Lesson Plan: Ancient Rome

Subject: World History

Grade: 6

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:

SS.6.W.3.8 Determine the impact of significant figures associated with ancient Rome.

SS.6.W.3.9 Explain the impact of the Punic Wars on the development of the Roman Empire.

SS.6.W.3.10 Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its contribution to the development of democratic principles (separation of powers, rule of law, representative government, civic duty).

SS.6.W.3.11 Explain the transition from Roman Republic to empire and Imperial Rome, and compare Roman life and culture under each one.

SS.6.W.3.12 Explain the causes for the growth and longevity of the Roman Empire.

SS.6.W.3.14 Describe the key achievements and contributions of Roman civilization.

SS.6.W.3.15 Explain the reasons for the gradual decline of the Western Roman Empire after the Pax Romana.


Overview:

The Roman Empire is one of the greatest achievements accomplished by any ancient civilization; one can even say it was a civilization that was beyond its own time in government structure, art/architecture, entertainment, and military sophistication just to name a few facets of its power. It began around 500 BCE as the Roman Republic and would survive for about 2,000 years. The Empire went through various phases and peaked during the second century. It controlled over 2.5 million square miles of land and about 100 million people or half of the world’s population. Rome ceased to be an Empire in 476 CE when the Western Roman Empire fell to Germanic invaders. But much of the influence of Roman culture would remain for another 1,000 years in the form of the Byzantine Empire.

The Roman Empire, many will argue, has inspired many of the institutions that we have today, thus students should have a fundamental understanding of its achievements and lasting legacy, specifically in governmental and social institutions. This Unit of study will
therefore seek to examine and understand these issues, so students are able to understand just how the Romans have influenced them and developed into a unique society.

**Essential Questions**

1. How did the Etruscans impact the development of Roman Civilization?
2. How did the Roman Republic gain control of the lands of the Mediterranean?
3. What was the significance of the Twelve Tables and the Law of Nations?
4. How did elements of Greek culture influence the Romans?
5. What role did Christianity play within and around the Roman Empire?
6. What was the importance of the Senate and other assembles to the Roman Republic?
7. In what ways did the Greeks influence the Romans?
8. How did Julius Caesar gain control of the Roman Government?
9. Why did it take so long for the Roman State to accept Christianity?
10. What led to the collapse of the Roman Empire?

**Key Vocabulary**


**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- Explain how Rome gained control of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea
- Tell why the Roman Republic developed and fell
- Describe the chief political and economic features of the Roman Empire
- Describe the major aspects of Roman culture and society
- Compare the Roman and Greek Civilizations
- List the Major steps in the development of Christianity
Describe the reasons for the decline and fall of the empire

Evidence of Student Understanding (Assessment) in this Lesson:

Formative Assessments
1. Time-line on the Roman Empire
2. Questions on the Geography of the Roman Empire
3. Essay on the decline of empires
4. Students will also be formally assessed based upon classroom discussions and activities. (See Activities Below)
5. Exit Slips

Summative Assessments
1. The primary summative assessment is the end of unit exam consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.
2. The project and essay can also serve as a secondary summative assessment.

Materials Needed:
- Internet Resources
- Books, Magazines and other resources made available by the school site
- Internet Access
- LCD Projector
- Overhead Projector
- Colored Pencils
- Time-Line template
- Chosen Films (see attached)
- Film Questions Guide
- Map of the Roman Empire
Duration: 6 Class Periods or Three Blocks (315 Minutes)

Steps to Deliver the Lesson and Activities

1. **10 Minutes** Bell Ringer: Have students brainstorm the ways that Ancient Romans are similar to the Ancient Greeks that were previously studied in the last Unit Lesson Plan.

2. **25 Minutes** The Geography of the Roman Empire.
   - Provide students with a map of the Roman Empire and answer the attached question guide.

3. **30 Minutes** Have students complete a time-line on Ancient Rome. In the middle of the time-line have the students place the number 0. Talk to the students about what this number represents (birth of Jesus Christ). This point may also serve as a great place to discuss with students about AD / BC versus the more contemporary labels of time BCE / CE. Next have the students place the time frame of Mythological story of Romulus and Remus. This should then bring forth a great discussion on how far back the Roman Empire stretched. Students will complete the timeline of the Roman Empire, by including some significant dates including, but not limited to the following:

   Establishment of the Roman Republic  Punic Wars  Death of Julius Caesar
   Augustus Caesar as the 1st Emperor  Death of Augustus  Pax Romana
   Birth of Jesus  Death of Jesus  Split of the Roman Empire

Decline of the Roman Empire (476CE)

4. **35 Minutes** Provide students with copies of the story of Romulus and Remus. A sample copy of the story is attached at the end of the lesson. You may also wish to show students excerpts from a short video (many can be found on YouTube) e.g., *Romulus and Remus: the real story* - YouTube 4:24.

5. Have students read the story either as a class or in groups. In the aftermath of reading the story, have a few students provide a summary of the story. Follow through with discussion questions:

   e.g., 1. Are the stories the same each time?
   2. What might account for the differences?
   3. Ask students who the author was of the story.
   4. Discuss reasons why no author was present.
   5. How does the story of Romulus and Remus contribute to Roman Folklore?
   6. Why would individuals make up this story?
   7. How is this indicative of other societies that have been studied?
8. Should the stories of other societies be a legitimate starting point of Roman history, why or why not?

6. **30 Minutes** In order to understand the accomplishments of Roman leaders and the shift from a Republic to an Empire, utilize student textbook. See Attached. Have students create a chart comparing and contrasting the accomplishments of 3 men: Crassus, Pompey and Julius Caesar.

7. **75 Minutes** Provide students with a list of Achievements made by the Romans. Have students either utilize the relevant chapter from textbook to research an achievement or if time permits have students go on-line and find specific resources and pictures that encapsulate the essence of Roman Greatness (include the role of Christianity in this section). Students can either research in groups or as individuals. Have students address questions regarding the various achievements and prepare a brief report to the class.

8. **30 Minutes** For the final activity have students complete a Web Diagram on the decline of the Roman Empire. Students must provide the causes that led to the ultimate decline.

9. **50 Minutes** Summarizing Activity: In the aftermath of completing the web diagram students engage in a discussion on how the declines of the Roman and Greek empires were similar and different. What accounted for these similarities and differences? What does this say about the decline of empires in general? This may also be a great place to have students hypothesize reasons why in general many great empires fall for similar causes. Can they think of one in history that is completely different? You may want to have students write a short paragraph analyzing the decline of empires, using these questions or others as a guide.
Activities:

1. **30 Minutes** Show students small excerpts from two films on the Roman Empire and have them address the following questions in the aftermath.

   1. What seems to be accurate in the film? What sources are you using to assess accuracy?
   2. In what ways does the film impact your reading of any of the documents you have read?
   3. What liberties does the film take with the past? Why?
   4. Is the film primarily entertainment, or is it really trying to work within a historical period? How can you determine the film maker's intention?
   5. What, if any, modern point is the film trying to make?

**Differentiated Instruction Strategies:**

Students who are identified with learning disabilities can be provided with information before the implementation of the lesson. If ESOL students are present in your classroom, provide students with annotated copies of the material. For those students who are more advanced allot them opportunities to assist with other students. Furthermore, activities outlined in this lesson plan, serve multiple learning styles and thus various student interests, ranging from linguistic, visual/spatial to logical

**Technology Integration:**

A video library of the early Roman Empire

http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/resources/video.html

An interactive game site on the Roman Empire

http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/special/emperor_game.html

A collection of lesson plans and web-sites for Ancient Rome

http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/educators/index.html

A collection of resources for teaching about the Roman Empire


Civilization and Cultural Topics on Ancient Rome

http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmmanus/romanpages.html
A teacher’s guide to Ancient Rome

http://www.teach-nology.com/themes/social/rome/

**Lesson Closure:**

In order to engage students in summarizing their learning, students will synthesize learned information, skills and processes by writing an exit slip. An exit slip can be a one sentence summary of what students learned. Other uses may include but are not limited to answering a review question, pose a question related to topic studied, make a short list of facts learned, set a goal for the next day of class, etc. Prior to providing students with exit sip be sure to decide what its purpose will be (and whether or not this will be a type of formative assessment). During the last 5 minutes of class inform students about the purpose of the task associated with the exit slip. As students exit your classroom, collect their exit slips. This will serve a dual purpose, as they will assess your own teaching and will often indicate whether or not students understood the material presented.
Map of the Roman Empire

Question Guide

1. Name the Seven Seas that touched the Roman Empire.
2. What is the largest body of water in the Roman Empire?
3. What body of water lies south of the Italian Peninsula?
4. What shape is the Italian Peninsula?
5. What river flows through Rome?
6. What strait is at the western end of the Mediterranean Sea?
7. What city is south of Rome?
8. What city is east of Rome?
9. Name the three continents over which the Roman Empire spread.
Story of Romulus and Remus

Taken from the following source
(http://www.historyonthenet.com/Romans/legend_of_rome.htm)

A legend is a story about a person who did something heroic. It is not based on fact nor can it be said to be the truth. Roman children were told the following legend about how the city of Rome was built.

Romulus and Remus

Romulus and Remus were twin brothers. Their father was Mars, the God of War; their mother was Rhea Silvia, a vestal virgin and daughter of the King, Numitor. Numitor's brother, Amulius, had taken the throne from him and had forced Rhea Silvia to become a vestal virgin so that she would not have any children who might try to take back the throne.

When the boys were born, Amulius seized them, put them into a basket and threw them into the River Tiber. He hoped that they would drown. However, the boys were rescued by a she-wolf who fed the babies with her own milk and cared for them.

They grew up and were found by the shepherd Faustulus, who took them home and looked after them until they were grown up.

The two young men discovered who they really were and decided to kill Amulius and put their grandfather back on the throne. After doing this they decided to build a city of their own but could not agree where to build it. Remus favored the Aventine Hill but Romulus wanted to use the Palatine Hill. They could not reach an agreement and so each began to build his city enclosed with walls.

One day, Remus visited Romulus and made fun of his wall by jumping over it and saying how easily it could be breached. Romulus was so annoyed that he killed Remus and said the he would kill anyone who mocked his city or tried to break through the walls of Rome.

The legend says that Romulus became the first King of Rome in 753BCE and populated his new city with runaway slaves and convicted criminals. He stole women from the Sabine tribe to provide wives for the slaves and criminals and to populate his new city.

The Sabine tribe were not happy about this and declared war on Rome. The war went on for many years but eventually the Sabine tribe and Romulus reached an agreement and the Sabines became a part of Rome under the Kingship of Romulus.

The legend ends by telling how Romulus was carried up to the heavens by his father, Mars, and was worshipped as the God Quirinus.
Potential Films include: (You must review the segment which you will show in class to be sure it is appropriate.)

*Spartacus (1960) VHS
Dir. Stanley Kubrick, With Lawrence Olivier, Tony Curtis, and Kirk Douglas

*Cleopatra (1999) [TV Miniseries; also reduced film version]
Dir. Franc Roddam, With Leonor Varela, Timothy Dalton, Billy Zane and Rupert Graves

*Julius Caesar (1953)
Dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz. after Shakespeare

#I, Claudius (1976) BBC TV-Series, 10 episodes of 50 mins. VHS
Dir. Herbert Wise. With Derek Jacobi, Siân Phillips, Brian Blessed, John Hurt
One of the best TV series ever made. Based on Robert Graves' novels I, Claudius and Claudius the God, which in turn were based on Suetonius. The acting is superb.

Age of Treason (1993) 93 mins.
Dir. Kevin Connor, With Matthias Hues
Murder mystery set in 69 CE.

The Arena (1973) VHS
Dir. Steve Carver, With Pam Grier.
Women slaves fight in the Arena. A Blaxpolitation movie.

*The Fall of the Roman Empire (1964) 188 mins VHS
Essentially the story of the transition from Marcus Aurelius to Commodus. Gladiator represents a remake.

*Gladiator (2000) 154 mins
Dir. Ridley Scott, With Russell Crowe.
A movie which may represent the rebirth of the sandals and sand epic. It was widely praised in the press, and panned by ancient historians (with the Harvard faculty member who was listed as "historical" consultant sending out a mass apology to colleagues). Ridley Scott made full use of modern technology to create a "real" ancient Rome, but the result looks more like the French Second Empire. The Arena sequences are OK, but do not match those with Charlton Heston in Ben Hur.

*Attila (2001) (TV mini)
US, Historical, Color
Director. Rick Lowry

Sign of the Pagan (1955) 92 mins.
Dir. Douglas Sirk, With Jeff Chandler and Jack Palance.
The Story of Attila the Hun....

Dir. Julie Taymor