Rome's Changing Reach

Trace Roman boundaries through place and time.

AWH.C.7.1 "Locate on a historical map, ancient Rome, tracing the changing boundaries of the Roman Republic and Empire from 500 BC to 500 AD and explaining how the geographical location of ancient Rome contributed to the expansion of its political..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each date, underline place names and waterways you could locate on a map, and write E beside sentences showing expansion or S beside sentences showing shrinking borders.

From River City to Empire

1. Around 500 BC, Rome was a small republic centered on a city beside the Tiber River in central Italy. The Italian peninsula reaches into the Mediterranean Sea, with the Alps across its northern edge. Rome stood inland from the Tyrrhenian Sea, yet ships could reach its river port from the coast. Hills offered defensible ground, while roads and river routes linked the city to nearby communities. By about 264 BC, Rome controlled most of the Italian peninsula. Its position near the peninsula's middle helped armies move both north and south, but conquest and alliances, not geography alone, built its power.

2. Rome then fought Carthage, a power based on the North African coast. Control of Sicily, the large island between Italy and North Africa, gave Rome a foothold on Mediterranean sea routes. By about 100 BC, the republic held territory in Iberia to the west, parts of North Africa to the south, and Greece and western Asia Minor to the east. These gains widened its borders far beyond Italy. The Mediterranean connected these lands: fleets carried troops, grain, and messages between coasts. Still, sea access did not guarantee victory. Roman armies, political decisions, and local alliances shaped each expansion.

3. In 27 BC, Augustus became Rome's first emperor, and the republic gave way to imperial rule. At its greatest extent around AD 117, the empire reached Britain in the northwest, the Rhine and Danube frontiers in northern Europe, and, briefly, Mesopotamia in the east. It also held Egypt and other North African lands. Roman control did not stay fixed. Western imperial rule ended in AD 476. By AD 500, an eastern Roman emperor still ruled lands around the eastern Mediterranean, including Greece, western Asia Minor, and Egypt, but no longer ruled Britain or most western provinces. Sea routes continued to connect this smaller empire.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Where would you place Rome on a map around 500 BC? Name two nearby features that helped connect it to other places.

2. How would you change a map shaded for about 264 BC to show the republic's territory by about 100 BC? Name at least two directions and regions.

3. On a map of the empire around AD 117, which place would mark its northwest reach, which place would mark its brief eastern reach, and which rivers would you mark along northern frontiers?

4. When changing an AD 117 map into an AD 500 map, what territory would you remove from Roman control? How could the remaining eastern lands stay connected?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence note to a mapmaker planning maps dated 500 BC, 100 BC, AD 117, and AD 500. Tell the mapmaker what to shade at each date, and explain how one feature of Rome's location helped its power expand.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.7.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each date, underline place names and waterways you could locate on a map, and write E beside sentences showing expansion or S beside sentences showing shrinking borders. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Where would you place Rome on a map around 500 BC? Name two nearby features that helped connect it to other places.	**Place Rome beside the Tiber River in central Italy. The river and nearby Tyrrhenian Sea connected it to other places.**
2	How would you change a map shaded for about 264 BC to show the republic's territory by about 100 BC? Name at least two directions and regions.	**Extend the shading west into Iberia, south into parts of North Africa, and east into Greece and western Asia Minor. Accept any two directions with matching regions.**
3	On a map of the empire around AD 117, which place would mark its northwest reach, which place would mark its brief eastern reach, and which rivers would you mark along northern frontiers?	**Mark Britain in the northwest, Mesopotamia as a brief eastern reach, and the Rhine and Danube along northern frontiers.**
4	When changing an AD 117 map into an AD 500 map, what territory would you remove from Roman control? How could the remaining eastern lands stay connected?	**Remove Britain and most western provinces. Mediterranean sea routes could still connect the remaining eastern lands.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

On the 500 BC map, shade Rome and its nearby territory beside the Tiber in central Italy. On the 100 BC map, shade most of Italy plus Roman lands in Iberia, North Africa, Greece, and western Asia Minor; Rome's access to Mediterranean routes helped move troops between these coasts. On the AD 117 map, extend the shading to Britain and, briefly, Mesopotamia, with the Rhine and Danube along northern frontiers. On the AD 500 map, remove Britain and most western provinces but keep eastern lands including Greece, western Asia Minor, and Egypt.

Accept other accurate descriptions of the boundaries at each date. The location explanation should connect a geographic feature to movement, defense, or access, rather than claim geography alone caused expansion.