

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY ACTIVITY 8

Rome's Ideal Location

Rome's success had much to do with the original city's ideal location. Raw materials, waterways, mountains, and good weather protected and helped Rome grow and develop into one of the greatest empires in history.

Abundant Natural Resources

In the 500s B.C., Rome was founded on seven hills along the Tiber River, about 15 miles (24 km) inland from the Tyrrhenian Sea. It was close to sources of raw materials. Romans mined iron in the nearby Apennine Mountains. They then forged the iron into farm tools and weapons. The mountains were also valuable sources for wood. Many of the city's houses and public buildings were made of wood from the Apennines. Stone from the mountains was also used as a building material.

Much of the land surrounding Rome was used for grazing goats and sheep. These animals supplied dairy products, meat, and materials for clothing. The soil of this region was also good for growing olive trees and grapevines, keeping the Romans well supplied with oil and wine.

In addition, Rome benefited from the mild weather of the Mediterranean region. The city received abundant rainfall at certain times of the year. The Alps, several hundred miles to the north, helped keep the cooler air of northern Europe from reaching Italy.

Trade and Defense

The Tiber River was a main source of fresh water for the Romans. It was also important for trade. Boats carried goods both downriver to the city and upriver to outlying areas. Rome's central location on the Italian peninsula placed it on overland trade routes. One of the most famous was the Appian Way (*Via Appia*), one of the world's first paved roads.

The city's position on hills also helped make it easier to defend against invading forces. Since the city was not on the sea, enemy ships could not storm it. In addition, the Apennines formed a natural barrier that protected Rome from invasion from the east. To the north, the high peaks of the Alps also helped protect Rome. Deep snow and cold weather made the Alps impassable for six months or more each year.

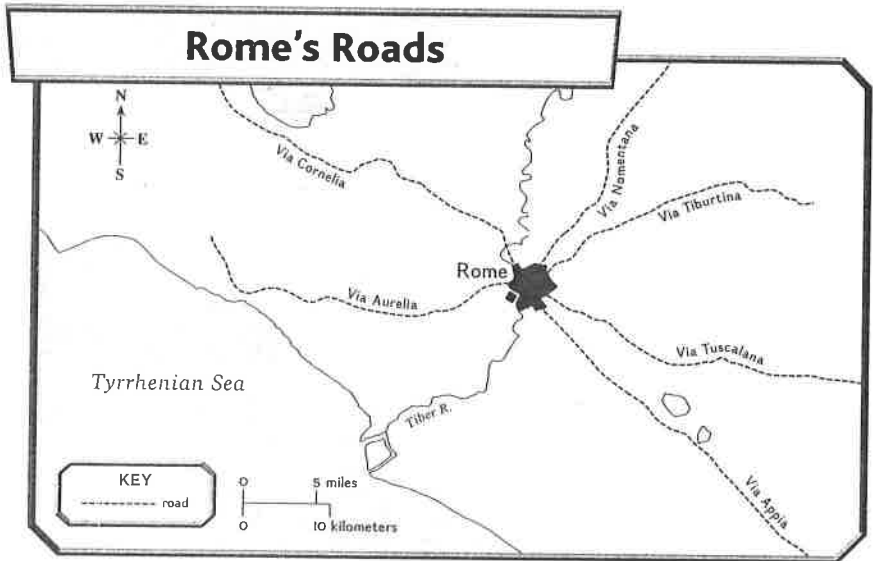
Expansion and Empire

As Rome grew into a large city, it could no longer grow enough food in the surrounding lands to feed its people. It needed to expand its territory. Between the 400s B.C. and A.D. 1, the Romans

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY ACTIVITY 8 (continued)

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conquered lands around the Mediterranean and to the north in Europe. From its central position in the Mediterranean region, Rome was in an ideal location to administer and peacefully maintain its vast empire.



CHAPTER 8

Directions: Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. What raw materials came to Rome from the Apennines and how were they used?

2. Why was Rome's location in central Italy important?

3. What features helped make Rome easier to defend?

4. In which direction did the Via Appia run from Rome?

5. **Analyzing** Which of the aspects of location discussed above do you think was most important for Rome's success? Explain your answer.

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