

The Early Empire

Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

You learned in Section 3 that when Octavian became Augustus, the Roman world began to change. The republic gave way to an empire, and peace and prosperity spread throughout the Mediterranean.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- By expanding the empire and reorganizing the military and government, Augustus created a new era of prosperity. (page 287)
- Rome's system of roads, aqueducts, ports, and common currency made the empire rich and prosperous. (page 290)

Locating Places

Rhine River (RYN)
 Danube River (DAN•YOOb)
 Puteoli (pyu•TEE•uh•LY)
 Ostia (AHS•tee•uh)

Meeting People

Caligula (kuh•LIH•gyuh•luh)
 Nero (NEE•roh)
 Hadrian (HAY•dree•uhn)

Building Your Vocabulary

Pax Romana

(pahks roh•MAH•nah)
 aqueduct (A•kwuh•DUHKT)
 currency (KUHR•uhn•see)

Reading Strategy

Cause and Effect Use a chart like the one below to show the changes Augustus made in the Roman Empire and the effect of each change.

| Causes | Effects |
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When & Where?



A.D. 10

A.D. 14
 Augustus dies

A.D. 96

A.D. 96
 Rule of the Good
 Emperors begins

A.D. 180

A.D. 180
Pax Romana
 ends

The Emperor Augustus

Main Idea By expanding the empire and reorganizing the military and government, Augustus created a new era of prosperity.

Reading Focus What makes a good or bad leader? Think about this question as you read about Augustus and other Roman emperors.

Augustus paved the way for 200 years of peace and prosperity in Rome. The emperors who followed him were not all good rulers, but they helped the Roman Empire reach its peak. For centuries, the Mediterranean region had been filled with conflict. Under Augustus and his successors, the region was under the control of one empire. A long era of peace began with Augustus and lasted until A.D. 180. It was called the *Pax Romana* (pahks roh•MAH•nah), or “Roman Peace.”

What Did Augustus Achieve? Upon becoming emperor in 27 B.C., Augustus set out to make the empire strong and safe. To provide security, he built a permanent, professional army of about 150,000 men—all Roman citizens. Augustus also created a special unit called the Praetorian Guard.

This force consisted of about 9,000 men in charge of guarding the emperor. The Praetorian Guard later became very influential in Roman politics.

Augustus’s legions conquered new territories and added vast stretches of northern Europe to the empire. All of Spain and Gaul came under Roman rule, as did land in what is today Austria, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

Meanwhile, Augustus rebuilt Rome with stately palaces, fountains, and splendid public buildings. “I found Rome a city of brick,” he boasted, “and left it a city of marble.” The arts flourished as never before, and Augustus also imported grain from Africa to feed the poor. He knew that a well-fed population would be less likely to cause trouble.

Augustus devoted much of his energy to improving Rome’s government. During his reign, more than 50 million people lived in the Roman Empire. To rule this huge population, Augustus appointed a proconsul, or governor, for each of Rome’s provinces. These new officials replaced the politicians who had been chosen by the Senate. Augustus often traveled to the provinces to see how the governors were doing.



▲ The city of Rome at the height of the Roman Empire

The Julio-Claudian Emperors

Emperor

Accomplishments

Tiberius

14–37 A.D.



Great military leader; regulated business to prevent fraud; kept Rome's economy stable

Caligula

37–41 A.D.



Abolished sales tax; allowed people in exile to return; increased court system's power

Claudius

41–54 A.D.



Built new harbor at Ostia and new aqueduct for Rome; conquered most of Britain

Nero

54–68 A.D.



Constructed many new buildings; gave slaves the right to file complaints; assisted cities suffering from disasters

Understanding Charts

The four emperors who followed Augustus were all relatives of Augustus.

1. Under which emperor was Britain conquered?
2. **Conclude** Why do you think the Roman Empire remained at peace even with weak emperors such as Caligula and Nero?

Augustus also reformed the Roman tax system. Previously, individual tax collectors paid the government for the right to do the job. To make their investment worthwhile, tax collectors were allowed to keep some of the money they gathered. Many of them, however, were dishonest and took too much. Augustus solved this problem by making tax collectors permanent government workers. This change made the tax system fairer.

Augustus also reformed the legal system. He created a set of laws for people in the provinces who were not citizens. As time passed, however, most of these people gained citizenship. The laws of Rome then applied to everyone, although the legal system generally stressed the authority of the government over the rights of the individual.

Who Came After Augustus?

After ruling for almost 40 years, Augustus died in A.D. 14. No law stated how the next emperor was to be chosen. Augustus, however, had trained a relative, Tiberius, to follow him. The next three emperors—**Caligula** (kuh • LIH • gyuh • luh), Claudius, and **Nero** (NEE • roh)—also came from Augustus's family. They are called the Julio-Claudian emperors. Unfortunately, they were not all fit to lead. Tiberius and Claudius ruled capably. Caligula and Nero, however, proved to be cruel leaders.

Mental illness caused Caligula to act strangely and to treat people cruelly. He had many people murdered, wasted a lot of money, and even gave his favorite horse the position of consul. Eventually, the Praetorian Guard killed him and put Claudius on the throne.

Nero was also a vicious man. Among those he had killed were his mother and two wives. He is best remembered for having "fiddled while Rome burned." According to legend, he was playing music miles from Rome when a fire destroyed much of the city in A.D. 64. Eventually, he committed suicide.

✓ **Reading Check** **Explain** What did Augustus do to make the empire safer and stronger?

Biography

AUGUSTUS

63 B.C.—A.D. 14

Octavian was born to a wealthy family in a small Italian town southeast of Rome. During his youth, Octavian suffered a number of illnesses. He refused to let his illnesses interfere with his life, however, showing the determination that would later make him Rome's first emperor.

Octavian's father was a Roman senator, but it was Octavian's great-uncle—Julius Caesar—who first introduced Octavian to public life in Rome. In his late teens, Octavian joined Caesar in Africa and then the following year in Spain. At the age of 18, while Octavian was studying at school, he learned that his great-uncle had been murdered. In his will, Caesar had adopted Octavian as his son. Caesar had also made Octavian his heir—a position that Antony had assumed would be his. Against his family's advice, Octavian went to Rome to claim his inheritance. By the time he reached Rome, however, Antony had seized Caesar's papers and money and refused to give them to Octavian. With remarkable political savvy for someone so young, Octavian turned the situation around in his favor. He won the hearts of Caesar's soldiers and the people of Rome by celebrating the public games that Caesar had started.

In his rise to power and during his reign as Emperor Augustus, Octavian pushed himself and his loyal followers with relentless energy. In his private life, however, he lived simply and quietly and shunned personal luxury. He was devoted to his wife, Livia Drusilla, and spent his spare time with her at their home on the outskirts of Rome.

Augustus ►



**"I extended the frontiers
of all the provinces of the
Roman people."**

—Augustus, "Res Gestae: The
Accomplishments of Augustus"

Then and Now

Augustus overcame the obstacles of illness and political enemies to become a great emperor. Can you think of any present-day individuals who overcame obstacles to excel at something?

Unity and Prosperity

Main Idea Rome's system of roads, aqueducts, ports, and common currency made the empire rich and prosperous.

Reading Focus Do you find that you are more productive when you are not worried about conflicts at home or school? Read to learn how the Roman Empire prospered during its time of peace.

After Nero committed suicide, Rome passed through a period of disorder until Vespasian, a general and one of Nero's pro-consuls, took the throne. Vespasian restored peace and order. He put down several

rebellions in the empire, including the Jewish rebellion in Israel. Troops commanded by his son Titus defeated the Jews and destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

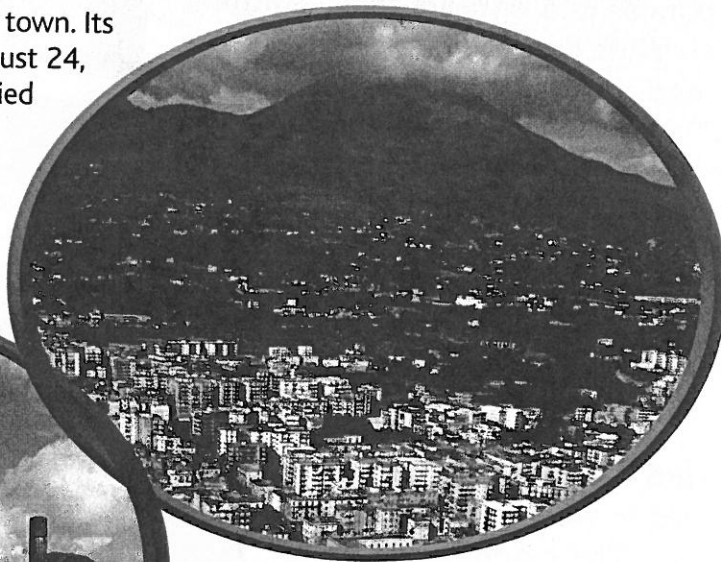
During his reign, Vespasian began construction of the Colosseum—a huge amphitheatre—in central Rome. His son Titus, then his other son Domitian, ruled Rome after he died. Both sons oversaw an era of growth and prosperity in Rome. During Titus's reign, two disasters struck the empire. The volcano Mount Vesuvius erupted, destroying the city of Pompeii, and a great fire badly damaged Rome.

Linking Past & Present

Living in the Shadow of Mt. Vesuvius

THEN Ancient Pompeii was a busy port town. Its citizens were going about their day on August 24, A.D. 79, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted and buried the town in volcanic ash. About 20,000 people escaped, but thousands of others died. Not until centuries later—in the 1500s—were the preserved ruins at Pompeii discovered.

▼ Mt. Vesuvius today



▲ The ruins of Pompeii

NOW Today, about 600,000 people live near Mt. Vesuvius. Some people even live on the volcano's beautiful green slopes. Scientists warn that the volcano is overdue to erupt again and suggest that people move away from the highest-risk areas. **Would you choose to live near Mt. Vesuvius? Why or why not?**

The Way It Was

The “Good Emperors” At the beginning of the A.D. 100s, a series of rulers who were not related to Augustus or Vespasian came to power. These five emperors—Nerva, Trajan, **Hadrian** (HAY•dree•uhn), Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius—are known as the “good emperors.” They presided over nearly a century of prosperity, from A.D. 96 to A.D. 180. Agriculture flourished, trade increased, and the standard of living rose.

During this time, the emperor came to overshadow the Senate more than ever before. The five “good emperors” did not abuse their power, however. They were among the most devoted and capable rulers in Rome’s history. They improved Roman life in many ways, naming trained officials to carry out their orders.

Among the achievements of these emperors were programs to help ordinary people. Trajan gave money to help poor parents raise and educate their children. Hadrian made Roman law easier to understand and apply. Antoninus Pius passed laws to help orphans. All the emperors supported public building projects. They built arches and monuments, bridges and roads, and harbors and aqueducts. An **aqueduct** (A•kwuh•DUHKT) is a human-made channel for carrying water long distances.

A Unified Empire Later emperors continued to conquer new territory for Rome. The empire reached its largest size under Trajan. It spread well beyond the Mediterranean, including Britain in the north and part of Mesopotamia in the east.

Trajan’s successors, however, realized that the empire had grown too big to rule effectively. Hadrian began to pull back. He removed troops from most of Mesopotamia.

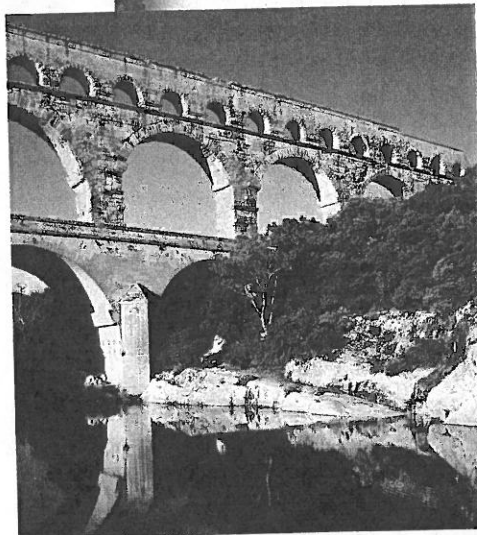
Science and Inventions

Roman Aqueducts Transporting water is a complex problem. Roman engineers solved it by building aqueducts. Roman aqueducts carried water across a valley or hillside using gravity, aboveground stone arches, and underground pipes made of stone or clay. Between 312 B.C. and A.D. 226, 11 aqueducts were built to bring water to Rome from as far away as 57 miles. Once the water made it to Rome, it was held in collecting tanks. Most people gathered water from these public tanks. Only the rich and high-ranking officials had private water tanks in their homes.

Many Roman aqueducts still stand and are used today. Engineers in ancient

Persia, India, and Egypt built similar water systems hundreds of years before the Romans. However, historians agree that the Romans were the greatest aqueduct builders of the ancient world.

◀ Roman aqueduct

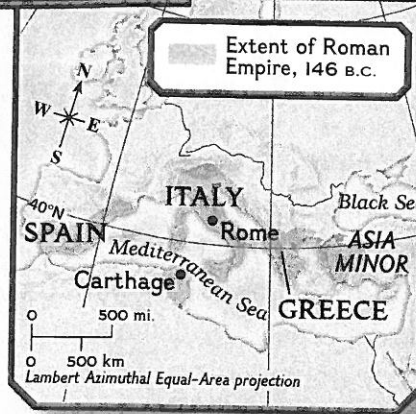


Connecting to the Past

1. How did the Romans transport water to the city of Rome?
2. Why do you think that only the rich and powerful had private water supplies?

The Roman Empire: Trade and Expansion

In Motion



The "Good Emperors" of the Pax Romana



Nerva

A.D. 96–98

Reformed land laws in favor of the poor; revised taxes



Trajan

A.D. 98–117

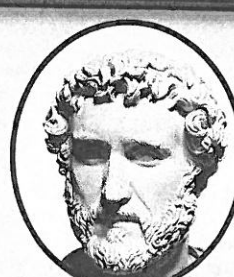
Expanded the empire to its largest size; built many new public works



Hadrian

A.D. 117–138

Built Hadrian's Wall in Britain; made Roman laws easier to understand



Antoninus Pius

A.D. 138–161

Promoted art and science; built new public works; passed laws to aid orphans



Marcus Aurelius

A.D. 161–180

Helped unite the empire economically; reformed Roman law

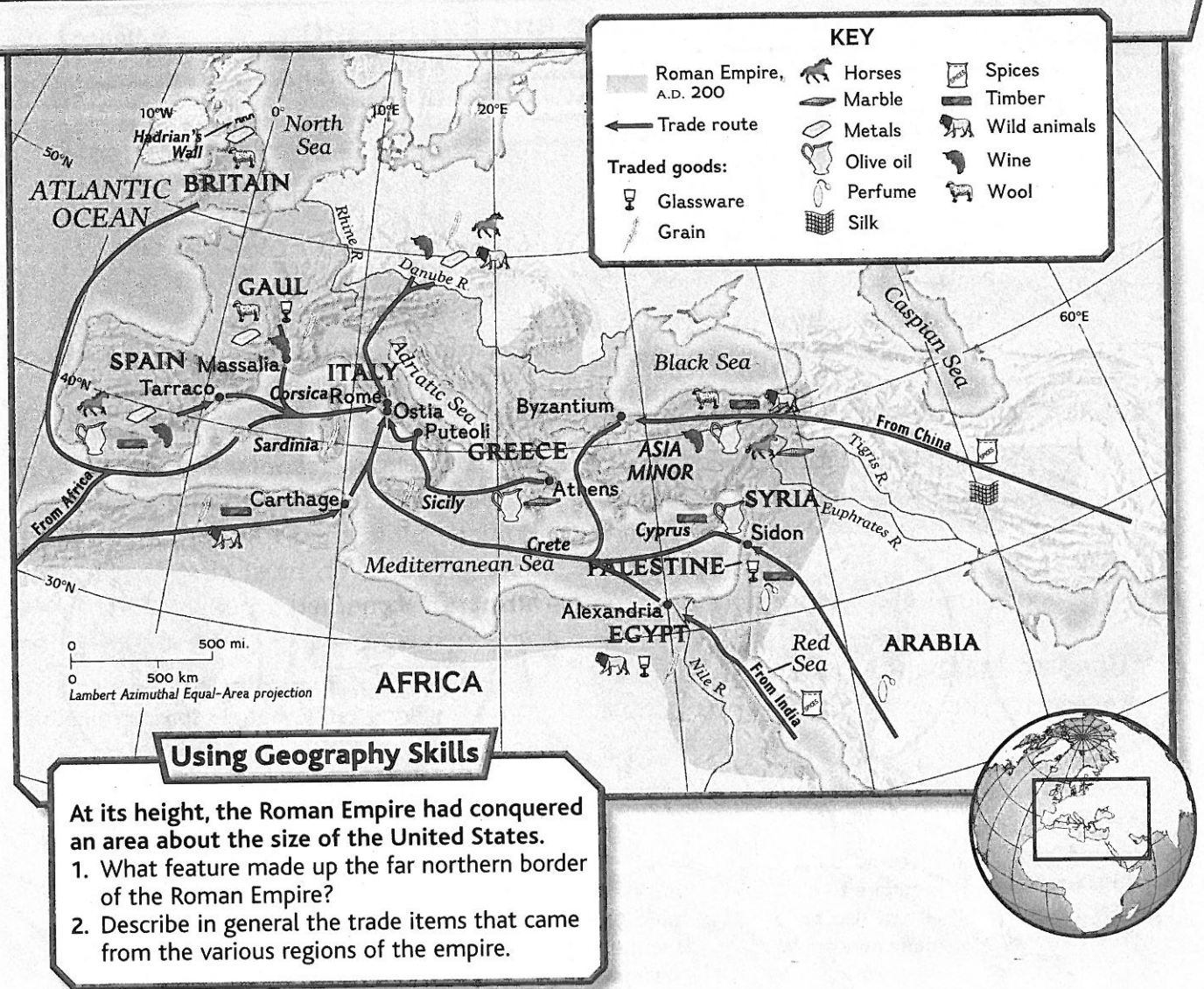
In Europe, he set the empire's northern boundaries at the **Rhine River** (RYN) and **Danube River** (DAN•YOUB). He also built Hadrian's Wall across northern Britain to keep out the Picts and Scots—two warlike people who lived in northern Britain.

In the A.D. 100s, the Roman Empire was one of the greatest empires in history. It included about 3.5 million square miles (9.1 million square km). Its people spoke different languages—mostly Latin in the west and Greek in the east. They also practiced different local customs. What unified the

empire, though, were Roman law, Roman rule, and a shared identity as Romans.

Roman culture had been carried into every province by the soldiers who protected the empire and by the officials sent to govern. The Romans were generous in granting citizenship. In A.D. 212 every free person was made a Roman citizen.

A Booming Economy Most people in the Roman Empire made a living from the land. Small farms dotted northern Italy. In



southern and central Italy, latifundia, or large estates worked by enslaved people, were common. On these estates and in the provinces of Gaul and Spain, farmers produced grapes and olives. The making of wine and olive oil became big business. In Britain and Egypt, the chief crops were grains. Bountiful harvests from these regions kept Rome's people well fed.

Agriculture was the most important part of the economy, but industry was important too. Potters, weavers, and jewelers

produced goods and cities became centers for making glass, bronze, and brass.

Traders came from all over the empire—and beyond—to ports in Italy. Two of the largest port cities were **Puteoli** (pyu•TEE•uh•ly) on the Bay of Naples and **Ostia** (AHS•tee•uh) at the mouth of the Tiber. The docks were lively places. Luxury items, including silk goods from China and spices from India, poured in to satisfy the rich. Raw materials, such as British tin, Spanish lead, and iron from Gaul, went to the workshops of Roman cities.

Roads and Money A good transportation network was vital to the empire's trade. During the *Pax Romana*, Rome's system of roads reached a total length of 50,000 miles (80,000 km). On the seas, the Roman navy helped to rid the Mediterranean of pirates. Goods could be shipped more safely to and from Rome's ports.

Rome's trade was helped by a common **currency** (KUHR•uhn•see), or system of money. Roman coins were accepted throughout the Mediterranean region by A.D. 100. Merchants could use the same money in Gaul or Greece as they did in Italy. The Romans also created a standard system of weights and measures. This made it easier for people to price goods, trade, and ship products.

Ongoing Inequality The Roman Empire's prosperity did not reach all of its people.



▲ Roman coins could be used throughout most of the empire, making trade much easier. **How else did Rome improve trade during the empire?**

Shopkeepers, merchants, and skilled workers benefited from the empire's trade. Rich Romans built great fortunes and lived in luxury. However, most city dwellers and farmers remained poor, and many remained enslaved.

✓ **Reading Check** **Identify** Who were the "Good Emperors," and what did they accomplish?

HistoryOnline

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Section 4 Review

Reading Summary

Review the **Main Ideas**

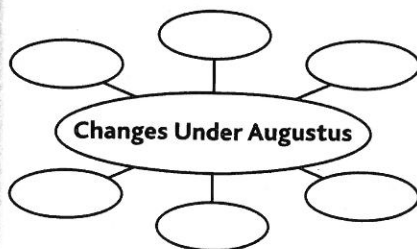
- Augustus conquered new lands and created a professional military and a system of proconsuls. He improved the tax system and the legal system, ushering in the *Pax Romana*.
- Under Vespasian, his sons, and the five good emperors, Romans continued to be prosperous. They built an elaborate system of roads and developed a common currency that promoted trade and economic growth.

What Did You Learn?

1. What was the *Pax Romana*?
2. What products came from the farms of Italy, Gaul, and Spain?

Critical Thinking

3. **Organizing Information**
Draw a diagram like the one below. Add details about the improvements and changes Augustus made to the Roman Empire during his reign.



4. **Sequencing Information**

Describe the sequence of emperors who ruled Rome, from Augustus through the "Good Emperors."

5. **Analyze** Why was Rome's creation of a common currency important?
6. **Evaluate** Who do you think was a more important leader, Julius Caesar or Augustus? Explain.
7. **Creative Writing** Write a short play in which several Roman citizens discuss one of the emperors mentioned in this section and his accomplishments.

