

## AP World History Unit 2 Test Study Guide

### Key Terms, People, and Ideas:

#### PERSIA

- **Empire:** A region unified under a single government, built through the conquest of other areas
- **Darius I:** Probably the greatest Persian emperor; was a general in the army and a prince, before he acquired the throne by killing the ruler before him; followed the precedent set by Cyrus II, by ruling through **benevolent despotism**; when he conquered an area, he allowed some local administrators to staff their own local governments, established that royal inscriptions had to be posted in three languages so that more people would be able to read them, created legal codes that were specific to the customs and usage of each area, and unified his empire with a common currency and script (which means that overall, he was a pretty cool dude ☺)
- **Satrapy:** The Persian Empire was divided into local districts, called satrapies. Each satrapy was ruled by a governor, or satrap, who had to report back to the emperor.

#### GREECE

- **Polis:** A Greek city-state; each had a small, locally organized government, which was based on a single central city with enough land surrounding for farming
- **Homer:** A Greek poet, best known for his epics *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*
- **Agora:** The civic and market center of a polis, with buildings for the trade of goods, ideas, and politics
- **Oligarchy:** A government consisting of a small, powerful group of people
- **Coalition:** An alliance between multiple governments
- **Phalanxes:** Greek military formations (see [this article](#) for more info)
- **Battle of Marathon, 490 BCE:** The first battle between Athens and Persia- Darius sent a massive navy towards Athens (in response to Athens supporting other Greek city-states that Darius was trying to conquer), but the Athenians had a better, more structured militia (see “phalanxes”), more knowledge of the topography and conditions of the battle location, and support from Sparta, which ultimately led to a pretty big win for the Greeks. The Greek historian Herodotus details the conflict between Athens and Persia in his book, *The Persian Wars*. Fun fact! The 26.2 mile run is called a marathon because a Greek dude ran 26.2 miles all the way from Marathon to Athens to deliver the news of Greek victory (as soon as he gave the message, he collapsed on the spot and died).
- **Tribute:** After defeating the Persians, Athens created a small empire of its own. They conquered smaller city-states and assembled them into the Delian League. Athens mostly let the other city-states govern themselves, but they demand tribute, or payment for being in the League. (Why didn’t anyone just leave? –Athens was way more powerful, and they

forbade withdrawal. Also, if you couldn't pay, you would be attacked and honestly, that seems a lot more stressful than just providing the payment) Eventually, Sparta and its allies got really freaked out that Athens was gaining so much power, so they joined forces and engaged in the...

- **Peloponnesian War:** This is it! The big ancient Greek showdown to determine who's really the boss! Sparta, along with some of Athens' allies as well, attacked Athens to try and destroy its power. During this time, Athens became more and more scary (in the island of Melos, for example, Athens tried to get Melos to succumb to Athenian authority, but when the Melians resisted, Athens made a HUGE deal out of it by killing all the men of military age and selling all the women and children into slavery. Yikes!). These insane methods eventually turned admiration for Athens into hatred. However, Sparta (being a very militaristic state) defeated Athens with some help from the Persians (who still felt salty from their earlier loss). At this point, Greece was not unified, which left it very vulnerable to conquest. (Cue Philip of Macedonia)

Fun fact: Spartan serfs were called **helots**. They were a class who fell between slaves and citizens.
- **Alexander the Great:** The second coolest Alexander (after Hamilton, of course), this dude controlled a MASSIVE empire. He was actually from Macedonia, an area north of Greece, which the Greeks actually considered semi-barbaric. Alex's father, Philip, conquered a large area around the Mediterranean and beyond with two goals in mind: unify and bring peace to Greece, and free Greek city-states from Persian control. He was very diplomatic, but people had mixed feelings about him. Another dude, Demosthenes, tried to call Athens into battle against him, but they lost. However, poor Phil still got assassinated, and was succeeded by Alex. Alex had fought by his father's side for many years, and sought to continue his legacy. Under his political and military rule, the empire stretched from Egypt and the Mediterranean all the way to the Indus river! Unlike other emperors, he was in the middle of the action. He actively participated in military conquest, which took him all the way to India (where he wanted to go farther, but his troops mutinied, and then he got a fever and died. Some people think he was poisoned, possibly by Aristotle). He practiced a policy of benevolent despotism, just like Cyrus and Darius from Persia. Wherever he met resistance, he showed brutality, but as long as people were compliant, he was pretty chill. The Egyptians treated him like a god. His legacy is still present- he caused a dominance of Greek language and culture worldwide (for example, English has Greek roots). This diffusion of **Hellenistic** culture was a pretty big effect of Alex's empire.
- **Minoans and Mycenaeans:** These peoples made up some of the early city-states of the Aegean Sea, even before Athens. The Minoans lived on an island that was located at the crossroads of several trade routes. It had four major palace complexes, which had three functions: elaborate royal residence, religious center, and administrative headquarters for the economy; the palaces were all destroyed later. Eventually, the Mycenaeans gained

control of the Minoans. The poet Homer depicts the Mycenaeans as brave and heroic, and their kings (including the legendary Agamemnon) were pretty wealthy. Their land was divided into several small kingdoms, which each had a palace or citadel with an accompanying cemetery. The administrative center was surrounded by a giant wall and adorned gates. The Mycenaeans probably were very warlike, as evidenced by their weapons, armor, and warrior paintings. Mysteriously, all the towns and palaces were either abandoned or destroyed. Two possible theories explaining this are outside invaders and internal warfare leading to implosion. Whatever the reason, the fall of the Mycenaeans led to the “Dark Ages”, where civilization took a step backward (they even forgot how to write!), and allowed immigrants to enter from the north.

- **Athenian Democracy:** Athens instituted the first democracy, but this system definitely had its limits. First, let’s talk about its origins. **Solon** was a leader whose accomplishments include ending the hereditary aristocracy, and giving all free men the right to participate and vote in politics. Yep, way to represent all the people, Solon. However, his achievements seem to be mostly good- he also canceled all public and private debts, and abolished enslavement as payment. He also created the Council of Four Hundred, which represented the interests of the wealthy, and an assembly, which represented the commoners. Later leaders changed up this system in their own ways, but the basic idea was that citizens could participate in the government, but there were restrictions regarding who was considered a citizen.
- **The Greek Approach to Science and Philosophy:** The “Golden Age” of Athens came with the development and flourishing of arts, literature, sciences, and philosophy. The three most famous philosophers of ancient Greece are Socrates (who was forced to commit suicide for “corrupting the youth”), his student Plato, and his student Aristotle. Socrates came up with the **Socratic method**, which is learning through questioning. Plato preferred to think of ideal situations. He believed that the best government was headed by a philosopher-king who was very virtuous and wise. He also suggested that women should have the same opportunities as men, but the Greeks (being a largely misogynistic society) laughed at this idea. Aristotle focused on ethics and politics. He liked the idea of small units of government (aka city-states) and he even tutored Alex the Great (though Alex obviously didn’t agree with Aristotle too much).

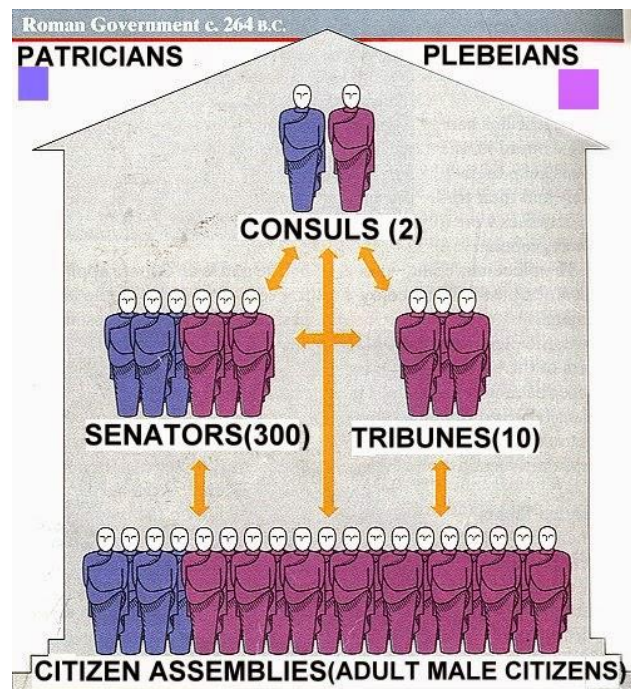
[Video on Persia and Greece](#)

[Video on Alex the Great](#)

## ROME

- **Pax Romana:** “Roman Peace” (between the disparate peoples of the empire)
- **Republic:** Rome started out under the rule of the Etruscan kings. Eventually the powerful citizens drove the Etruscans out and turned Rome into a republic (government by people and their elected representatives). Under this system, there was a rift between the social classes. The upper class made up the **patricians**, and the lower classes made up the

**plebeians.** Only the patricians were citizens, and the plebeians couldn't be military officers or participate in the government. The two classes were not allowed to intermarry. Because the patricians held the power, they created all kinds of laws that made plebeian life suck even more. For example, after 30 days, debtors could be arrested and chained, and after 60 days, sold into slavery or even killed. There were many conflicts between these two groups, and while the patricians had money and political power, the plebeians relied on strength and numbers. The best way the plebeians could annoy the patricians was by boycotting the military, which threatened the city. Eventually, the patricians agreed to give up some of their status and power, which led to the creation of the **Senate** system. This was a political hierarchy, which is kind of confusing in the textbook, but here is a diagram showing the basic structure:

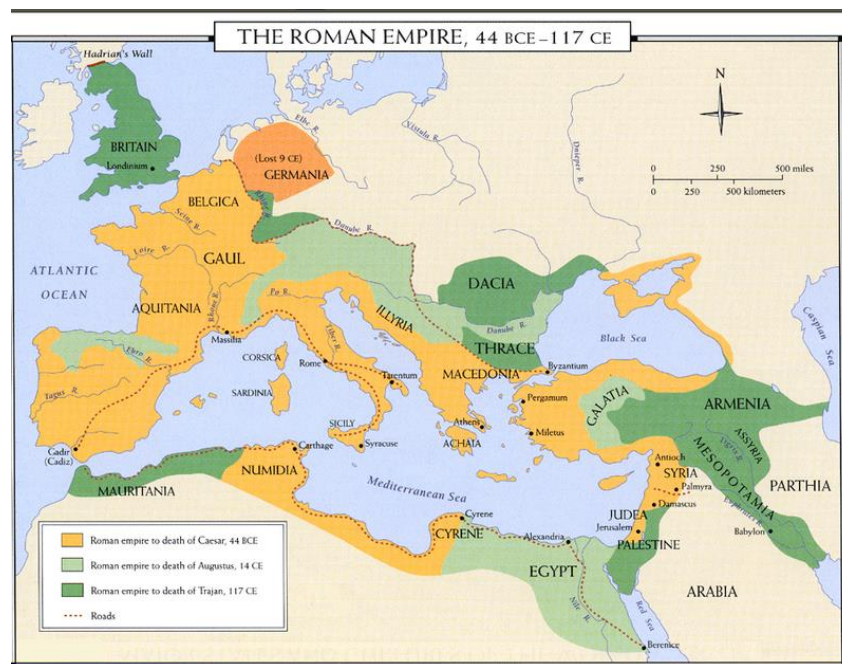


The Senate could even appoint a dictator who had total power for six months, in an emergency situation.

- **Carthage:** Carthage was another state, which controlled the northern African coast and western Mediterranean. It developed as a major trade outpost, and established ports and cities in Italy, which threatened the Romans (particularly their economic power). This growing tension eventually bubbled out in the **Punic Wars**. **Hannibal** was a famous Carthaginian military leader. He led a bunch of elephants! I wish I could have an elephant. Hannibal was a formidable enemy, but the Romans defeated Carthage in all three Punic Wars. Rome was so petty, in fact, that they obliterated Carthage, sold the survivors into slavery, and sowed salt into the soil so it would never be fertile (But seriously, the salt thing was a pretty smart political move). Their victory against Carthage gave the Romans the confidence they needed to expand farther. They began to seize land

wherever they saw weakness. For example, when Alex the Great died, his empire split into three kingdoms: Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt. The Romans took advantage of this and conquered each of these areas separately over several years. They practiced a policy of “New Wisdom”, which basically meant they destroyed anyone who refused to be conquered.

- Julius Caesar:** By the time of Julius Caesar, the republic system was pretty much dead, and the generals started to ruin things by competing among themselves for power, which led to civil war. Julius was a general in the Roman military, and was born to a patrician family. He slowly worked his way up the power pyramid, first becoming a magistrate, then the pontifex maximus (chief priest), then the praetor. He really came to power when he formed a triumvirate with two other guys, who really aren't too important. The triumvirate broke when one of the other guys died, after which Caesar took over. During his dictatorship, Caesar wasn't even a bad leader (he revised the Roman calendar, reorganized Rome's city government, and extended citizenship to many conquered peoples), but some senators got jealous and afraid, so they stabbed him to death. Poor Julius! Before he was killed, he did choose his nephew Octavian to be his heir, and maaaaan, the people loved him.



- Augustus Caesar:** Well, Octavian was pretty good overall (he ruled for 56 years!) but he did have his low moments. For one, he murdered 300 senators and 2000 knights as revenge for Julius' death. Also, when his rival Antony married Octavius' sister Octavia, but then cheated on her with Cleopatra, Octavian was pretty freaking mad, and went over there to defeat Antony and Cleopatra, seize the Egyptian treasury, and get super rich. However, under Octavian's rule, Rome saw mostly unification and peace. The Senate bestowed upon him several honors, including the title “Augustus”. Gus instituted an



imperial monarchy in Rome, which literally just means he started an official empire, with a really powerful emperor at its head. He achieved many things, and his reign saw the “Golden Age” of Rome for arts and literature (some of which was stolen from the Greeks!) During his age, there seemed to be a link between a well-ordered family and a well-ordered empire, as evidenced by the conservative policies regarding family life. Women definitely had more rights in Rome than in Greece, for one. As for the military, Gus kept occupational armies, where soldiers were trained both as fighters and as builders- they had to build their own support systems on the field. New towns grew from these military camps. Since the Roman empire was so huge, there were a lot of new trade opportunities, and luxury goods were brought in from as far as China and India. Both sides of the trade hugely benefited. Also, emperor and ancestral worship was encouraged. Upon Gus’ death, he was celebrated as a god. The Romans had adopted the Greek gods, but several other religions were also practiced within the empire. Ultimately, his empire began to decline as generals requested and received more power from Gus. His biggest problem was overextension, which made the empire pretty vulnerable to barbarian attacks.

- Religious Conflict:** While the Roman empire did have religious freedom for the most part, the Romans didn’t tolerate people who challenged their authority, which means that anyone who wouldn’t worship the emperor was kicked out. This was the reason for Rome’s problems with the Jews- since the Jews were monotheistic, with a “fierce ethnic nationalism”, they couldn’t worship the Roman emperor, which led to fighting, not only between the Romans and the Jews, but among the Jewish people themselves. The repercussions of this intolerance are unfortunately still present today, which goes to show how influential the Roman empire was. As for the Christians, the Romans didn’t like them too much either, mostly for the same reasons as the Jewish people. However, Christianity was attractive to the poor because it spoke of salvation; it also offered more freedom for women and incorporated the sophistication of Greek philosophy. The emperor **Constantine** promoted Christianity, and it eventually became the official state religion. Constantine did another pretty huge thing too. By the time of his rule, the Roman empire was ENORMOUS. It was becoming way too much to be governed from the capital city of Rome, so Constantine established another capital, **Constantinople**, in modern-day Turkey (it later became Istanbul, but more on that in another unit). When the Roman empire finally **FELL IN 476 CE**, the empire split into two halves and the eastern half (called the Byzantine Empire, but more on that in another unit) survived for almost another thousand years. It was primarily a Christian empire.
- Bread and Circuses:** As the empire expanded, the plebeian population in Rome increased. Eventually, they got to the point where there were way, way too many idle peasants just being a waste of space, so the government decided to employ Plan 476-CE (which isn’t actually a thing), “bread and circuses.” They kept people occupied by giving them free bread and entertainment. I, for one, would love free bread and entertainment.

However, it wasn't entertainment that I would enjoy, sadly. The Romans had built massive amphitheaters and coliseums, where they put on gladiator matches in particular. Very gory! While this policy kept the people compliant, it didn't really solve the problems of unemployment and lack of dignity.

- **Slavery:** The Romans were hugely dependent on slave use. As they won more and more wars, they captured more and more slaves. Slaves were super important to the empire, as they were used for labor on the fields and in homes, entertainment (they were trained to be gladiators) and public works building. However, just because slaves were important doesn't mean they were treated as such. They weren't very happy at all, and they had a tendency to be disloyal. Many slaves ran away to join foreign armies. Many other slaves revolted, which caused a pretty huge disruption. The Roman government was so mad that they killed 100,000 slaves and crucified 6,000 more along the roads leading into Rome, to serve as a warning to potential rebels.
- **Roman Engineering:** Despite their many faults, the Romans were engineering geniuses. They built massive structures, many of which have lasted until today. These include aqueducts (these totally remind me of the mail system in Omashu), which channeled water from the mountain streams into the cities; huge amphitheaters and coliseums; and bath houses, which even had hot and cold water (this was actually evidence of social stratification as well).



- **Fall of the Roman Empire:** Rome's biggest problem was overextension, which led to vulnerability to barbarian attacks. The empire was just too big to handle. The biggest barbarian problem came from the steppe nomads, who the Romans called Huns (these were the same guys as the Xiongnu in China and the Hunas in India). Another really big problem that came from barbarians was that the battles were pretty expensive and bankrupted the empire. They also shifted Roman authority from the central government to distant battlefields (basically, they weakened the government). These factors all contributed to the misery of the inhabitants, who by this point were very alien to one

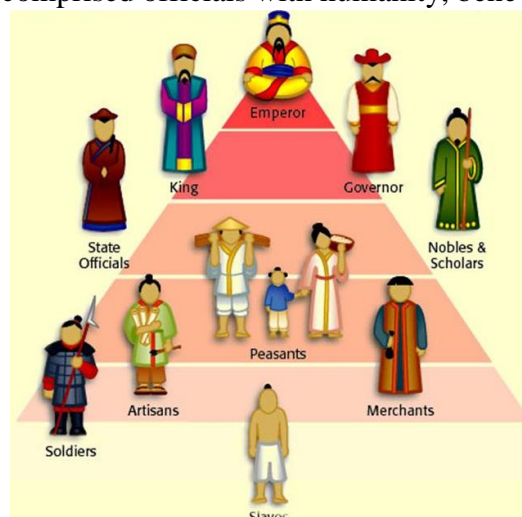
another. The decline of the empire happened over the course of many years, but we recognize the official end of the empire as **476 CE**.

### [Video on Rome](#)

## CHINA

- **Qin Dynasty:** Following the fall of the Zhou dynasty (that's right, remember those guys?), the Chinese states were plunged into a period of war called, you guessed it, the Warring States Period. This period ended when the Qin dynasty took over. Their big important emperor guy was **Shi Huangdi**. Under his rule, the empire built enormous public works projects, including the Great Wall of China, and Shi Huangdi's own massive palace. Some of the key features of his empire include its bureaucracy, in which people were chosen for offices based on ability, rather than family ties; and unification by standardization of weights, measures, coin values, cart axle and road sizes, and most importantly, a written form of the Chinese language. This unification has helped China stay mostly together even until now. The Qin also followed **legalist** principles, which meant they believed that the best way to rule was through strict laws and enforcement, with rewards and severe punishments. When Shi Huangdi died, the dynasty fell as members of the court fought over the succession. This allowed room for our very favorite Han dynasty to step in.
- **Mandate of Heaven:** Hopefully you remember this from the last era! The Mandate of Heaven was the idea that an emperor's right to rule was based on the will of the gods, and he could continue to rule if he was wise and benevolent. If he was a bad leader, then it was the right of the people to overthrow him, the gods would revoke the Mandate, and someone else would take over. The Chinese mostly determined this by natural disasters. The Mandate of Heaven was the basis for the rise and fall of Chinese dynasties.
- **Han Dynasty:** After the fall of the Qin, a dude named Liu Bang gained control of the empire. He continued the administrative bureaucracy of the Qin, but added his own twist. Although **Confucianism** was developed during the Qin, the Han liked it much better. This favor is reflected in their legal system- Liu Bang appointed educated men with Confucian principles. The philosopher Confucius idealized these principles- he believed the best government comprised officials with humanity, benevolence, virtue, and culture.

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Confucianism also dictated women's roles- they had to be self-sacrificing and serving, especially towards males in their lives, such as their husbands, fathers, or brothers. Emperor Wudi eventually made Confucianism the official state religion.

The Han government, despite these ideals, was still militaristic. They were constantly battling the Xiongnu and other tribes at the borders, but finally they welcomed many of these peoples and assimilated them into the Chinese culture. They used a tributary system, which means that they mostly left neighboring groups as long as they acknowledged Han dominance and offered them gifts every once in a while. As for their economy, the Han had very advanced metallurgy compared to other early empires, and even had a trade route to Rome. One reason for the fall of the Han was the **Yellow Turban Rebellion** and other peasant revolts, which weakened and exploited the government. Check out [this link](#) for more information. Another reason for their decline was the combination of outside attacks and the division within the court. The last Han emperor stepped down in **220 CE**.

[Video on China](#)

## INDIA

- **Origins:** We already know the Harappans were probably the first civilization in India, but we also know that they were not the ancestors of modern Indians. Those would be the Aryan immigrants, who were probably from central Asia (NOT THE HITLER ARYANS). These people had a BUNCH of writings from which historians can learn about their lifestyles. These were primarily Hindu religious texts, including the four **Vedas**, which are religious reflections, and the epics the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These both are very, very long stories, so you can check out [this link](#) to learn more about them.
- **Establishment of States:** The Aryans built their civilization in groups called **janapadas**, which were large political district. Each janapada was autonomous, but some were dominant over others. Eventually these big fish developed into brief but influential empires.
- **Mauryan Empire:** The founder of the empire, Chandragupta Maurya, possibly had a vision of an India-wide empire when he met Alex the Great. He ended up conquering most of the northern India subcontinent. His grandson, **Asoka**, is more interesting. He expanded the empire a lot farther, killed a bunch of people, and then looked in horror at what he'd done. He thought to himself, "Dude, what have you even done? You gotta do something to repent... oh, I know! Become a Buddhist!" and so he converted himself and his empire to Buddhism, but the religion pretty much faded away in India after his death, although it was very popular in China and other countries.

The Mauryan government followed the Artha-sastra, a manual of politics and economics written by a member of the court. The book details a cutthroat view of interstate competition; the most important idea was the “**law of the fish**”, which said that bigger states should swallow smaller states. They also used an extensive network of spies. The government regulated domestic life, and their main function was to provide a stable setting for people to seek the four main goals in life: wealth, sensual pleasure, fulfillment of social and religious duties, and release from earthly existence. They enforced gender behaviors- men got to control and protect women, and women got to run the household (according to the man, of course) and be available for the man’s pleasure. These (incredibly stupid) gender ideals have carried over even to today, and it’s shocking and terrible to see how women are treated in some parts of the world (sorry for the mini-rant). Another societal behavior that still exists is the caste system. Each person has a social, economic, and ritual position that is inherited at birth, remains for life, cannot change, and give unequal status under law. However, people don’t actually care too much about caste anymore, unless they’re super old school. Back then, it was the responsibility of the state to enforce these caste distinctions (to learn more about the caste system, [click here](#)).

- **Gupta Empire:** The Mauryan empire declined after Asoka died, allowing the Gupta empire to rise. They expanded even farther than the Mauryas, but they saw an era of peace. Their government used **indirect rule**, meaning that after military victories, they allowed independent governing but demanded tribute. The Gupta empire also saw a “Golden Age” of learning- there was a resurgence of **Sanskrit** literature and Hindu philosophy. The Sanskrit language became formal and standardized, with a fixed and systematic grammar. During these two empires, despite regional diversity, the people were culturally unified, primarily through the use of the same language and the dominance of Hinduism.
- **Huna Invasions:** Huna invaders came into India through the northwest mountain passage, and overthrew the Guptas. They eventually came to control much of north and central India, and had a reputation for cruelty. Although they were defeated by Turkic and Persian forces, they left behind considerable long-term effects in India. They caused a resurgence of regional independence rather than imperial rule, ruined the Buddhist monasteries, and dimmed northern urban culture. Their invasion led to major distinctions between northern and southern India, notably in the origin of their languages.

[Video on India](#)