Big Idea

The Roman World Takes Shape

Essential Question

How did geography lead to the rise of the Roman Empire?
Let’s Set The Stage...

Rome began as a small city in Italy and became a ruler of the Mediterranean and beyond. The story of the Romans and how they built a world empire begins with the land in which they lived. The Italian peninsula is centrally located in the Mediterranean Sea, and the city of Rome sits toward the center of Italy. This location would benefit the Romans as they expanded—first within Italy and then into the lands bordering the Mediterranean.
Unifying the Lands of Italy

Because of its geography, Italy proved much easier to unify than Greece. Unlike Greece, Italy is not broken up into small, isolated valleys.

The Apennine Mountains, which run down the length of the Italian peninsula, are less rugged than the mountains of Greece. Italy has fertile plains which supported the growing population.
Ancient Rome was located on the Italian Peninsula which goes into the Mediterranean Sea. Rome's location in the Mediterranean Sea made it easier to travel to foreign lands around the sea like North Africa, to conquer new territories, and to develop trade routes.

Through these trade routes, Romans came in contact with lots of different people with whom they traded goods, ideas and technology.
By 800 B.C., the ancestors of the Romans – the Latins – migrated (moved) to Italy. They settled along the Tiber River in small villages over seven hills. Their villages would in time grow together into Rome.

Legend held that twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, had founded the city.
Etruscan and Greek Influences

The Romans shared the Italian peninsula with the Etruscans and the Greeks of southern Italy. The Etruscans ruled much of central Italy, including Rome itself in the 6th century B.C.
The Romans learned much from the Etruscans, including the alphabet, engineering techniques (archs) and the belief in gods and goddesses.
How did geography lead to the rise of the Roman Empire?

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