

Power in the Republic

How Roman government shaped democratic principles

SS.6.W.3.10 “Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its contribution to the development of democratic principles (i.e., separation of powers, rule of law, representative government, civic duty).”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four details that show democratic principles in action. Label each detail in the margin: 1 for separation of powers, 2 for representative government, 3 for rule of law, or 4 for civic duty.

Rome Builds a Republic

- ① After Romans ended their monarchy in 509 BCE, they created a republic, a government considered a public matter. Instead of one ruler, elected officials shared power. Two consuls led the army and carried out laws, but each consul could block the other’s decision. Other magistrates handled courts, money, or public works. Officials served limited terms, so no one person was supposed to hold power for long. This division of jobs and checks helped limit abuse of power.
- ② The Senate, made up largely of wealthy former officials, advised leaders and guided important decisions. Male Roman citizens met in assemblies to vote on laws and elect many officials. These bodies did not give every person equal political voice. Women, enslaved people, and many noncitizens could not vote. Still, Romans used representatives, people chosen to act for citizens, rather than having a king make every decision. Their system influenced later ideas about representative government in many places.
- ③ Roman leaders also developed the idea that laws should be known and applied through courts. The Twelve Tables, displayed publicly, listed rules that citizens could read. Written laws did not always protect people fairly, especially poorer Romans, but they set an important principle: government officials should follow laws too. The republic depended on civic duty. Citizens voted, served in the army when required, and sometimes held public office. Romans believed participation and service helped protect their republic.

2

ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1

Describe two ways the Roman Republic limited the power of one official.

2

How did Roman assemblies and the Senate help create a representative government? Include one limit of this system.

3

Why did displaying the Twelve Tables publicly support the rule of law?

4

Name two civic duties of Roman citizens. How did these duties support the republic?

3

YOUR TURN

Your own words

Create a government plan for a new town that uses all four Roman democratic principles. In each row, give one town rule or action and explain how it protects the town's government.

PRINCIPLE	TOWN RULE OR ACTION	HOW IT PROTECTS GOVERNMENT

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline four details that show democratic principles in action. Label each detail in the margin: 1 for separation of powers, 2 for representative government, 3 for rule of law, or 4 for civic duty. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Describe two ways the Roman Republic limited the power of one official.	Two consuls shared leadership and could block each other's decisions. Officials also served limited terms.
2	How did Roman assemblies and the Senate help create a representative government? Include one limit of this system.	Assemblies of male citizens voted on laws and elected many officials, while the Senate advised leaders and guided decisions. Women, enslaved people, and many noncitizens could not vote.
3	Why did displaying the Twelve Tables publicly support the rule of law?	Citizens could read the written rules, and the laws supported the idea that officials should follow laws too.
4	Name two civic duties of Roman citizens. How did these duties support the republic?	Citizens voted, served in the army when required, or held public office. Participation and service helped protect the republic.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

PRINCIPLE	TOWN RULE OR ACTION	HOW IT PROTECTS GOVERNMENT
Separation of powers	Two elected leaders share executive power and can block each other's decisions.	One leader cannot make every decision alone.
Representative government	Residents elect council members to speak and vote for their neighborhoods.	Citizens choose people to act for them.
Rule of law	Town rules are posted publicly, and officials must obey them.	Laws are known and apply to leaders as well as residents.
Civic duty	Residents vote in elections and serve on town committees when chosen.	Participation helps the town make decisions and solve problems.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect shared or limited offices to separation of powers, elected decision makers to representation, public laws applied to officials to rule of law, and participation or service to civic duty. For the town plan, each row should match the named principle and include a reasonable explanation.