Republic Under Pressure

Trace how foreign expansion and conflicts at home weakened Roman government.

SS24.7.15e "Describe the internal and external factors that led to the eventual collapse of the Roman Republic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two pressures that began with Rome's wars or conquests, circle two problems inside Rome, and number three linked changes in the order they helped bring down the republic.

How Did the Republic Fall?

1. Imagine a farmer returning to Italy after years of fighting for Rome. His small farm may have failed while he was away. During the last two centuries BCE, Roman armies conquered lands around the Mediterranean Sea. These foreign wars brought new territory, riches, and enslaved people into Italy. Wealthy Romans bought large farms and used enslaved labor, while many small farmers struggled. Some moved to crowded Rome, where they demanded help. Expansion abroad had created problems at home, including sharp divisions between rich and poor citizens.

2. The republic was meant to share power among elected officials, the Senate, and citizen assemblies. Yet powerful senators often blocked plans to give land to poor citizens. In the 130s and 120s BCE, the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus pushed for land reforms; each died amid political violence. Later, commanders recruited soldiers who depended on them for pay and land. Soldiers could become more loyal to their general than to the republic. In 88 BCE, the general Sulla marched his army on Rome, showing how political struggles could turn into armed conflict.

3. Foreign wars also gave generals chances to build powerful armies and reputations. Julius Caesar gained fame and loyal troops while conquering Gaul. In 49 BCE, after the Senate ordered him to give up his command, Caesar crossed the Rubicon River into Italy with his army, starting a civil war. Caesar won, but senators who feared his growing power killed him in 44 BCE. More civil wars followed. By 27 BCE, Octavian, later called Augustus, held power in Rome. Overseas expansion had strengthened generals, while conflict and violence within Rome destroyed the republic's shared government.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Rome's conquests outside Italy help create conflict between rich and poor citizens at home?

2. How did disputes over land reform weaken the republic's way of settling problems?

3. Explain how foreign wars and soldiers' loyalty to generals together made the republic less secure.

4. How did Caesar's actions and the events after his death move Rome toward rule by one person?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise Rome's Senate before Caesar crosses the Rubicon. In 4 to 5 sentences, propose one response to a problem caused by foreign expansion and one response to an internal political conflict, and explain how each might protect the republic.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two pressures that began with Rome's wars or conquests, circle two problems inside Rome, and number three linked changes in the order they helped bring down the republic. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Rome's conquests outside Italy help create conflict between rich and poor citizens at home?	**Conquests brought riches and enslaved workers to Italy. Wealthy Romans bought large farms and used enslaved labor while small farmers struggled, widening the divide between rich and poor.**
2	How did disputes over land reform weaken the republic's way of settling problems?	**Senators blocked plans to give land to poor citizens, and the Gracchus brothers died amid political violence. Disputes were increasingly met with violence rather than resolved through government.**
3	Explain how foreign wars and soldiers' loyalty to generals together made the republic less secure.	**Foreign wars gave generals fame and powerful armies. Soldiers who depended on generals for pay and land could follow them against Rome, as Sulla's march on the city showed.**
4	How did Caesar's actions and the events after his death move Rome toward rule by one person?	**Caesar brought his army into Italy and started a civil war. His killing was followed by more civil wars, and by 27 BCE Octavian held power in Rome.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Set an end date for generals' commands after foreign campaigns, and require their soldiers to leave military service. This could stop victorious commanders from using armies to challenge elected leaders. Pass a law that gives struggling farmers access to land. If leaders settle land disputes without violence, citizens may trust the republic instead of turning to a general.

Accept other passage-supported cause-and-effect explanations. For Your Turn, look for one proposal addressing a consequence of expansion, one addressing a conflict within Rome, and a plausible explanation for each.