

Civilizations: Leadership

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: World History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Prosperity and Decline (31 min.) – Traces the beginning of the Roman Empire and explores why the empire succeeded and why it ultimately fell. *In Rome's Wake* (5 min.) – Discusses the chaos in Europe following the fall of the Roman Empire, the rise of feudalism during the Middle Ages, and the impact of the Crusades on Europe and the Middle East. *The Politics of The Prince* (5 min.) – Describes the political climate during the Renaissance in Italy and the political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli, who identified the qualities of a leader in a famous book called *The Prince*. *Emperor Napoleon* (6 min.) – The story of Napoleon, who created the French Empire but was defeated by other leaders of Europe.

Onscreen Questions

- How did the choices of Rome's leaders affect the empire?
 - What conditions can lead to dissatisfaction with a leader?
 - What's the difference between a good leader and a bad one?
 - Can a nation prosper without good leadership?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Learn what caused the fall of the Roman Empire.
- Write an essay describing the cause of the fall of the Roman Empire.
- Apply information to other civilizations.

Materials

- Civilizations: Leadership video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by showing segment 1, *Prosperity and Decline*, of the video. Then discuss what attributes made the empire strong. Ideas include the following:
 - The establishment of the city
 - Accomplishments in art and architecture
 - The ability to unite diverse groups of people
 - The ability to maintain the peace for a long period of time
2. Then discuss the reasons given in the video for the decline of the Roman Empire. Suggestions include the following:
 - Too great an appetite for the pleasures of life
 - Disease
 - Decline in revenue coming into the Empire
 - Strong invaders from other countries
3. Tell students to use the list above as a starting point for understanding the causes of the empire's fall. Have students explore other reasons by researching the topic. Suggest that they use the following Web sites:
 - Edward Gibbon: The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-1788)
http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/gibbon_decline.html
 - Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire
http://faculty.oxy.edu/horowitz/courses/Hist221/rise_and_fall_of_the_roman_empir.htm
 - The Collapse of the Roman Empire: Military Aspects
<http://www.nipissingu.ca/departement/history/muhlberger/orb/milex.htm>
 - The Myth of Decline and Fall
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/9708/forum/essay.html>
 - Church History: The Fall of Rome
<http://www.thirdmill.org/files/english/html/ch/CH.h.Arnold.CH.16.html>
 - Why Rome Fell
<http://mars.acnet.wnec.edu/~grempe/courses/wc1/lectures/14romefell.html>

4. After students have completed their research, assign an essay (for homework) that explains why the Roman Empire fell. Encourage students to take a clear position. For example, if they think that the barbarian invasions caused the fall, that idea must be stated as the thesis and supported with documentation, and a strong conclusion should summarize the main ideas.
5. During the next class period, have students share their essays. Discuss the ideas. What reasons did they give for the fall of the Roman Empire? Was there consensus among students?
6. Conclude by applying what students learned about the fall of the Roman Empire to other societies. Do students see any parallels between what happened in the Roman Empire and any facets of our own society? Do students think their own country is experiencing a period of decline? Do students think any other societies are declining?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; produced a persuasive essay, with all the requested components; and were able to apply what they learned to other cultures, including our own.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions; produced an adequate essay, with most of the requested components; and could see some parallels between the Roman Empire and other cultures, including our own.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; produced an incomplete essay, with little or none of the requested components; and were not able to apply their findings to other cultures.

Vocabulary

city

Definition: A central meeting place where the offices of the government were located, as well as amphitheaters, temples, and markets.

Context: Many historians believe that the Romans invented the city, which they laid out in a grid and built in an orderly way.

Colosseum

Definition: A huge amphitheater in Rome where people gathered to watch recreation events.

Context: The Colosseum in Rome could seat as many as 50,000 spectators.

gladiator

Definition: Slaves, prisoners of war, or criminals trained to fight one another until someone died

Context: Watching gladiators fight was a form of entertainment, but it also foreshadowed the moral decline that contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire.

Marcus Aurelius

Definition: The ruler of Rome during a period of growing unrest, from AD 161 to 180

Context: During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Rome defended itself against the growing threat of Germanic tribes from the north.

Pax Romana

Definition: Meaning Roman peace, this period represented 200 years of peace and prosperity for the Roman Empire.

Context: Augustus established the *Pax Romana* by ruling with a firm hand, but he was fair and orderly and able to control the large empire.

Academic Standards**Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Historical Understanding— Understands the historical perspective
- World History: Era 3— Understands major global trends from 1000 BCE to 300 CE
- Language Arts: Viewing— Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - People, Places, and Environments
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the [Discoveryschool.com](http://www.discoveryschool.com) Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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