



The Roman Republic

Name _____

SS1 SS2 SS3 Date _____

Read each short article and follow the directions afterward.

SPQR - The *Senate* & the *People* of Rome

If you were walking down the streets of Rome during the republic era, you would see the letters SPQR everywhere. In fact, you can still see them carved in buildings in Rome and on ancient coins.

The letters SPQR stood for (in Latin) *Senatus Populus Que Romanusa* - in English that translates to “the Senate and the People of Rome.” After defeating Tarquin, the last Roman king, the people started a new type of government, a republic. A republic is a type of government whereby people elect officials to represent them in government. This form of government was VERY unusual at the time. Most nations were ruled by kings, powerful oligarchies or military dictators. Romans knew they were doing something special.

As a publicity campaign, and as propaganda, the new senate had the letters SPQR chiseled, branded, or stamped on everything that they controlled. Public buildings, furniture, sidewalks, documents, new coins, and even park benches got the letters SPQR added to them.

The people of Rome were proud of their new government, and were reminded every time that they saw SPQR that they were a part of the Roman Republic, and no longer ruled by a king.



1. Underline a passage from the text that tells what SPQR means in Latin.
2. Double underline a passage from the text that tells what SPQR means in English.
3. Circle a passage that tells why the phrase was so important to the Roman citizens.
4. Place an asterisk * over the word that tells what type of government the Romans had.
5. Place Xs over at least five different items that might have had SPQR marked upon them.
6. Draw a squiggly line under the passage that gives the name of the last king of Rome.

Think back to our “Forms of Government” quiz. Use that information (from your memory!) to match the following forms of government to their definitions. (Place the correct letter on the blank.):

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| 7. | republic |
| 8. | monarchy |
| 9. | theocracy |
| 10. | oligarchy |
| 11. | direct democracy |
| 12. | dictatorship |

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | a church or religious leaders are in charge |
| b. | the individual people vote on every decision |
| c. | a single leader who has taken power through force |
| d. | a king or queen inherits the power to rule |
| e. | a small group of people are in charge, just because of who they are |
| f. | citizens choose other citizens to make decisions for them |

Roman Legions

The ancient Romans loved pomp and spectacle (putting on a good show). The Roman army provided plenty opportunities to show off. Each legion (basic military unit, kind of like a “division” in our modern army) had its own special banner, its own name, and its own number. Within each legion, there were smaller groups of about 80-100 men called centuries (remember the Latin root “cent” means 100). Centuries also had a banner. The legion also had trumpet players, drummers, and other noisemakers, so a Roman legion on the march was certainly spectacular. All this showy display gave the soldiers pride and also intimidated their enemies.

When a legion moved camp, they would totally break apart the old camp and march away. When they stopped for the night, they would build a new camp, complete with walls, towers, (of course, banners) and even roads.

Their armor was also spectacular. Although, in spite of what you might have seen in the movies, most Roman armor probably did not shine. Some armor was made of leather, with metal on the inside. The uniform worn by a legionary (regular foot soldier) included a rectangular shield, a short sword, a dagger, jacket, belt, helmet, kilt, shirt, and sandals. The legionary wore special sandals with hob-nails (small nails in the sole of shoes that make the shoes more durable and give better traction), which were designed to make a loud noise and even create sparks on rocky ground. A new legionary was issued these items.

Most legionaries were from the plebian class. Officers were from the patrician class and bought their own armor and weapons. If an officer wanted a horse, that officer had to provide and care for a horse himself. (Although he probably had a slave with him to help with these manual labor tasks.) Each legionary served for a minimum of 25 years before he could retire. When a legionary retired, he was given land in the provinces and a small pension. This gave Roman cities retired but well-trained military men who could help to protect cities and villages all over the empire.

The Roman legion was very organized, very successful, and very flashy. Its reputation as an invincible fighting organization was so great that sometimes, when they moved into a new region, the people gave up without a fight.

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1. Place an asterisk * over the term the **Romans** used for a **foot soldier**.
 2. Place **Xs** over at least five different items that were issued to a foot soldier.
 3. Circle the passages that tell why how many men were in a **legion** and how many were in a **century**.
 4. Underline a passage that tells the **purposes** that showy displays and ceremonies served.
 5. Double underline a passage that describes a **requirement** for retirement from the army.
 6. Draw a squiggly line under the passage that tells the **benefits** given to a soldier in retirement.