From Republic to Empire

Trace the causes and consequences of Rome's change in government.

9-12.WC.12 "Describe the causes and consequences of the establishment of the Roman Empire by the Julio-Claudians, including, but not limited to the role of Augustus Caesar."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two conditions that helped end the Republic, circle two actions Augustus took to secure power, and number two consequences of imperial rule 1 and 2.

How Rome Gained an Emperor

1. In 44 BCE, senators killed Julius Caesar, hoping to defend the Roman Republic. Instead, his death set off another struggle for power. Years of expansion had brought wealth to Rome, but also sharpened inequality and made ambitious commanders with loyal armies powerful. Caesar's adopted heir, Octavian, joined Mark Antony and Lepidus to defeat Caesar's killers. Their alliance soon broke apart. Octavian portrayed Antony's partnership with Cleopatra, ruler of Egypt, as a threat to Rome. In 31 BCE, Octavian's forces defeated theirs at Actium. The victory left Octavian with control of Rome's armies and no major rival.

2. After Actium, Octavian kept power instead of restoring the Senate's former independence. In 27 BCE, the Senate granted him the name Augustus and authority over key provinces where most legions served. He also held other powers, including the power of a tribune, while presenting himself as the Republic's leading citizen rather than a king. The Senate still met, but Augustus controlled the armed forces and shaped major decisions. This arrangement helped him avoid the hated title of king while concentrating power in one person. A republic with elected magistrates had become an empire governed by an emperor.

3. Augustus used his authority to settle veterans, improve tax collection in provinces, and maintain a standing army. The end of repeated civil wars brought greater stability, though it did not give Romans back their former political voice. When Augustus died in 14 CE, his adopted son Tiberius became emperor, showing that power could pass within a ruling family. Later Julio-Claudian emperors included Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Claudius expanded Roman rule into Britain. Nero's death in 68 CE, without a secure successor, sparked new civil wars: generals and their armies fought over who would rule. The dynasty ended, but emperors remained.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Rome's expansion help create conditions that weakened the Republic?

2. Why was the victory at Actium important to Octavian's rise?

3. How did Augustus concentrate power while avoiding the title of king?

4. What do Tiberius's rise and the wars after Nero's death show about consequences of Julio-Claudian rule?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Augustus had given the Senate control of the legions in 27 BCE. In five sentences, predict two possible consequences for imperial rule and explain your reasoning with two details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

From Republic to Empire

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.12

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two conditions that helped end the Republic, circle two actions Augustus took to secure power, and number two consequences of imperial rule 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Rome's expansion help create conditions that weakened the Republic?	**Expansion increased wealth but sharpened inequality and helped ambitious commanders build loyal armies, making struggles for power more likely.**
2	Why was the victory at Actium important to Octavian's rise?	**It defeated Antony and Cleopatra, leaving Octavian in control of Rome's armies with no major rival.**
3	How did Augustus concentrate power while avoiding the title of king?	**He presented himself as a leading citizen and kept the Senate meeting, but held authority over provinces with most legions and shaped major decisions.**
4	What do Tiberius's rise and the wars after Nero's death show about consequences of Julio-Claudian rule?	**Tiberius's rise showed that imperial power could pass within a family. The wars after Nero's death showed that an unclear succession could bring back conflict between generals and their armies.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

If Augustus had given the Senate control of the legions, he might have found it harder to keep sole authority. The passage says most legions served in provinces under his authority, so losing that command would have weakened his position. Rival senators might then have competed for military backing, risking another civil war. Earlier, commanders with loyal armies had become powerful, which makes that danger plausible. With no single emperor firmly in charge, power might not have passed to Tiberius as it did.

Accept other plausible predictions if the response has five sentences, identifies two possible consequences, and supports its reasoning with two accurate details from the passage. Students should distinguish predictions from events that actually occurred.