Power Over Rome

Trace how political violence and concentrated power ended the Republic.

9-12.WC.11 "Describe the fall of the Roman Republic including, but not limited to the role of Julius Caesar taking the role of Dictator for Life."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number three moments when force replaced political compromise, then underline the words that show how Caesar concentrated power.

How the Republic Fell

1. In 133 BCE, the tribune Tiberius Gracchus proposed giving public land to poor citizens. Wealthy senators opposed him, and political opponents killed him during an election. Later reforms and clashes brought more violence. At the same time, Roman generals gained soldiers' loyalty by promising land and rewards after campaigns. In 88 BCE, the general Sulla marched his army on Rome to defeat his political rivals. After winning a civil war, he ruled as dictator from 82 to 79 BCE and used deadly lists of enemies to secure power. Although Sulla eventually resigned, his actions showed that an army could settle political disputes by force.

2. Julius Caesar built wealth and a loyal army while conquering Gaul. In 49 BCE, the Senate, influenced by his rival Pompey, demanded that he give up his military command before returning to Rome. Caesar instead led his army across the Rubicon River into Italy, starting another civil war. After defeating Pompey's forces and other opponents, Caesar held extraordinary powers. In 44 BCE, he was named dictator for life, a title that removed the usual time limit on a dictator's authority. He also controlled major appointments and decisions. Some senators feared that one man's power had replaced the Republic's shared rule.

3. On March 15, 44 BCE, a group of senators assassinated Caesar, claiming they wanted to protect the Republic. His death did not restore the old balance of power. Instead, Caesar's supporters and opponents fought new civil wars, and the leaders Octavian and Mark Antony eventually became enemies. Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra's forces at Actium in 31 BCE. In 27 BCE, the Senate gave Octavian the title Augustus, and he became Rome's first emperor. Republican offices such as the Senate remained, but Augustus held the dominant military and political authority. The Republic had fallen through repeated struggles over land, armies, and power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did disputes over land and soldiers' loyalty weaken the Republic before Caesar rose?

2. How did Sulla's actions show a new way to settle political disputes?

3. How did Caesar gain power through civil war, and why did his title of dictator for life threaten the Republic?

4. Why did Caesar's assassination fail to restore the Republic?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a senator speaking in 27 BCE. Write a six-sentence speech that connects at least three developments in the passage to the Republic's fall, explains why Caesar's lifetime dictatorship mattered, and proposes one rule that might limit a commander's power.

ANSWER KEY

Power Over Rome

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number three moments when force replaced political compromise, then underline the words that show how Caesar concentrated power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did disputes over land and soldiers' loyalty weaken the Republic before Caesar rose?	**Opposition to land reform led to political killing, while promises of land and rewards drew soldiers' loyalty toward generals rather than shared government.**
2	How did Sulla's actions show a new way to settle political disputes?	**He marched his army on Rome and later used his power as dictator to eliminate enemies, showing that a general could use force against political rivals.**
3	How did Caesar gain power through civil war, and why did his title of dictator for life threaten the Republic?	**Caesar brought his army into Italy and defeated his opponents. As dictator for life, he had no usual time limit on his authority and controlled major decisions, replacing shared rule with one man's power.**
4	Why did Caesar's assassination fail to restore the Republic?	**More civil wars followed his death. Octavian eventually defeated his rivals and, as Augustus, held dominant military and political authority despite the survival of republican offices.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Fellow senators, the killing over land reform showed that political disputes could turn violent. When generals promised soldiers land and rewards, those troops could become more loyal to commanders than to the Republic. Sulla's march on Rome then showed how an army could seize control of politics. Caesar followed that path across the Rubicon and later became dictator for life, concentrating authority in one man. Killing him did not revive shared rule, since further wars allowed Augustus to dominate the state. We should forbid commanders from bringing troops into Italy and enforce time limits on emergency offices.

Accept speeches that accurately connect at least three developments, explain the significance of Caesar's lifetime dictatorship, and propose a plausible rule limiting a commander's power. The proposed rule need not appear in the passage.