the US, many potential politicians stay away from politics to stay out of the public eye, so the best people do not try to reform or rule.
* The US basically remained friends and allies with England, while the Romans conquered the Greeks and Etruscans.
* No real system to control the emperors existed except to overthrow them.  America is far more balanced, although, it is a source of political frustration to find that balance.
* In Rome you could appeal unto Caesar, but only if you were a citizen. Here in the US, the appeal process is extended to many and has many levels throughout the judicial system.
* In the US, every citizen has born natural rights such as the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In the Roman Empire, many were just subjects and not citizens.
* The US holds elections to find leaders, while the Romans used military power to bring in a new Caesar.
* It was common for emperors to have enemies killed, but assassinations are not acceptable in the US.
* Source for this information—
  + http://www.calaveras.k12.ca.us/07%20schools/chs/teachers/wgissler/similaritiesdifferencesromansandus.htm