Power and the Republic

How three figures shaped and tested Roman government

AWH.C.7.2 "Explain the rise of the Roman Republic and the role of historical figures in Roman history, including Brutus, Cincinnatus, and Hannibal."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by Brutus, Cincinnatus, and Hannibal. Circle a consequence for the republic linked to each action, then number the three figures in the order they appear in Roman history.

Three Tests of Roman Power

1. According to Roman tradition, in 509 BCE Romans drove out their last king, Tarquin the Proud. His family's abuse of power helped turn leading citizens against monarchy. Lucius Junius Brutus helped organize the revolt and became one of the first two consuls, officials elected to lead the new republic. Each consul could check the other, and their terms lasted one year. This system aimed to prevent one person from ruling for life. Yet the early republic did not give everyone equal power: wealthy patrician families dominated offices and the Senate, while plebeians pushed for a stronger political voice.

2. In 458 BCE, according to Roman accounts, an enemy force trapped a Roman army. The Romans appointed Cincinnatus dictator, an emergency office that granted broad authority for a limited time. He gathered troops, defeated the enemy, and then gave up the office rather than keeping its power. Whether every detail happened exactly as told is uncertain, but Romans celebrated his choice as a model of service to the republic. His story reveals a tension in Roman government: an emergency might require swift command, but a leader who refused to step aside could endanger shared rule.

3. Centuries later, the republic faced a different test from Hannibal, a Carthaginian general. In 218 BCE he crossed the Alps with his army and invaded Italy. At Cannae in 216 BCE, his forces destroyed a much larger Roman army. Yet Hannibal did not capture Rome. Roman leaders raised new armies and kept fighting, while some Italian allies remained loyal. Rome eventually attacked Carthage's territory in North Africa; Hannibal returned there and lost to a Roman army led by Scipio at Zama in 202 BCE. Victory expanded Roman power, but long wars strained farms and sharpened disputes over land and political influence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Brutus help bring about the republic, and what did the new consul system aim to prevent?

2. How did patrician control limit the change brought by the republic's founding?

3. Why did Romans treat Cincinnatus's actions as an example of service to the republic?

4. How did Hannibal's invasion both test the republic and affect it after Rome's victory?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label explaining how Brutus, Cincinnatus, and Hannibal each shaped or tested the republic. Argue which figure best reveals a tension between power and shared rule, using two details from the passage to defend your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Power and the Republic

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.7.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by Brutus, Cincinnatus, and Hannibal. Circle a consequence for the republic linked to each action, then number the three figures in the order they appear in Roman history. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Brutus help bring about the republic, and what did the new consul system aim to prevent?	**Brutus helped organize the revolt against the king and became a consul. Two consuls with one-year terms could check each other, helping prevent rule for life.**
2	How did patrician control limit the change brought by the republic's founding?	**The republic replaced the king, but wealthy patrician families still dominated offices and the Senate, while plebeians sought a stronger voice.**
3	Why did Romans treat Cincinnatus's actions as an example of service to the republic?	**He used emergency authority to defeat an enemy, then gave up the office instead of keeping its power.**
4	How did Hannibal's invasion both test the republic and affect it after Rome's victory?	**Hannibal destroyed a larger Roman army at Cannae, but Roman leaders kept raising armies and fighting. Rome's eventual victory expanded its power, while the long wars strained farms and intensified disputes over land and influence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Brutus shows that the republic began with a revolt against a king, yet wealthy patricians dominated its offices. Cincinnatus shows another danger: Romans sometimes granted one person broad emergency authority, although he gave it up after victory. Hannibal tested whether the republic could survive a major defeat at Cannae. Cincinnatus best reveals the tension between power and shared rule because his appointment concentrated authority during a crisis. His decision to step down showed that temporary command could defend Rome without becoming permanent personal rule.

Accept supported claims that identify a different figure as the strongest example of the tension. Responses should explain the roles of all three figures and use two accurate passage details to defend the choice.