

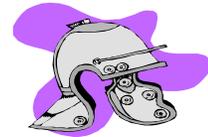
# Decline of Ancient Rome

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"The warlike states of antiquity, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, educated a race of soldiers; exercised their bodies, disciplined their courage, multiplied their forces by regular evolutions, and converted the iron which they possessed into strong and serviceable weapons. But this superiority insensibly declined with their laws and manners; and the feeble policy of Constantine and his successors armed and instructed, for the ruin of the empire, the rude valour of the Barbarian mercenaries."

~ Gibbon, *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*

As a group, sort these factors into 2 categories: 1. Rise, and 2. Decline of the Roman Empire. Then rearrange each category in order of importance, starting with #1 for the most important.



Factors that influenced the rise of the Roman Empire	Factors that influenced the decline of the Roman Empire
Rome represented a better way of life and standardization. Centralized food supply, currency, trade, laws, affordable goods, governance, travel, etc...	The Germanic tribes of Northern Europe (e.g., Visigoths and Ostrogoths) became strong military forces and attacked the Empire, conquering Rome in 456. All roads led to Rome.
Infrastructural advances: Rome brought innovation such as roads, running water, cement, and advanced architectural design.	Eventually the Empire became a dictatorship and the people were less involved in government.
Rome's army was more trained and disciplined than any other force. BY 121 AD, the Roman Empire controlled most of the landmass around the Mediterranean Sea.	Rome's army became too large; the hired soldiers (mercenaries) in Roman armies were not Romans and not loyal to Rome.
Roman slaves (often conquered soldiers) and plebeians were used as workers to build most of Rome at very little cost.	Inheritance of the title of Emperor was unstable; this led to power struggles, violence, and insecurity.
Advantageous Site: defensible hills at the Tiber, a natural barricade at the Alps, and rich agricultural territory in the center of Italy.	Trade was constantly disrupted because of wars; the economy suffered because goods could not be freely bought and sold.

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Rome originally respected its conquered cultures (customs, religions, etc.) reducing the drain on the military (freeing it to continue expanding and developing).	The Empire became too large and the borders were too long to defend. Too many resources were sunk into the governance, protection and defense of the empire.
Rome was a naval powerhouse, enabling it to control all trade in the Mediterranean region.	Slavery eroded the economy by taking work away from the plebeians.
Between 338 and 290 BC the Roman Republic exhibited military prowess and experienced very important initial victories (Punic Wars).	Conflict and social unrest was created by the wide gap between the rich and the poor.
The Romans "borrowed" many ideas and technological advancements from the Etruscans, Greeks and other ancient cultures.	Heavy taxes were paid by the provinces to support the luxury of Rome; the conquered people began to resent this.
Rome thrived on superiority/luxury. It was able to conquer resources, wealth and manpower in order to develop architectural masterpieces and entertainment spectacles.	The spread of Christianity divided the Empire and caused many people under Roman rule to reject traditional Roman culture.
Rome established a system of governance that lent itself to an expanding Empire (centralized decision-making).	The society was weakened by its materialism and focus on luxury, especially in the ruling classes.
The Pagan religion (multiple gods) was largely accepted and was used to control citizens through fear.	People may have been suffering from lead poisoning because of the lead pipes for the Roman water supply.

### **“Greatness contains the seeds of its own destruction”**

Write a short essay examining the decline of the Roman Empire. Select what you consider to be the 3 most influential factors and refer to people, places, things and events to support your opinion. Use the quote above as a starting point.