Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

After 200 years of Pax Romana, Rome fell into a long slow period of decline. Invaders were able to enter Rome, and cause great destruction. These included: Visigoths, Huns, Germans, Persians, Slavs, and Avars.

Reasons for the Decline of the Roman Empire

**Economic Decay**
- Barbarian disruption of trade
- No plunder
- Drain of gold and silver (on luxuries and military)
- Inflation caused by over coinage
- Over farming of soil
- Slavery and the loss of work ethic
Reasons for the Decline of the Roman Empire

Political Decay
- Indifference to politics and government
- Inability to collect taxes
- Military shenanigans (take over, assassination cycle)
- No confidence 😞

Military Decay
- Military pressure from a growing world
- Split loyalty of Barbarian troops
- Lack of patriotism of soldiers (fight for $)
Roman Decline. 180 – 476 AD (Highlights)

**Dioecletian** (284 –305AD)

Strong leader who **temporarily** stopped the decline.

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**Dioecletian’s Reforms**

*Secured the borders (doubled the military)  
*Pushed patriotism (Emperor = god)

*Stopped inflation (price and wage controls)  
*Persecuted **Christians**

*Split Empire in two – created two capitals

   western: **Latin-speaking** Rome

   eastern: **Greek-speaking** (Byzantium) Constantinople
**Constantine 312 AD**

**First Christian Emperor**

Follows Diocletian after winning battle for power.

Revelation tells him to put **crosses** on Soldier’s shields

Issues **Edict of Milan** - allowing freedom of worship and ends Christian persecution

Constantine moves capital of Empire to **Byzantium** because:

1. Crossroads of trade
2. Easy to defend
3. Christian city
4. Richer half of the Empire

Renamed the city **Constantinople**
Rome under pressure from **Barbarian tribes** from the North

Barbarian Germanic tribes invade:
- German-speaking
- pagan
- less-civilized

Some, like the Visigoths and Vandals, invade just for sport

Others, like **Attila the Hun** were trying to carve out an empire (100,000+ men “horde”)

Most Germanic tribes invade Roman lands because they are being pushed out by overpopulation and Attila.

**“Cross beats Sword”**
- Pope Leo I convinces Attila
- **NOT** to invade Rome
- Adds to credibility of Pope’s power

No Roman forces left to fight, government too weak to raise an army
FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE 476 AD
EASTERN EMPIRE CONTINUES FOR ANOTHER 1000 YEARS

Invasions of the Roman Empire
100 - 500 CE

Who Would stop the Fall?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Save It</th>
<th>Let It Go</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
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<td>Government Leadership</td>
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<td>Patrician in countryside</td>
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<td>Average Roman Farmer</td>
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<td>Romans of Foreign Origin</td>
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<td>New Barbarian Immigrants</td>
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<td>Romans in cities</td>
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<td>Christians</td>
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Reasons people did not like or need Roman rule:

- Racism against Barbarians
- Government **taxes**: More people involved in **spending** taxes than in paying them”.
- Feeling that Barbarian rule will not be that bad.
- Rise of **villa** system/ didn’t need Roman government

NAME THE “REAL REASON” FOR THE FALL OF ROME:

**NO ONE REALLY WANTED TO STOP THE FALL**

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**LEGACY OF ROME**

**Conquest**

- Slavery
- Brutality
- Plunder
Military Skills
- Professional soldiers
- Military Tactics
- Order and Organization

Law
- Individual Rights
- Due Process
- Court System
Government
- Republic
- Citizenship
- Pax Romana

Latin Language
- Italian
- French
- Spanish
- Portuguese

ius, iuris: (justice)

justice
jury
juror
justification
Architecture

- Concrete
- Water management
- Roads

- Note: on the following slides, only note down the bold and underlined text. :)

**Roman Life**

**Society/Culture**
- Rich and poor lived differently
  - Rich had large gardens, homes, many slaves.
  - Had banquets that lasted for hours that had very rare food
- Many poor lived in fire hazard tenets
- **The government offered unemployed city dwellers free food and entertainment to keep them from rioting.**

**Roman Fashion Statements**
- **Toga**
  - Was about 20 feet long and wrapped around the wearer
  - Worn only by citizens
  - **Was their “best” clothing**
Social Life

• **Baths**
  – Not just for cleaning
  – **Places where people could relax, enjoy art, work out, discuss politics, and converse with others about the issues of the day**
  – Open to anyone, including poor

Gladiators

• From the Latin *gladius* (*sword*)
• **Professional fighters that fought against each other, wild animals, and condemned criminals, often to the death**
• Made up of criminals, slaves, poor, rich and many other types of men
ROME’S LEGACY

• Rome has added much to culture
• Influenced
  – art
  – government
  – architecture

• When Roman culture mixed with Greek and Hellenistic culture, a super-culture was formed
  – Greco-Roman culture

Art

• Took their idea’s from the Greeks
• Used sculptures to tell stories
• Skilled in mosaics (pictures with small stones, glass, or tile)
• Excellent in painting
• Frescos
Architecture

- Perfected the:
  - Arch
  - Dome
  - concrete
- Arches were used in such features as the **aqueducts**
- Had many roads that were paved
  - some are used still today

Aqueduct

- Brought water from mountains to the cities
- Carried water up to 50 miles
- Went on a slight slope to the cities
Roads