Jessica and her friends planned a trip to Europe in the summer. They decided to visit several countries, including France, Italy, and Spain. Jessica had always been interested in European history and culture, and she was excited to explore the ancient ruins and museums they planned to visit. The group had carefully planned their itinerary, including flights, accommodations, and activities. They looked forward to immersing themselves in the rich heritage of Europe and creating unforgettable memories.
The Roman Empire Divides

Instruct

Introduce: Vocabulary Builder

Have students locate the Vocabulary Builder term in the text and look up its definition. Ask students to explain how loss of prestige might affect an emperor’s ability to govern or control his armies.

Teach

Have students identify the political and economic problems the emperors faced after the Pax Romana ended. Then ask Why are political instability and frequent, violent changes in leadership a serious problem for a government? (They lead to lack of continuity and frequent changes in policies, weaken rule of law, decrease respect for and trust in government, make citizens fearful and uncertain, make long-term economic or social planning impossible, damage trade, and make businesses reluctant to invest.) How did overcultivation of land and the empire’s economic problems affect the status of small farmers? (The burden of high taxes led small farms to fail, forcing farmers to work on large estates for landowners. Farmers lost independence and the freedom to leave the land.)

Answers

Instability hurt the economy, making trade difficult or dangerous; it caused disruptions and/or inconsistencies in economic policy and possibly difficulties in imposing and collecting taxes.

Emperor Diocletian Shares Power

In 284, the emperor Diocletian (dy uh KLEE shun) set out to restore order. To better handle the challenges of governing the huge empire, he divided it into two parts. He kept control of the wealthier eastern part for himself and appointed a co-emperor, Maximian, to rule the western provinces.

Diocletian also took steps to end the empire’s economic decay. To slow inflation, or the rapid rise of prices, he fixed the prices of many goods and services. Other laws forced farmers to remain on the land. In cities, some were required to follow their fathers’ occupations. These rules were meant to ensure steady production of food and other goods.

Emperor Constantine Makes Further Reforms

In 312, the talented general Constantine joined the throne. As emperor, Constantine continued Diocletian’s reforms. In addition, he took two steps that changed the course of European history. First, as you have read, Constantine granted toleration to Christians. Second, he established a new capital at the centuries-old city of Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople. With this “New Rome,” Constantine made the eastern empire the center of power.

Improvements Prove Temporary

The reforms of Diocletian and Constantine had mixed results. They revived the economy, and by increasing the power of government, they helped hold the empire together for another century. Still, the reforms failed to stop the long-term decline. In the end, internal problems combined with attacks from outside to bring the empire down.

Checkpoint: How do you think Rome’s unstable government affected the economy?
Invaders Threaten the Roman Empire

For centuries, Rome had faced attacks from the Germanic peoples who lived east of the Rhine and north of the Danube rivers. When Rome was powerful, the legions on the frontiers were successful in holding back the invaders. Some of the Germanic peoples who lived along the borders learned Roman ways and became allies of the Romans.

Migrating Nomads: Attack.

As early as 200, wars in East Asia set off a chain of events that would eventually overwhelm Rome, thousands of miles to the east. Those wars sent a nomadic people, the Huns, migrating from central Asia toward eastern Europe, which they reached by 370.

Those skilled riders fought fierce battles to dislodge the Germanic peoples in their path. The Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and other Germanic peoples crossed into Roman territory seeking safety.

With the empire in decline, Roman legions were hard pressed to halt the invaders. Under pressure from attacks, the Roman empire surrendered first Britain, then France and Spain. It was only a matter of time before foreign invaders marched into Italy and took over Rome itself.

Rome Is Sacked

In 378, when a Roman army tried to turn back the Visigoths at Adrianople, it suffered a stunning defeat. Roman power was fading. New waves of invaders were soon hammering at Rome’s borders, especially in the west. In 410, the Visigoth general Alaric overran Italy and plundered the city of Rome. Meanwhile, a Germanic people called the Vandals moved through Gaul and Spain into North Africa. Gradually, Germanic groups occupied more and more of the western Roman empire.

Religious Reforms

Before Constantine came to power, many Roman emperors had persecuted Christians, arresting or executing them. Diocletian had been among the most brutal persecutors. This painting shows the Christian martyr Lucy being burned under his reign (an ordeal she is said to have survived).

Whether Constantine (above) fueled Christianity’s growth or its growth fueled his acceptance is not known. What is clear is that in the 300s, Christianity was thriving in the empire. It would underlie social and cultural developments for centuries onward.

Thinking Critically

1. Make Comparisons

Compare the short-term and long-term effects of Diocletian’s division of the empire.

2. Synthesize Information

How do you think the acceptance of Christianity changed life in the empire?

Link to Geography

Constantinople

Constantine made a wise choice in the location of his new capital. The city is located on a peninsula where Europe and Asia meet, making it an ideal port for trade between east and west. The Bosphorus channel enabled shipping to ports on both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The city has had many names. Its first was Byzantium, named according to legend after a Greek leader who conquered the area and built a city there about 657 B.C. Almost a millennium later in A.D. 330, a Roman emperor changed its name to Augusta Antonina after his son. This name lasted just over a century until Constantine renamed it Constantinople. In 1300, the city officially took its modern name, Istanbul.

Quick Activity

Divide students into small groups. Have each group make a list of the problems the empire faced and the effects of each. Then have them pick the problem they consider to be most serious, assess Emperor Diocletian or Constantine’s efforts to solve this problem, and brainstorm alternative solutions. Use the Numbered Heads strategy (TE, p. T23) to have each group report its findings to the class.

Independent Practice

As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure they have listed the social, political, and economic problems they have read about so far. For a completed version of the chart, see Note Taking Transparencies, 71.

Monitor Progress

As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure they have listed the social, political, and economic problems they have read about so far. For a completed version of the chart, see Note Taking Transparencies, 71.
Instruct

■ Introduce In the previous subsection students looked at internal threats to the stability of the empire. Have students speculate about why Rome would be more vulnerable to foreign attack than it had been during the Pax Romana.

■ Teach Ask Why did Rome's internal problems make it harder to stop the Huns and other invaders? (Division of the empire, economic decline, power struggles among rival generals, and political instability all made the army less effective.) How were military and social problems related? (Decline in such values as patriotism and devotion to duty made the hiring of mercenaries necessary.) Why are the developments that ended the Roman empire more correctly called a decline than a fall? (They were gradual rather than sudden, and the Roman empire did not disappear completely.)

■ Quick Activity Divide students into four groups. Assign each group either military, political, economic, or social problems. Have group members explain how those problems contributed to Rome's decline.

Independent Practice

Have students read Comparing Viewpoints on this page and discuss the explanations given for the empire's decline.

Monitor Progress

■ Check to make sure that students have correctly filled in their chart with military, social, political, and economic causes.

■ Check Reading and Note Taking Study Guide entries for student understanding.

Answers

The Huns ravaged large areas of the Roman empire and left Italy open to attack.

Comparing Viewpoints Gibbon is surprised that the empire lasted as long as it did while Brown states that the empire actually endured longer than its supposed date of collapse.

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chosen as emperor. Perhaps most important, dividing the empire at a time when it was under attack may have weakened it beyond repair. The riper eastern Roman empire did little to help the west.

Economic Weakness: Economic problems were widespread in the empire. Heavier and heavier taxes were required to support the vast government bureaucracy and huge military establishment. At the same time, reliance on slave labor discouraged Romans from exploring new technology. The wealth of the empire dwindled as farmers abandoned their land and the middle classes sank into poverty. Some scholars have suggested that climate change was yet another reason for reduced agricultural productivity. In addition, the population itself declined as war and epidemic disease swept the empire.

Social Decay: For centuries, worried Romans pointed to the decline in values such as patriotism, discipline, and devotion to duty on which the empire was built. The need to replace citizen-soldiers with mercenaries testified to the decline of patriotism. The upper class, which had once provided leaders, devoted itself to luxury and pleasure. Besides being costly, providing “bread and circuses” may have undermined the self-reliance of the masses.

Did Rome Fall? Although we talk of the “fall” of Rome, the Roman empire did not disappear from the map in 476. An empire still ruled the eastern Roman empire, which continued to exist for another 1,000 years under the name of the Byzantine empire.

The phrase “the fall of Rome” is, in fact, shorthand for a long, slow change from one way of life to another. Roman civilization survived the events of 476 in Italy, people continued to live much as they had before, though under new rulers. Many still spoke Latin and obeyed Roman laws.

Over the following centuries, however, Germanic customs and languages replaced much of Roman culture. Old Roman cities crumbled, and Roman roads disappeared. Still, the Christian Church preserved elements of Roman civilization. In later chapters, you will read how Roman and Christian traditions gave rise to medieval civilization in western Europe.

Checkpoint: What social problems contributed to the decline of the Roman empire?

Terms, People, and Places
1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking
2. Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes. Use your completed chart to answer the Focus Question: How did military, political, social, and economic factors combine to cause the fall of the western Roman empire?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking
3. Summarize: Describe the crisis that afflicted the Roman empire after the Pax Romana ended. From diocletian to diocletian try to resolve the crisis?
4. Express Problems Clearly: How did the successors of invaders such as the Visigoths reveal the failing power of the Roman empire?
5. Identify Central Issues: What features of the western Roman empire survived after the year 476?

Writing About History
Quick Write: Write a Conclusion
Compare the various factors that led to the “fall” of Rome. Write a conclusion paragraph for an essay explaining which factors you think played the greatest role.

Vocabulary Builder
prestige: the power to impress or influence because of success or wealth

Section 5 Assessment
1. Sentences should reflect an understanding of each term, person, or place.
2. The Romans were unable to defend against foreign invasion because of the weakness of their armies and political rivalries among commanders. Also, heavy taxes needed to finance the mercenary army hurt the economy, as did reliance on slave labor. Decline in moral values reduced the number of capable people willing to accept positions in public life.
3. Crisis caused by political violence and instability; diocletian divided the empire to make governing easier.
4. showed how weak the Roman army was
5. Roman culture, laws, and language survived.

Assess and Reteach
Assess Progress
● Have students complete the Section Assessment.
● Administer the Section Quiz.

Reteach
If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary in the chapter.

Answer
Decline in such values as patriotism, discipline, and devotion to duty resulted in fewer citizen-soldiers and more reliance on mercenaries as well as fewer members of the upper class willing to assume leadership positions in public life.

Color Transparency: Decline of Rome. Ask students to review the reasons that Rome declined. Then have them conduct a debate as to which factor was most significant in causing the decline.

Color Transparencies, 30

Writing About History
Student responses should give reasons for identifying particular factors as having decisive roles in the fall of Rome.

For additional assessment, have students access Progress Monitoring Online at Web Code naa-0551.