

Welcome!

Grade 3, Unit 4 Ancient Rome

Dear Family Member,

In this unit, students will be introduced to an ancient civilization whose contributions can be seen in many areas of our lives today: **ancient Rome**.

What's the story?

Students will explore the **culture** of ancient Rome, including **religion**, **food**, **education**, **social class** structure, and entertainment. Students will learn about Roman geography, history, major leaders, and monumental battles. They will also study the **rise and decline** of the Roman Empire.

What will my student learn?

In the first part of the unit, students will learn about the origins of the ancient Roman civilization. This will include study of the polytheistic religious beliefs of early Rome and their similarities and differences from those of the ancient Greeks. Students will read nonfiction and fiction texts, including the legend "**The Sword of Damocles**".

The second part of the unit is focused on Rome at its ancient peak. Students will learn about the reign of **Julius Caesar** and **Augustus Caesar**. Students will learn about the structure of the Roman government and how that structure has been used by modern governments today.

The last part of the unit is focused on Rome's decline into two separate empires and its transition to **Christianity**. Students will learn about early Christian beliefs and hear how the Roman road system was a catalyst for the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. Students will learn about many factors that led to the empire's decline, and students will study the reigns of **Constantine the Great** and **Justinian**.

Students will be introduced to a **writing portfolio**, which they will reference as they collaborate, share ideas, and give feedback on their writing. They will also focus on writing an **opinion piece** that will be completed through a sequence of lessons ending in writing their own opinion essay on the unit assessment.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. You learned about the word *ruins* in this unit. What are ruins?
Follow up: Can you use the word ruins in a sentence that relates to what you have been studying? What part of speech is *ruins*?
2. What made Rome a civilization?
Follow up: Why do you think civilizations were created along the banks of a river?
3. How was daily life different for plebeians and patricians in Roman society?
Follow up: Can you provide some specific examples from the Read-Alouds?
4. Tell me about Augustus Caesar.
Follow up: Can you give me three facts about him?
5. What were some of the factors that led to the decline of the Roman Empire?
Follow up: How did the reign of Justinian bring about the "Second Rome"?