

Rome to Feudalism

Trace why Rome weakened and how local systems offered order.

6.6a "Overexpansion, corruption, invasions, civil wars, and discord led to the fall of Rome. Feudalism developed in Western Europe in reaction to a need for order and to meet basic needs."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline five words or phrases that show why the Western Roman Empire fell. Circle three words or phrases that show how feudalism helped people find order or meet basic needs.

When Central Rule Weakened

- ① By the late Roman Empire, rulers governed lands stretching across Europe, North Africa, and western Asia. Moving soldiers and messages across such a huge area was slow and costly. Some officials used public money for themselves instead of repairing roads or paying troops. Political fights also weakened the government. Emperors were sometimes removed by force, and civil wars broke out between Roman groups. As leaders competed for power, people could not always count on laws, taxes, or the army to work fairly.
- ② At the same time, Germanic peoples and other groups crossed Roman borders. Some came seeking land or safety, while others attacked Roman territory. Invasions added pressure to an empire already struggling with money and leadership problems. In 476 C.E., a Germanic military leader removed the last western Roman emperor. The Western Roman Empire ended, but Roman traditions continued. Eastern Roman rulers governed from Constantinople, while western communities faced uncertainty and less protection.
- ③ Over later centuries, authority often became more local; feudal ties developed gradually. Local lords controlled land and made many decisions. In return for military service and loyalty, a lord might grant land called a fief to a vassal. Castles offered protection during danger. Farmers often worked on manors, where they sought food, homes, and safety. This feudal system grew because people needed order and basic needs met. The Christian Church also connected communities through shared beliefs and leaders.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did Rome's large size make it harder for rulers to govern?

2 Name two internal problems that weakened the Roman government.

3 What happened in 476 C.E., according to the passage?

4 How did feudalism help people meet needs after central Roman rule weakened? Use two details from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Imagine you live in a western European village after Roman protection has weakened. Write exactly four sentences explaining how a local lord, a land grant, and the Church could help create order or meet needs. Include one possible limit of depending on local lords.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline five words or phrases that show why the Western Roman Empire fell. Circle three words or phrases that show how feudalism helped people find order or meet basic needs. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Rome's large size make it harder for rulers to govern?	Moving soldiers and messages across the huge empire was slow and costly.
2	Name two internal problems that weakened the Roman government.	Officials misused public money, and political fights included emperors being removed by force and civil wars.
3	What happened in 476 C.E., according to the passage?	A Germanic military leader removed the last western Roman emperor, ending the Western Roman Empire.
4	How did feudalism help people meet needs after central Roman rule weakened? Use two details from the passage.	Local lords made decisions and could grant fiefs for service or loyalty. Castles offered protection, and manors provided places where farmers sought food, homes, and safety.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After raids disrupted travel, a local lord organized guards for nearby families. He gave a small farm to a warrior who promised military service. The Church brought villagers together through shared beliefs and leaders. However, people in one lord's area might receive different rules or protection than people elsewhere.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations of Rome's overexpansion, corruption, invasions, civil wars, and political discord. For the open response, accept any accurate four-sentence scenario that includes all three required supports and a reasonable limit of local rule.