Power Across Rome

Trace the pressures that changed a republic into an empire.

SS24.7.16a "Explain Rome's shift from Republic to Empire, including economic, political, and geographic causes."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline an economic pressure, circle a political weakness, and write 1 beside a geographic challenge and 2 beside the shift in power. Use your marks to trace why Rome changed from a republic to an empire.

When Rome Grew Too Large

1 By the second century BCE, Roman armies had taken lands around the Mediterranean Sea. The Republic still relied on elected officials and a Senate based in Rome, but its territory reached far beyond Italy. Messages and armies took weeks or months to travel, making distant provinces hard to oversee. Governors and generals could build power far from the capital. Conquests also brought riches and enslaved workers to Italy. Wealthy landowners expanded large farms, while some small farmers lost land and moved to Rome seeking work.

2 These changes sharpened conflicts over money and power. Many families in Rome had little land, yet rich Romans had a strong voice in government. Reformers tried to address inequality, but political rivals sometimes used violence instead of compromise. Soldiers once supplied their own equipment, but commanders increasingly recruited men without property and promised them pay or land. A soldier might depend on his general more than on the Senate for a future farm. Generals with loyal armies could pressure elected leaders and fight one another for control.

3 Caesar led his army into Italy in 49 BCE, starting a civil war. He won and became dictator for life, alarming senators who feared one-person rule. They killed him in 44 BCE, but more civil wars followed. Caesar's adopted heir Octavian defeated Mark Antony, his last major rival, in 31 BCE. In 27 BCE, the Senate named Octavian Augustus. Elections and the Senate continued, but Augustus controlled the armies and held the greatest political power. Rome had shifted from a republic to an empire under one ruler.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Rome's growing territory make it easier for governors and generals to gain power?

2. How could the loss of farmland and generals' promises of land weaken the Senate's control of armies?

3. How did political violence and loyal armies make the Republic less stable before Caesar's victory?

4. Why was Rome an empire under Augustus even though elections and the Senate continued?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise the Senate before Caesar's civil war. In five sentences, explain how an economic pressure, a political weakness, and a geographic challenge could work together to threaten the Republic; then propose one new policy and explain how it could reduce that danger.

ANSWER KEY

Power Across Rome

GRADE 7 · SS24.7.16a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline an economic pressure, circle a political weakness, and write 1 beside a geographic challenge and 2 beside the shift in power. Use your marks to trace why Rome changed from a republic to an empire. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Rome's growing territory make it easier for governors and generals to gain power?	**Distant provinces were hard for leaders in Rome to oversee because travel took weeks or months, so governors and generals could build power far from the capital.**
2	How could the loss of farmland and generals' promises of land weaken the Senate's control of armies?	**Men without land could join the army and depend on a general's promise of a future farm. Their loyalty to that general could let him pressure the Senate.**
3	How did political violence and loyal armies make the Republic less stable before Caesar's victory?	**Rivals sometimes used violence instead of compromise, and generals with loyal armies could pressure elected leaders or fight for control.**
4	Why was Rome an empire under Augustus even though elections and the Senate continued?	**Augustus controlled the armies and held the greatest political power, so one ruler dominated despite the continued elections and Senate.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As Rome's territory spread around the sea, distant governors could gather power before the Senate could respond. Farmers who lost land might enter the army hoping a general would reward them. If soldiers backed their general and political rivals turned to violence, elected leaders could lose control. I would require the Senate to provide land grants to veterans instead of leaving those promises to generals. Then soldiers would have less reason to follow a general who challenged the Republic.

Accept other passage-supported chains that connect economic, political, and geographic pressures to the loss of republican control. The proposed policy should address at least one pressure and explain how it could reduce the danger.