



The Roman Empire

MAIN IDEA

EMPIRE BUILDING The creation of the Roman Empire transformed Roman government, society, economy, and culture.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Roman Empire has served throughout history as a model of political organization and control.

TERMS & NAMES

- civil war
- Julius Caesar
- triumvirate
- Augustus
- *Pax Romana*

SETTING THE STAGE As Rome enlarged its territory, its republican form of government grew increasingly unstable. Eventually, the Roman Republic gave way to the formation of a mighty dictator-ruled empire that continued to spread Rome’s influence far and wide.

TAKING NOTES

Clarifying Make a bulleted chart showing how Rome changed as it became an empire.

Changes in Rome

- Dictator claims sole power
-
-

The Republic Collapses

Rome’s increasing wealth and expanding boundaries brought many problems. The most serious were growing discontent among the lower classes of society and a breakdown in military order. These problems led to a shakeup of the republic—and the emergence of a new political system.

Economic Turmoil As Rome grew, the gap between rich and poor grew wider. Many of Rome’s rich landowners lived on huge estates. Thousands of enslaved persons—many of whom had been captured peoples in various wars—were forced to work on these estates. By 100 B.C., enslaved persons formed perhaps one-third of Rome’s population.

Small farmers found it difficult to compete with the large estates run by the labor of enslaved people. Many of these farmers were former soldiers. A large number of them sold their lands to wealthy landowners and became homeless and jobless. Most stayed in the countryside and worked as seasonal migrant laborers. Some headed to Rome and other cities looking for work. They joined the ranks of the urban poor, a group that totaled about one-fourth of Roman society.

Two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius (GUY•us) Gracchus (GRAK•us), attempted to help Rome’s poor. As tribunes, they proposed such reforms as limiting the size of estates and giving land to the poor. Tiberius spoke eloquently about the plight of the landless former soldiers:

PRIMARY SOURCE

The savage beasts have their . . . dens, . . . but the men who bear arms and expose their lives for the safety of their country, enjoy . . . nothing more in it but the air and light . . . and wander from place to place with their wives and children.

TIBERIUS GRACCHUS quoted in Plutarch, *The Lives of Noble Greeks and Romans*

The brothers made enemies of numerous senators, who felt threatened by their ideas. Both met violent deaths—Tiberius in 133 B.C. and Gaius in 121 B.C.

A period of **civil war**, or conflict between groups within the same country, followed their deaths.

Military Upheaval Adding to the growing turmoil within the republic was a breakdown of the once-loyal military. As the republic grew more unstable, generals began seizing greater power for themselves. They recruited soldiers from the landless poor by promising them land. These soldiers fought for pay and owed allegiance only to their commander. They replaced the citizen-soldiers whose loyalty had been to the republic. It now was possible for a military leader supported by his own troops to take over by force. Eventually, one would do just that.

Julius Caesar Takes Control In 60 B.C., a military leader named **Julius Caesar** joined forces with Crassus, a wealthy Roman, and Pompey, a popular general. With their help, Caesar was elected consul in 59 B.C. For the next ten years, these men dominated Rome as a **triumvirate**, a group of three rulers.

Caesar was a strong leader and a genius at military strategy. Following tradition, he served only one year as consul. He then appointed himself governor of Gaul (now France). During 58–50 B.C., Caesar led his legions in a grueling but successful campaign to conquer all of Gaul. Because he shared fully in the hardships of war, he won his men's loyalty and devotion.

The reports of Caesar's successes in Gaul made him very popular with the people of Rome. Pompey, who had become his political rival, feared Caesar's ambitions. In 50 B.C., the senate, at Pompey's urgings, ordered Caesar to disband his legions and return home.

Caesar defied the senate's order. On the night of January 10, 49 B.C., he took his army across the Rubicon River in Italy, the southern limit of the area he commanded. He marched his army swiftly toward Rome, and Pompey fled. Caesar's troops defeated Pompey's armies in Greece, Asia, Spain, and Egypt. In 46 B.C., Caesar returned to Rome, where he had the support of the army and the masses. That same year, the senate appointed him dictator. In 44 B.C., he was named dictator for life.

Caesar's Reforms Caesar governed as an absolute ruler, one who has total power. However, he started a number of reforms. He granted Roman citizenship to many people in the provinces. He expanded the senate, adding friends and supporters from Italy and other regions. Caesar also helped

History Makers

Julius Caesar 100–44 B.C.

In 44 B.C., on March 15, Caesar prepared to go to speak to the Senate, unaware that important senators plotted his death. According to legend, his wife, Calpurnia, begged him not to go. She said she had seen him in a dream dying in her arms of stab wounds.

When Caesar arrived at the Senate chamber, he sat in his chair. Soon the plotters encircled him, took knives hidden in their togas, and stabbed him 23 times, as depicted in the painting below. They were led by Gaius Cassius and Caesar's friend Marcus Brutus. Caesar's last words were "Et tu, Brute?" ("You, too, Brutus?")

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more on Julius Caesar, go to **classzone.com**



the poor by creating jobs, especially through the construction of new public buildings. He started colonies where people without land could own property, and he increased pay for soldiers.

Many nobles and senators expressed concern over Caesar's growing power, success, and popularity. Some feared losing their influence. Others considered him a tyrant. A number of important senators, led by Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius, plotted his assassination. On March 15, 44 B.C., they stabbed him to death in the senate chamber. **A**

Beginning of the Empire After Caesar's death, civil war broke out again and destroyed what was left of the Roman Republic. Three of Caesar's supporters banded together to crush the assassins. Caesar's 18-year-old grandnephew and adopted son Octavian (ahk•TAY•vee•uhn) joined with an experienced general named Mark Antony and a powerful politician named Lepidus. In 43 B.C., they took control of Rome and ruled for ten years as the Second Triumvirate.

Their alliance, however, ended in jealousy and violence. Octavian forced Lepidus to retire. He and Mark Antony then became rivals. While leading troops against Rome's enemies in Anatolia, Mark Antony met Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. He fell in love with her and followed her to Egypt. Octavian accused Antony of plotting to rule Rome from Egypt, and another civil war erupted. Octavian defeated the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra at the naval battle of Actium in 31 B.C. Later, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

While he restored some aspects of the republic, Octavian became the unchallenged ruler of Rome. Eventually he accepted the title of **Augustus** (aw•GUHS•tuhs), or "exalted one." He also kept the title *imperator*, or "supreme military commander," a term from which *emperor* is derived. Rome was now an empire ruled by one man.

A Vast and Powerful Empire

Rome was at the peak of its power from the beginning of Augustus's rule in 27 B.C. to A.D. 180. For 207 years, peace reigned throughout the empire, except for some fighting with tribes along the borders. This period of peace and prosperity is known as the **Pax Romana**—"Roman peace." **B**

During this time, the Roman Empire included more than 3 million square miles. Its population numbered between 60 and 80 million people. About 1 million people lived in the city of Rome itself.

A Sound Government The Romans held their vast empire together in part through efficient government and able rulers. Augustus was Rome's ablest emperor. He stabilized the frontier, glorified Rome with splendid public buildings, and created a system of government that survived for centuries. He set up a civil service. That is, he paid workers to manage the affairs of government, such as the grain supply, tax collection, and the postal system. Although the senate still functioned, civil servants drawn from plebeians and even former slaves actually administered the empire.

After Augustus died in A.D. 14, the system of government that he established maintained the empire's stability. This

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives

A Why did Caesar's rivals feel they had to kill him?

History Makers



Augustus
63 B.C.–A.D. 14

Augustus was the most powerful ruler of the mightiest empire of the ancient world. Yet, amid the pomp of Rome, he lived a simple and frugal life. His home was modest by Roman standards. His favorite meal consisted of coarse bread, a few sardines, and a piece of cheese—the usual food of a common laborer.

Augustus was also a very religious and family-oriented man. He held to a strict moral code. He had his only child, Julia, exiled from Rome for not being faithful in her marriage.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more on Augustus, go to classzone.com

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

B To what does the term *Pax Romana* refer?

Vocabulary

The term *civil service* refers to persons employed in the civil administration of government.

Trade in the Roman Empire, A.D. 200



was due mainly to the effectiveness of the civil service in carrying out day-to-day operations. The Romans managed to control an empire that by the second century A.D. reached from Spain to Mesopotamia, from North Africa to Britain. Included in its provinces were people of many languages, cultures, and customs.

Agriculture and Trade Agriculture was the most important industry in the empire. All else depended on it. About 90 percent of the people were engaged in farming. Most Romans survived on the produce from their local area. Additional food (when needed) and luxury items for the rich were obtained through trade. In Augustus's time, a silver coin called a denarius was in use throughout the empire. Having common coinage made trade between different parts of the empire much easier.

Rome had a vast trading network. Ships from the east traveled the Mediterranean protected by the Roman navy. Cities such as Corinth in Greece, Ephesus in Anatolia, and Antioch on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean grew wealthy. Rome also traded with China and India.

A complex network of roads linked the empire to such far-flung places as Persia and southern Russia. These roads were originally built by the Roman army for military purposes. Trade also brought Roman ways to the provinces and beyond.

The Roman World

Throughout its history, Rome emphasized the values of discipline, strength, and loyalty. A person with these qualities was said to have the important virtue of *gravitas*. The Romans were a practical people. They honored strength more than beauty, power more than grace, and usefulness more than elegance.

Roman Emperors, A.D. 37–A.D. 180

Bad Emperors

Caligula

- 37–41
- Mentally disturbed

Nero

- 54–68
- Good administrator but vicious
- Murdered many
- Persecuted Christians

Domitian

- 81–96
- Ruled dictatorially
- Feared treason everywhere and executed many

Good Emperors

Nerva

- 96–98
- Began custom of adopting heir

Trajan

- 98–117
- Empire reached its greatest extent
- Undertook vast building program
- Enlarged social welfare

Hadrian

- 117–138
- Consolidated earlier conquests
- Reorganized the bureaucracy

Antoninus Pius

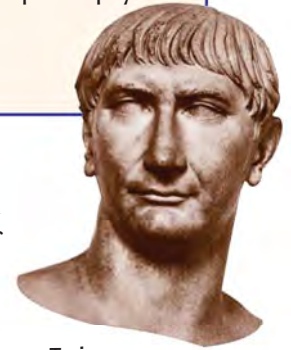
- 138–161
- Reign largely a period of peace and prosperity

Marcus Aurelias

- 161–180
- Brought empire to height of economic prosperity
- Defeated invaders
- Wrote philosophy



Caligula



Trajan

Most people in the Roman Empire lived in the countryside and worked on farms. In Rome and smaller cities, merchants, soldiers, slaves, foreigners, and philosophers all shared the crowded, noisy streets. Here, people from all walks of life came together to create a diverse society.

Slaves and Captivity Slavery was a significant part of Roman life. It was widespread and important to the economy. The Romans made more use of slaves than any previous civilization. Numbers of slaves may have reached as high as one-third of the total population. Most slaves were conquered peoples brought back by victorious Roman armies and included men, women, and children. Children born to slaves also became slaves. Slaves could be bought and sold. According to Roman law, slaves were the property of their owners. They could be punished, rewarded, set free, or put to death as their masters saw fit.

Slaves worked both in the city and on the farm. Many were treated cruelly and worked at hard labor all day long. Some—strong, healthy males—were forced to become gladiators, or professional fighters, who fought to the death in public contests. Other slaves, particularly those who worked in wealthy households, were better treated. Occasionally, slaves would rebel. None of the slave revolts succeeded. More than a million slaves lost their lives attempting to gain their freedom.

Gods and Goddesses The earliest Romans worshiped powerful spirits or divine forces, called *numina*, that they thought resided in everything around them. Closely related to these spirits were the Lares (LAIR-eez), who were the guardian spirits of each family. They gave names to these powerful gods and goddesses and honored them through various rituals, hoping to gain favor and avoid misfortune.

In Rome, government and religion were linked. The deities were symbols of the state. Romans were expected to honor them not only in private rituals at shrines in their homes but also in public worship ceremonies conducted by priests in temples. Among the most important Roman gods and goddesses were Jupiter, father of the gods; Juno, his wife, who watched over women; and Minerva, goddess of wisdom and of the arts and crafts. During the empire, worship of the emperor also became part of the official religion of Rome.

Society and Culture By the time of the empire, wealth and social status made huge differences in how people lived. Classes had little in common. The rich lived extravagantly. They spent large sums of money on homes, gardens, slaves, and luxuries. They gave banquets that lasted for many hours and included foods that were rare and costly, such as boiled ostrich and parrot-tongue pie.

However, most people in Rome barely had the necessities of life. During the time of the empire, much of the city's population was unemployed. The government supported these people with daily rations of grain. In the shadow of Rome's

History *in* Depth

Gladiator Games

Thumbs up or thumbs down—that is how a match often ended for a gladiator (shown in this mosaic battling a tiger). When one of the combatants fell, the organizer of the games usually determined his fate. A thumbs up sign from him meant that the fighter would live. Thumbs down meant his death.

The crowd usually played a key role in these life-and-death decisions. If the masses liked the fallen gladiator, he most likely would live to fight another day. If not, he was doomed.



great temples and public buildings, poor people crowded into rickety, sprawling tenements. Fire was a constant danger.

To distract and control the masses of Romans, the government provided free games, races, mock battles, and gladiator contests. By A.D. 250, there were 150 holidays a year. On these days of celebration, the Colosseum, a huge arena that could hold 50,000, would fill with the rich and the poor alike. The spectacles they watched combined bravery and cruelty, honor and violence. In the animal shows, wild creatures brought from distant lands, such as tigers, lions, and bears, fought to the death. In other contests, gladiators engaged in combat with animals or with each other, often until one of them was killed.

During this time of *Pax Romana*, another activity slowly emerged in the Roman Empire—the practice of a new religion known as Christianity. The early followers of this new faith would meet with much brutality and hardship for their beliefs. But their religion would endure and spread throughout the empire, and eventually become one of the dominant faiths of the world.

SECTION

2

ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- civil war
- Julius Caesar
- triumvirate
- Augustus
- *Pax Romana*

USING YOUR NOTES

2. What changes do you consider negative? Why?

Changes in Rome

- Dictator claims sole power
-
-

MAIN IDEAS

3. What factors contributed to the fall of the Roman Republic?
4. What were the main reasons for the Romans' success in controlling such a large empire?
5. What measures did the government take to distract and control the masses of Rome?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **ANALYZING CAUSES** What role did Julius Caesar play in the decline of the republic and the rise of the empire?
7. **ANALYZING ISSUES** What aspects of Roman society remained similar from republic to empire?
8. **RECOGNIZING EFFECTS** What was Augustus's greatest contribution to Roman society? Why?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **EMPIRE BUILDING** Write a brief **dialogue** in which various members of society comment on conditions in the Roman Empire during the *Pax Romana*. Participants might include a senator, a civil servant, a slave, a merchant, and a former soldier.

CONNECT TO TODAY CREATING A POSTER

Create a **poster** depicting the sporting events and other forms of entertainment that you enjoy watching. Include an introductory paragraph that explains what about them appeals to you.

Life in a Roman Villa

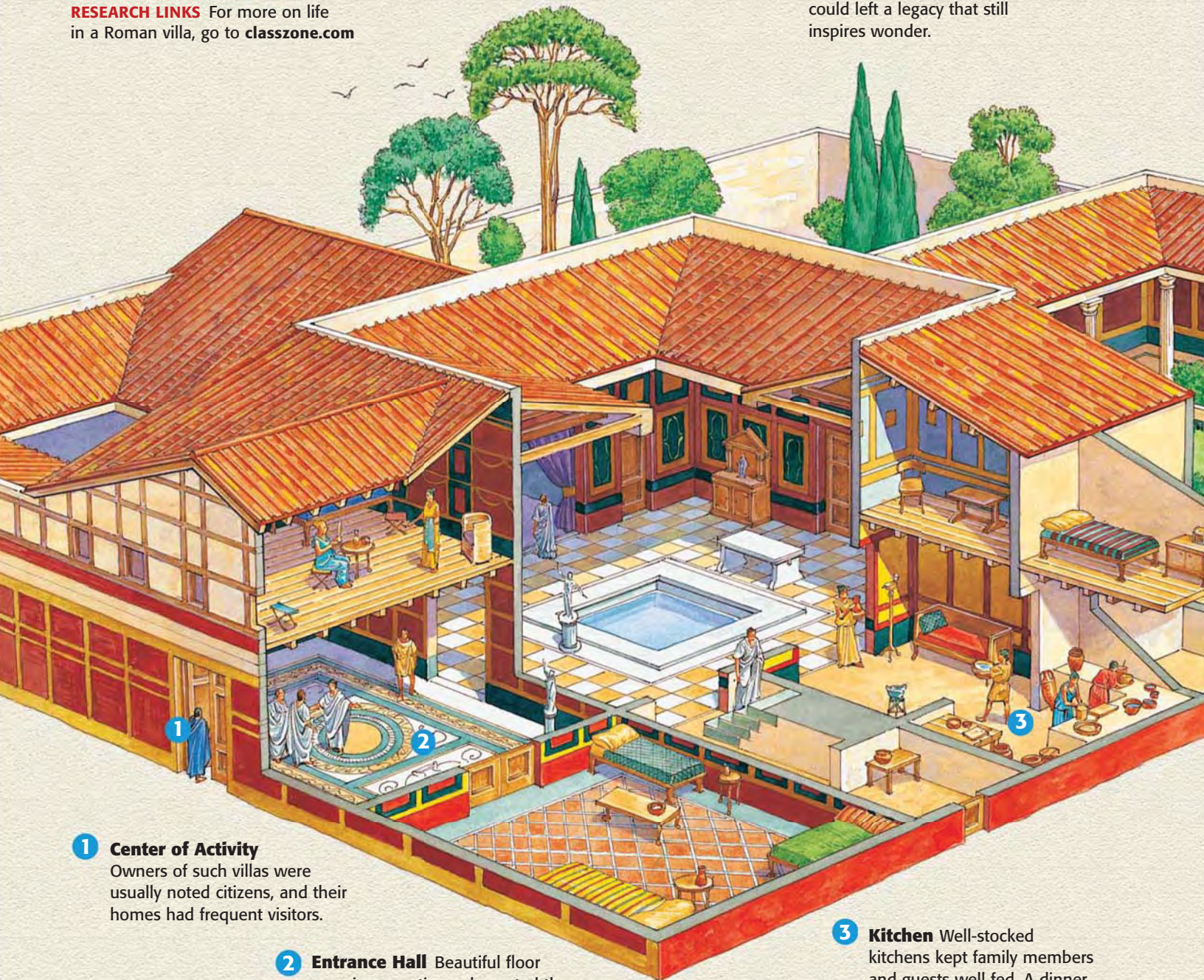
Much of what we know about Roman homes comes from archaeological excavations of the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In A.D. 79, Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried in volcanic ash by a tremendous eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The illustration you see here is modeled after a home in Pompeii. Notice the rich artwork and refined architecture of this home.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH LINKS For more on life in a Roman villa, go to classzone.com

▼ The Villa

Very few Romans could afford to live in such luxury, but those who could left a legacy that still inspires wonder.



1 Center of Activity
Owners of such villas were usually noted citizens, and their homes had frequent visitors.

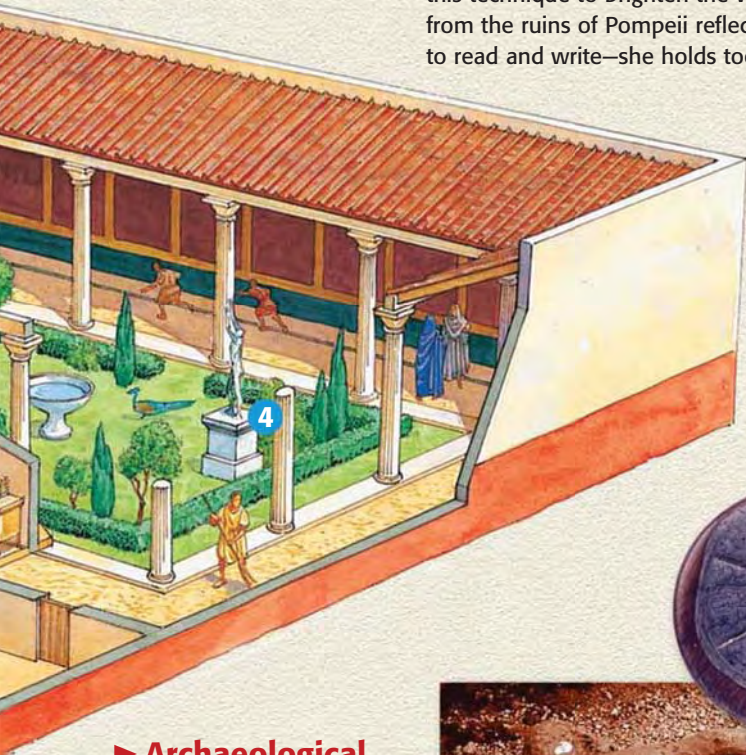
2 Entrance Hall Beautiful floor mosaics sometimes decorated the villa's entrance. Skilled artisans created the intricate designs like the one shown in the entry of this home.

3 Kitchen Well-stocked kitchens kept family members and guests well fed. A dinner from this kitchen might consist of eggs, vegetables, shellfish, meat, cakes, and fruit.



▲ Frescoes

A fresco is a painting made on damp plaster. Roman artists used this technique to brighten the walls of Roman homes. This fresco from the ruins of Pompeii reflects a couple's pride at being able to read and write—she holds tools for writing and he a scroll.



4 Gardens Wealthy Romans maintained gardens decorated with fountains, sculptures, and frescoes.

► Archaeological Excavation

When Mount Vesuvius erupted, ash rained down, covered everything, and hardened. Bread (shown above) carbonized in the bakeries. Bodies decayed under the ash leaving hollow spaces. An archaeologist developed the technique of pouring plaster into the spaces and then removing the ash. The result was a cast of the body where it fell.



> DATA FILE

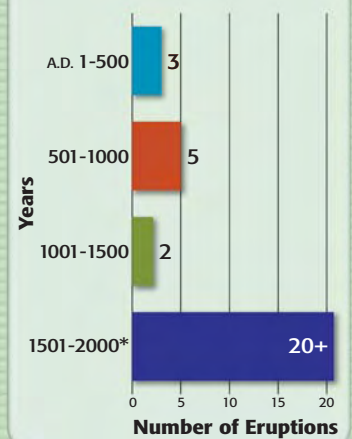
Pompeii

- Of the 10,000 to 20,000 people who lived in Pompeii, only 2,000 bodies have been uncovered.
- About three-fourths of the city has been excavated.

Mount Vesuvius

- Scientists believe there may be a reservoir of magma 400 kilometers (about 249 miles) wide sitting below Mount Vesuvius.
- Today, in the first 15 minutes of a medium-to-large-scale eruption, an area within a 4-mile radius of the volcano could be destroyed—about 1 million people live and work in this area.

Number of Major Recorded Volcanic Eruptions



* The last eruption occurred in 1944.
Source: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Connect to Today

1. Making Inferences What other types of rooms or activities can you identify in the illustration?

See Skillbuilder Handbook, page R10.

2. Comparing and Contrasting How are homes today similar to a Roman villa? How are they different?