

Power in Rome

Use context clues to unlock Roman government vocabulary.

L6-8RHSS4 "Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every bold word that is immediately followed by a comma. Circle the explanation after that comma, ending at the period, to show the context clue that gives the word's meaning.

How Romans Shared Power

- ① In 509 BCE, Romans ended the rule of a king and formed a **republic**, a government in which male citizens chose leaders. At first, political power rested mainly with **patricians**, members of old, wealthy families. Most Romans were **plebeians**, people such as farmers, craftworkers, and merchants who did not belong to those families. Plebeians served in the army and paid taxes, yet they had little voice in decisions. This unequal system caused years of conflict inside Rome.
- ② To gain rights, plebeians elected officials called tribunes. A tribune could use a **veto**, or an official refusal that stopped a proposed law. This power protected plebeians when other leaders tried to pass unfair rules. Over time, plebeians also won access to public offices. Rome still had a **Senate**, a council of experienced leaders that advised officials and shaped policy. The Senate did not represent every citizen equally, but its members held major influence over Roman government.
- ③ Roman leaders feared that one person might become too powerful. During a crisis, however, they could appoint a **dictator**, a temporary leader with broad power to command the army. The appointment lasted no more than six months. In ordinary times, elected **magistrates**, public officials who carried out laws and managed city business, shared duties. These rules did not make Rome fair for everyone, but they show how Romans tried to limit the power of individual leaders.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which words in paragraph 1 tell you what **republic** means? Then state the meaning in your own words.

2 What does **plebeians** mean in this text? Use the words after the comma to support your answer.

3 What was a **veto**? How does the context clue explain what it did?

4 What does **magistrates** mean? Name one job that the context says magistrates did.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Make two glossary entries, one for **patricians** and one for **Senate**. For each entry, write the meaning in your own words and copy a short context clue from the passage in quotation marks.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every bold word that is immediately followed by a comma. Circle the explanation after that comma, ending at the period, to show the context clue that gives the word's meaning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which words in paragraph 1 tell you what republic means? Then state the meaning in your own words.	The clue is “a government in which male citizens chose leaders.” A republic is a government in which citizens choose leaders.
2	What does plebeians mean in this text? Use the words after the comma to support your answer.	Plebeians were ordinary Romans, such as farmers, craftworkers, and merchants, who did not belong to old, wealthy families.
3	What was a veto ? How does the context clue explain what it did?	A veto was an official refusal that stopped a proposed law.
4	What does magistrates mean? Name one job that the context says magistrates did.	Magistrates were public officials. They carried out laws or managed city business.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Patricians: people from old, wealthy families. Clue: “members of old, wealthy families.” Senate: a council that advised officials and helped shape policy. Clue: “a council of experienced leaders.”

Accept equivalent meanings that use the passage's context clues accurately. For the glossary entries, require both a reasonable meaning and a quoted clue for each term.