

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Rome Lesson Plan 4: Mapping an Empire

Introduction:

In this lesson, students will compare a map of the Roman Empire in 44 BC with one of the Roman Empire in 116 AD. Using these two maps as a reference, students will use critical reading skills to learn about the expansion of the Roman Empire during that time period. Relying on the resources available on The Roman Empire in the First Century Web site [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/index.html>], students will learn about which countries/ territories were conquered by each Roman emperor. After reviewing basic map skills and information, students will use the data collected to construct their own maps documenting the historical expansion of the Roman Empire. They will then use the data represented on the map to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of specific emperors as well as the positive and negative aspects of expanding the Roman Empire so much in such a short time.

Subject Areas:

World History, Social Studies, Geography, and Communication Arts

Grade Level: 6-12

Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

1. Compare two different maps and make estimates about the growth of the Roman Empire during the first century.
2. Use primary source materials to gather facts about the expansion of the Roman Empire including the names of conquered countries/territories, the approximate date these lands were added to the empire, and which emperor was responsible for these expansions.
3. Participate in a review of map skills and the key components of maps to prepare for creating their own maps.
4. Work in pairs to create maps that show the historical expansion of the Roman Empire between 44 BC and 116 AD.
5. Analyze the maps they have created to draw conclusions about the expansion of the Roman Empire and how its size may have contributed to its downfall.
6. Complete a series of written response questions with their partner based on their analysis of the map they created.
7. Participate in a class discussion about the expansion of Rome using the conclusions they reached from analyzing the map and their answer to the written response questions.

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Relevant National Standards:

McRel Compendium of K-12 Standards Addressed:

World History

Standard 9: Understands how major religious and large-scale empires arose in the Mediterranean Basin, China, and Indian from 500 BCE to 300 CE.

Historical Understanding

Standard 1: Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.

Geography

Standard 1: Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies.

Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.

Standard 3: Understands the characteristics and uses of spatial organization of Earth's surface.

Standard 4: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place.

Standard 9: Understands the nature, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

Standard 12: Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes.

Standard 17: Understands how geography is used to interpret the past.

Language Arts

Writing

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

Reading

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Standard 7: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts.

Listening and Speaking

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Thinking and Reasoning

Standard 1: Understands the basic principles of presenting an argument.

Standard 3: Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences.

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Working with Others

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group.

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

Estimated Time:

This should take two to three 90-minute class periods or four to five 50-minute class periods, plus additional time for extension activities.

Materials Needed:

- If you wish to purchase a copy of The Roman Empire in the First Century program, visit the PBS Shop for Teachers [[Purchase DVD or Video](#)].
- Map of the Roman Empire in 44 BC [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/caesar.html>].
- Map of the Roman Empire in 116 AD [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/trajan.html>].
- Internet access for conducting research.
- Mapping an Empire Note Taking Sheet [[Download PDF here \(160k\)](#)], part of this lesson plan.
- A large pull-down map that can be used to identify key features necessary on a map.
- Mapping an Empire Assignment Sheet [[Download PDF here \(160k\)](#)], part of this lesson plan.
- One poster board for each pair of students.
- Assorted art supplies such as colored pencils, markers, crayons, and rulers.

Procedures:

1. Begin by providing students with a map of the Roman Empire as it appeared in 44BC [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/caesar.html>], after the death of Caesar. Using a current world map, discuss which countries made up the empire at this time so that students can get an idea of its size and location.
2. Using the map of the Roman Empire [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/trajan.html>], show students how much the empire grew from 44BC until 116AD. Have them make estimates about how much the empire grew in size during this time period and discuss these estimates by analyzing the maps as a class.
3. Explain to students that the Roman Empire grew over time under various emperors, and that some were more successful than others in conquering neighboring lands.

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4. Direct students to the Timeline

[<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/special/timeline01.html>] on The Roman Empire in the First Century Web site [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/index.html>]. Use the timeline along with other features on the site:

- Age of Augustus [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/age.html>]
- Empire Reborn [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/reborn.html>]
- Emperors [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/emperors.html>]
- Social Order [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/order.html>]
- Enemies and Rebels [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/enemies.html>]

Use the Related Resources

[<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/educators/lesson4.html#resources>] in this lesson plan to work in pairs to discover when various countries/territories were added to the empire.

Record this information on the Mapping an Empire Note Taking Sheet [[Download PDF here \(160k\)](#)]. Note: This activity could be done as a class to ensure accuracy of information for all students.

5. As a class, discuss the information recorded on the note taking sheet. Encourage students to make corrections to their data if necessary and record any important dates omitted from their notes. Discuss which emperors seemed to experience the most success in expanding the empire. This is also a good time to talk about key battles and military leaders that were important in the expansion of the empire.
6. Next, take time to review important information that is included on maps so that they can be easily interpreted. These items could include:
- Title of map
 - Years that the map represents
 - A compass rose
 - Scale of miles
 - Most importantly, a legend for determining what the markings and colors on the map represent
 - Labels on physical features such as country names, bodies of water, mountain ranges, etc.

Use a large classroom map to illustrate this information for students.

7. Now that students have completed their study of the growth of the Roman Empire, distribute the Mapping an Empire Assignment [[Download PDF here \(160k\)](#)] sheet to all students. Review the requirements of the assignment as a class. Then provide

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students with classroom time to construct their maps. Stress the importance of including key information and making maps neat and easy to read.

8. When maps have been completed, have students work with their partners to answer the following questions. Each student should turn in a paper for this assignment.
 - Based on what you learned from your research and what your map shows, which emperor do you feel was most successful in expanding the Roman Empire? Why?
 - Looking at the map you have created, why do you think it was so difficult for the Romans to maintain control of the empire? List and explain as many reasons as you can.
 - How do you think the sheer size of the Roman Empire contributed to its downfall?
 - Do you think the Roman Empire could have been more powerful if it had focused less energy on expansion and more energy on other aspects of the country's growth? Why?
9. Collect the written responses from each pair and end the class by facilitating a discussion about the three written response questions from procedure step eight. This should help students see the challenges faced by Roman emperors in their quest to become a world power and maintain that power.
10. Post maps on the walls around the classroom and use them as a reference as you continue to study the Roman Empire.

Assessment Suggestions:

1. Students could earn participation grades for class discussion activities.
2. A completion or accuracy grade could be assigned for the Mapping an Empire Note Taking Sheet.
3. Grades for accuracy and neatness could be assigned for the Mapping an Empire Assignment using percentages, and point checklist, or a scoring guide.
4. A completion or accuracy grade could be assigned for answers to the written response questions based on the map analysis.

Extension Activities:

1. Using the [map of the Roman Empire in 116 AD](http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/trajan.html) [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/extent/trajan.html>], add content about the land and its people. Create symbols to represent major cities that were part of the empire, create a list of cultures and nationalities represented, list the languages spoken by the people of the Roman Empire, and record the types of natural resources available in the Roman Empire. Discuss how Rome might have used the people and resources

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differently to make the country stronger. Using this data, refer back to some of the writings featured in the Virtual Library [<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/special/library.html>] and discuss why some Romans may have felt they were superior to residents of the conquered lands.

2. Compare the expansion of the Roman Empire with the expansion of other great civilizations throughout history. How do the Romans compare with the ancient Egyptians? The dynasties of China? The Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans? The expansion of the United States? Create a series of maps or graphic organizers that compare the similarities and differences between these great civilizations.

Related Resources:

The Roman Empire Web site [<http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/map-empire.html>] provides a series of maps organized by date to show the expansion of the empire over time.

- WorldAtlas.com [<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/world.htm>] provides a variety of maps and map resources that are printable. These can be used to illustrate various regions of the world, countries, and map features. your classmates.