

The Kings

- Rome was originally ruled by kings.
- The kings were elected by the senate, who were a group of important rich men.
- The senate also advised the king. It is thought that there were seven kings who ruled Rome before the kings were overthrown and a new type of ruling system was put in place.
- The third king reigned between 673- 642BCE. He was called Tullius Hostillus (perhaps his name is where the word 'hostile' came from) and he made his mark by attacking his neighbours, the city of Alba Longa.
- When the fifth King, Tarquinius Priscinus, ruled, he took over Alba Longa so it came completely under Roman rule.
- There were other kings, some good rulers and some not so good.
- The last king was Tarquinius Superbus (meaning Tarquin the proud). The people of Rome did not like him much because he was known to be a bully (he once had someone important killed and then let his wife run over the dead body with a chariot). It was also said that he lied about some of the senators so he could steal their wealth. Eventually he ended up in serious trouble because his son, Sexton, attacked a Roman noblewoman. This was the final straw and a group of Romans rebelled against the king and expelled him and his family from Rome. He had been such an unpopular king the people decided to set up a republic.
- There were advantages to the Roman king system:
 - The kings were elected by the senate, meaning it was not a birth right so the eldest son of the current king did not automatically take over after his father.
 - Under the kings, the Roman Empire expanded to about 350km².
 - Having one ruler was effective for fighting enemies because it meant that Rome was united under its leader. By having senators working under one king, decisions were discussed but the king always had the final say. This meant discussion would not drag on and on as it did under the republic.

The Republic

- After King Tarquinius Suberbus, the people created a Republic.
- The Republic was run by Rome's richest and most important male citizens, who were called the patricians.
- Three hundred of these men sat in the senate, where they met to discuss public affairs and agree new laws. They elected two consuls who ruled the city together for one year, after which time they would elect new consuls. The Romans thought this was safer than letting one man rule alone as had happened under the kings.
- The patricians were the most privileged citizens in Rome. They had to own land and entertain at their own expense. They were also expected to invest their own money in public works and buildings. Some even went bankrupt because of this!
- The people who were not patricians were known as plebeians.
- Patrician men were so grand they could not marry plebeian women, who were not considered good enough for them.
- Some of the plebeian people thought the system that only patrician men could become senators was unfair, so in 494BCE they threatened to leave Rome unless changes were made. The senate granted them their own council so the plebeians could elect tribunes to speak for them.
- The tribunes defended the plebeians' interests and property, and could summon public meetings.
- Later, the tribunes were given the power of 'veto', which meant during senate discussions they could stop any official by saying 'veto', meaning 'I forbid'.
- During wartime the senate could elect one leader – a dictator – an all-powerful ruler who could lead them to victory.
- There were many dictators but one of the most famous was Julius Caesar.
- Caesar smashed through Gaul and Britain in 55BCE. He was a great leader and was popular with the people, but the senate were worried because he loved power so much. Julius Caesar caused Pompey, the other Roman ruler at the time, to flee Rome when he arrived back there with his army. Caesar had told him to return *without* his army (Caesar hoped to kill him it seems).
- This was typical - the Roman rulers couldn't stop fighting each other.
- By 27BCE the ruler Octavian, Caesar's nephew, was made Emperor and he then changed his name to Augustus. This was the start of the Empire and the official end of the Republic.

The Empire

- The first man to become Emperor was Octavian (who changed his name to Augustus once he became Emperor).
- Augustus had killed his friend and fellow leader, Mark Antony, by declaring war on Mark Antony's girlfriend, Cleopatra Queen of Egypt, and then killing Mark Antony in battle.
- Augustus died in 14CE and over the next 400 hundred years the Roman Empire was led by Emperors whom, like the Roman leaders before them, loved to fight each other. They also liked to expand the Empire and rule over an ever-increasing area, which gave them more and more power!
- In 31CE Emperor Tiberius, who came after Augustus, retired and left the country to be run by Sejanus, who was then the city of Rome's army leader.
- Sejanus wanted to become the next Emperor so badly he killed off all his potential rivals. Tiberius was so angry he had Sejanus and his two children strangled.
- Each Emperor expanded the Empire and in 43CE Emperor Claudius invaded Britain, where the Romans held power for the next 350 years.
- The Roman army took more and more countries under Roman rule until in 165CE Emperor Marcus Aurelius decided the Empire was too big and divided it into the East and the West Empires.
- Although this seemed like a good idea, some say it was a huge mistake because the Romans were known to fight with each other, especially for power, and so the East and West Empires spent much of their time warring! This caused heavy losses to their armies *on top of* those caused them by their many enemies, such as the Celts, Barbarians, Goths, Persians, Franks and others!
- Eventually, with enemies attacking from all directions, the two Empires shrank until Rome was finally taken in 410CE.
- In 476CE the last Roman Emperor, whose name was Romulus like the first Roman leader, lost his throne and so the Roman Emperors and the whole Empire came to an end.
- It must be remembered that despite all the internal fighting, the Roman Emperors did manage to expand the Empire hugely – the Roman Empire was one of the largest in history and having one all-powerful leader made this possible.

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- The kings were elected by the senate, who were a group of important rich men.
- The senate also advised the king.
- It is thought that there were seven kings who ruled Rome.
- Eventually the kings were overthrown and the republic system was put into place.
- Under the kings the Roman Empire expanded to 350km², and so the kings became more and more powerful.
- The king system kept politics simple because there was only one ruler. The King had advisors but all the decisions were up to him. This avoided lots of discussion and debate. The king could change the rules and laws as he saw fit.
- There were other advantages to the Roman king system: they were elected by the senate, their advisors, which meant that in the Roman system becoming king was not a birthright – the eldest son of the current king did not automatically become king. This is not like our Royal Family today, where the next king or queen is the eldest child of the current king or queen.

The Republic

- The Republic was set up after seven kings had ruled Rome.
- The Romans decided the king system was unfair. The kings should not have all the power as they were often cruel.
- The Republic was made up of 300 men who were in the Senate. They discussed new rules and laws and helped make the decisions.
- There were also two rulers called Consuls, who were elected by the Senate and could only be the leaders for one year. This was done so they couldn't get too greedy or fond of power.
- When the Republic was set up the senate was made up of Rome's richest, most important men.
- However, when the rest of the people decided this was unfair and unacceptable, they threatened to leave Rome so the Republic introduced a system of Tribunes.
- Tribunes were like senators who represented the poorer people. They could hold public meetings and could stop the senators if they thought they were making really bad decisions.
- The Senate also decided that during war times they would elect one leader who could lead to Rome to victory. They recognised that it was important to let one person make decisions rather than risk the possibility of debate and decisions taking a long time.
- This idea worked very well, especially under leaders like Julius Cesar, who took over lots of France and even got as far as Britain.

The Empire

- Eventually the republic system fell apart because the Romans realised it wasn't working. It took too long to make decisions and the two Consuls were always fighting. They managed to win more wars and so take more lands when they had one leader, so they set up the system of Emperors.
- Under the Emperors the Roman Empire expanded massively.
- It took over most of Europe and parts of the Middle East and North Africa.
- The Emperors managed to beat back all their enemies and were the most powerful ruling system in the world.
- Having one strong leader made them even more efficient and effective, not only in war, but also in building roads, bridges, massive cities, sewerage systems and all sorts of things.
- The marks left by the Roman emperors are still there today.