**Roman Upheaval:**

* Rome was now the sole power in the Mediterranean and very prosperous.
* But as the territory grew, so did the gap between the rich and poor.
* The wealthy patricians benefited greatly from Roman expansion.
  + Slaves brought from conquered territories were sold to wealthy landowners.
* At one point, 1/3 of the population was slaves.
* Small farms could not compete with the wealthy landowners.
* Many people lose work and become homeless due to the vast amount of slave labor.
  + Many of these small farmers were former soldiers
* Nearly ¼ of Rome’s population was considered poor.

**The Gracchus Brothers:**

* Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were two brothers who tried to help Rome’s poor.
* As tribunes, they tried to make reforms such as limiting the size of large estates and also by giving land back to the poor.
* They made many enemies among wealthy Senators and other patricians.
* They were then murdered by those who felt threatened by their reforms.

**Roman Civil War:**

* This strife and upheaval between the rich and poor would lead to civil war – a conflict between two groups within the same country.
* Many poor soldiers in the military became discontent and loyal to their generals rather than to Rome itself.
* It would now become possible for a military leader supported by his troops to take over by force.

**Rome – Post Caesar:**

* Caesar left a will naming Octavian, his nephew who was only 19 years old, the heir to his fortune and position.
* This enraged Mark Antony who had been second in command and very loyal to Caesar for many, many years.

**The 2nd Triumvirate:**

* Despite his anger, Marc Antony enters a political alliance with Octavian and a general named Lepidus.
* This political alliance is known as the 2nd Triumvirate.
* This alliance is short lived as the jealous Antony joins forces with his new lover, Cleopatra, against Octavian.

**The 2nd Civil War:**

* A 2nd civil war breaks out between Antony and Octavian for control of Rome.
* Despite his youth and inexperience, Octavian triumphs in the Battle of Actium and defeats Marc Antony’s forces.

**The Fate of Marc Antony and Cleopatra:**

* Following the defeat at Actium, Cleopatra fears for her life as Octavian’s men gets close in.
* She devises a rumor that she has taken her life and goes into hiding.
* Marc Antony hears the news that Cleopatra is dead and he falls on his sword and commits suicide.
* With Marc Antony dead, Cleopatra does end up committing suicide by letting poisonous snakes bite her.

**Octavian Triumphs:**

* Having defeated Marc Antony, Octavian becomes the unchallenged ruler of Rome.
* While he keeps many similar aspects of a republic, (such as the Senate), Octavian is granted supreme power.
* He becomes the first emperor of Rome.
* He even changes his name to Caesar Augustus, meaning “exalted or great one”.

**Did you know?**

* Many rulers following Julius Caesar would take on the name and title of “Caesar”.
* This does not only apply to Roman emperors.
* In fact, the word “Kaiser” is German for Caesar, as is the word “Czar” in Russian.

**Caesar Augustus:**

* Augustus is a just and able ruler and further expands the empire.
* He also creates a lasting system of government.
  + glorifies Rome with beautiful public buildings
  + sets up a civil service to administer the empire
* Starting with Augustus’ rule, Rome would enjoy a period of peace and prosperity known as the Pax Romana or “Roman Peace” which lasts about 200 years.

**Strange but True:**

* Even though Rome enjoyed a time of peace, there were some strange emperors who came to power not long after.
* Take Emperor Caligula for example, Augustus’ great grandson.
  + Caligula was reportedly clinically insane
  + He claimed to be a God and insisted people worship him as such
  + He killed or had people killed because he would get bored
  + He reportedly had incestuous relationships with 3 of his sisters
  + He would throw lavish birthday parties and dinners for his horse and forced Rome’s elite and wealthy to attend
  + He also made his horse an official senator of Rome and even tried to make him consul
  + He once made his army march all the way from Rome to the English Channel, just to pick up seashells.
  + He was finally assassinated by his own guards

**Trade Amongst the Empire:**

* Rome has vast trading network, includes China and India
* Network of Roman roads links empire to Persia, Russia.
* Rome even created a common coin, denarius, makes trade within empire easier

**Agriculture and Slavery:**

* Agriculture the most important industry in the empire; 90% of Romans were farmers
* Romans grew wheat, fruits and vegetables as well as tending to livestock such as cattle, sheep and pigs
* Slavery is a significant part of Roman life in both cities and farms

**Gladiators:**

* During this time, a new public spectacle arises, gladiator games.
* The origin is unclear, but it rapidly became an essential feature of politics and social life in the Roman world.
* Its popularity led to more lavish and costly spectacles.
* Gladiators were slaves, condemned criminals, wild animals and even volunteers looking for excitement.
* Most oftentimes, they would fight to the death.

**Roman Religion:**

* Augustus brought back many traditional festivals and ceremonies to revive the state of Roman religion which had declined during the late Roman Republic.
* Roman religion focused on the worship of many gods and goddesses such as Jupiter, Mars and Venus.
* Under Caligula, worshipping the emperor becomes part of the Roman religion.

**Society and Culture:**

* While Rome is technically in a time of prosperity, many people are still poor.
* The rich live well while the poor receive grain from the government.
* Romans create 150 holidays and celebrations to try and distract and control the masses.