

Name:	Date:	Period:	Compelling Question: Was the Roman Republic destined to fail? Supporting Question: How did the Roman Republic fall?
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**Close reading** is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, applications, etc. It involves multiple readings of the text for different purposes. In social studies, close reading helps students make connections back to a compelling question and historical context.

Phases:			
1. What does the text say?	2. How does the text work?	3. What does the text mean?	4. How does the text relate to the historical/contemporary context?
Who, what, when, where, why; key details	Key vocabulary, phrases, and structure.	Make connections to ideas, interpret meaning of the text	Relate to compelling question, time period, etc.

Article Title: Roman Revolution	Vocabulary:	Questions and Annotations:
<p><b>Source:</b> by Mary Beard, 2011, for <i>BBC History</i>, <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/fallofromanrepublic_article_01.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/fallofromanrepublic_article_01.shtml</a></p> <p>In 133 BC, Rome was a democracy, which meant the Roman people was sovereign. True, rich aristocrats dominated politics; even the system of voting was weighted to give more influence to the votes of the wealthy. Yet, ultimate power lay with the Roman people. Mass assemblies elected the magistrates, made the laws and took major state decisions. Rome prided itself on being a 'free republic' and centuries later was the political model for the founding fathers of the United States.</p> <p>By 14 AD, when the first emperor Augustus died, popular elections had all but disappeared. Power was located not in the old republican assembly place of the forum, but in the imperial palace. The assumption was that Augustus's heirs would inherit his rule over the Roman world - and so they did.</p> <p>This was nothing short of a revolution, brought about through a century of constant civil strife, and sometimes open warfare. This ended when Augustus - 'Octavian' as he was then called - finally defeated his last remaining rivals Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 31 BC and established himself on the throne. Why did this revolution happen?</p> <p><b>The Tribune</b></p> <p>Many Romans themselves put the key turning point in 133 BC. This was the year when a young aristocrat, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, held the office of 'tribune' (a junior magistracy which had originally been founded to protect the interests of the common people). As one ancient writer put it, this was when 'daggers first entered the forum'.</p>		

The course of events is clear enough. Gracchus proposed to distribute to poor citizens stretches of state-owned land in Italy which had been illegally occupied by the rich. But instead of following the usual practice of first consulting the 'senate' (a hugely influential advisory committee made up of ex-magistrates), he presented his proposal directly to an assembly of the people.

Gracchus's land bill was passed. But when he tried to stand for election for another year's term as tribune (a radical step - as one of the republican principles was that each office should be held for one year only), he was murdered by a posse of senators.

Some modern historians have seen him as a genuine social reformer, responding to the distress of the poor. Others have argued that he was cynically exploiting social concerns to gain power for himself.

Whatever his motives were, his career revealed many of the main issues that were to underlie the revolutionary politics of the next hundred years.

### **Challenge of the army**

The consequences of Rome's growing empire were crucial. Many of the poor had fallen into poverty after serving for long periods with armies overseas - and returning to Italy to find their farmland taken over by wealthier neighbours.

How were the needs of such soldiers to be met? Who in Rome was to profit from its empire, which already stretched from Spain to the other end of the Mediterranean?

Leading men were sometimes given vast power to deal with military threats. The state had few mechanisms to control men who wanted to break out of the carefully regulated system of 'power sharing' that characterised traditional Republican politics.

This became an increasingly urgent issue as military leaders in the first century BC, such as Julius Caesar, then proved unwilling to lay down that power when they returned to civilian life. There seemed to be no solution for curbing them apart from violence.

### **Intensifying crisis**

Gracchus' assassination was followed by a series of intensifying crises. In 123-122 BC, his brother Gaius was elected to the tribunate, introduced a whole package of radical legislation, including state-subsidised corn rations - and was also murdered.

At the end of the century Gaius Marius, a stunningly successful soldier, defeated enemies in Africa, Gaul and finally in Italy, when Rome's allies in Italy rebelled against her.

He held the highest office of state, the consulship, no fewer than seven times, an unprecedented level of long-term dominance of the political process.

Marius then came into violent conflict with Lucius Cornelius Sulla, another Roman warlord, who after victories in the east actually marched on Rome in 82 BC and established himself 'dictator'.

This had been an ancient Roman office designed to give a leading politician short terms powers in an emergency. Sulla held it for two years, in the course of which he had well over a thousand of his political opponents viciously put to death.

Unlike Julius Caesar, however, who was to become dictator 40 years later, Sulla retired from the office and died in his bed.

### **Pompey vs Caesar**

The middle years of the first century BC were marked by violence in the city, and fighting between gangs supporting rival politicians.

The two protagonists were Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus ('Pompey the Great', as he was called, after Alexander the Great) and Julius Caesar. Originally allies in the First Triumvirate, they became bitter enemies. Both had conquered vast tracts of territory for Rome.

Caesar promoted radical policies in the spirit of Tiberius Gracchus; Pompey had the support of the traditionalists.

Given the power each had accrued and their entrenched opposition, war between them was almost inevitable. It broke out in 49 BC. By the end of 48 BC, Pompey was dead

## CLOSE-READING: ROMAN REVOLUTION

(beheaded as he tried to land in Egypt) and Caesar was left - to all intents and purposes - as the first emperor of Rome.

But not in name. Using the old title of 'dictator', he notoriously received the kind of honours that were usually reserved for the gods. He also embarked on another programme of reform including such radical measures as the cancellation of debts and the settlement of landless veteran soldiers.

He did not, however, have long to effect change (perhaps his most lasting innovation was his reform of the calendar and the introduction of the system of 'leap years' that we still use today). For in 44 BC he too was murdered by a posse of senators, in the name of 'liberty'.

Not much 'liberty' was to follow. Instead there was another decade of civil war as Caesar's supporters first of all battled it out with his assassins, and when they had been finished off, fought among themselves.

There was no other major player left when in 31 BC Octavian (Caesar's nephew and adopted son) defeated Antony at a naval battle near Actium in northern Greece. Octavian would be declared the first emperor of Rome.

**Summary of main ideas of text**

**How does this connect to the compelling the question?**