

## World History Study Guide – Chapter 15 – Rome’s Decline & Legacy

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1. What are the reasons for the Roman Empire’s fall? (p. 495-496)
  - Economic problems:** destroyed farmland & lack of farm production and more-productive farm technology led to food shortages. Also, people could not pay taxes so government couldn’t pay army or buy services.
  - Military problems:** *Rome needed larger armies so it hired mercenaries (soldiers for hire). Mercenaries weren’t always loyal to Rome or as disciplined as Roman soldiers. The result was a weakened defense at Rome’s borders.*
  - Political problems:** *Rome was a huge territory so it was hard to govern. Communication was difficult and government officials were often corrupt and selfish. Romans felt let down by their government.*
  - Social problems:** Cost of education increased, so poor Romans couldn’t become educated. Distributing news across the vast empire became difficult so people grew less informed.
2. After a 49-year period and 20 emperors, **Diocletian** took power, placed troops at the borders, and kept food prices low. He no longer consulted with the Senate to make laws. He was an **absolute ruler**, one who had total power. (p.497)
3. **Constantine** was responsible for moving the Roman Empire’s capital city from Rome eastward to Byzantium. . Later, he renamed it **Constantinople** (today it is called Istanbul). (p.497)
4. Increases in **taxes** caused hardships in the Roman Empire. What was the main cause of the increases? **Paying for expensive military defense** (p. 495)
5. How did the Eastern Roman Empire differ from the Western Roman Empire? (p. 501)
  - East:** *Eastern cities were stronger than the western cities. The capital, Constantinople, was a center of trade, so the cities had more wealth. Eastern cities were larger and had better defenses. The Black Sea was a natural barrier to discourage invaders.*
  - West:** Cities in the Western Empire were smaller & less prosperous, were located farther away from trade routes that would lead to wealth and goods. They were also more prone to attack since their defenses were widely scattered and poorly paid soldiers did not want to risk their lives.
6. The Western Roman Empire collapsed because of corrupt government officials, weakened citizens, and the overall breakdown of society. But, attacks and **invasions** from outsiders also contributed. (p. 504)
7. The Byzantine Empire continued about 1,000 years after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. In the 600s, a new religion called **Islam** began. Muslim armies attacked and weakened Constantinople, this was Rome’s greatest threat. (p. 512)
8. The emperor, **Justinian**, restored control over former Eastern Roman lands. He rebuilt Constantinople’s city walls, schools, hospitals, courts, and churches. He also rewrote and improved a new law code called the **Justinian Code**. (p. 510)
9. When the Christian church split, it created the **Roman Catholic** Church and the **Eastern Orthodox** Church. Factors such as different religious practices, cultural practices, and limited contact between these two areas caused the

church to split. However, one important reason was differing views on the relationship between **church** and **state**. (p. 511-512)

10. After Constantinople fell due to attacks by **Ottoman Turks**, the **Byzantine** Empire came to an end in 1453. This was about 1,000 years after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. (p. 513)

11. Many parts of Roman culture were based on Greek cultural influences. (p. 515-516)

**Art:** **mosaics**, a picture made from tiny pieces of colored stone or other material.

**Sculpture:** **bas-relief**, sculptures of realistic portraits that were slightly raised to stand out against a flat background.

**Literature:** **epic**, a long poem about a hero's adventures  
**oratory**, the art of speaking in public

**Language:** **Latin** was the language spoken throughout Rome and across the Western Empire. It became one of several languages referred to as, **Romance** languages as many of the words in these languages come from Latin.

12. Greek influences were also found in Roman technology, architecture, and engineering. (p. 517-518)

**Architecture:** Roman builders used **arches**, **vaults**, and **domes** to improve building structures and made it possible to build taller, larger buildings.

**Aqueducts:** **Waterways** made by people to bring water to cities, public fountains, public bathhouses, and public toilets.

**Roads:** Romans were famous for the quality of their roads. They were first built so that soldiers could move quickly throughout the empire where they were needed.

**MAP SKILLS:** Become familiar with the map on page 511, "Byzantine Empire, A.D. 565"

Have an idea of:

- What geographic feature helped protect the Byzantine Empire against invaders?
- Which empire did the Byzantine Empire have the most direct contact with in A.D. 527?
- Which cities were under Byzantine control in A.D. 527? Which were not?

**ESSAY TOPICS:** You'll choose one topic. Start your response by restating the question.

1. Explain how the size of the Roman Empire was a factor in its decline. (p. 501-504)

- how its size affected its defense
- how its size affected the costs of governing it
- how its size affected communication, unity, and patriotism

2. Explain why the Byzantine Empire was able to continue while the Western Roman Empire collapsed. (p. 509-512)

- differences in government and rulers
- geographic and environmental factors
- economic factors and differences