

Sample Lesson #2

The Beginning of the Roman Empire

The Roman Empire began in Italy, a land with a mild climate, interior mountains, and surrounding waters. In the beginning, four groups settled there, **Etruscans** to the north and Greeks to the south. The other two groups, **Latins** and **Samnites**, occupied **Latium**, the mountainous middle area of the country. The **Apennine Mountains** and the **Mediterranean Sea** protected farmers and shepherds; expert traders and fishermen lived in the civilizations that flourished near the water. Each group was an influence upon the others, borrowing from each other's religious mythologies and alphabets.

Skirmishes and wars marked the struggle for control of the region, and this struggle lasted for hundreds of years. The Samnites, a heavily populated ancient tribe, constantly clashed with Rome over control of Latium. Roman forces eventually crushed the Samnites, who then embraced Roman customs and language. The Etruscans inhabited the area just north of Rome, and for a short time, around 600 BCE, the Etruscans dominated Rome. Romans borrowed from the Etruscans to create an alphabet, as well as the arches and vaults of Roman architecture. Rome eventually conquered all of the early inhabitants of Latium, making them part of Rome.

Early Roman history mingled with Roman mythology, and historians have sometimes had difficulty separating the two. Legend tells of twin brothers, **Romulus** and **Remus**, sons of the god, Mars. When they were babies, their lives were in danger because their great-uncle had stolen control of Rome's mother city from the Greek hero, Aeneas. The twins, a threat to the plot, were left to die, but instead, they were found and raised by a she-wolf. The myth tells how, as a grown man, Romulus returned to his homeland and established a settlement on one of Rome's seven hills. The settlement merged with a different cultural group that was living on another of the seven hills. The two settlements formed Rome, making it a multicultural location. Archaeological evidence confirms the hill settlements that became Rome. Romulus and Remus, on the other hand, remain the stuff of legend.



Ancient civilizations, alliances, and wars shaped the Italian peninsula throughout the first millennium BCE.

1. In the passage, underline the names of the four ancient civilizations that populated the Italian peninsula.
2. The story of Romulus and Remus is a (primary source / myth).

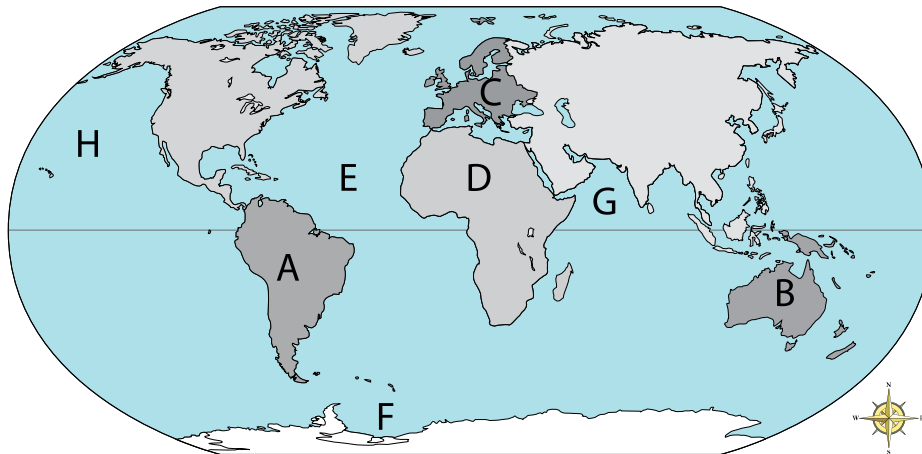
3. Which is an example of early cultural diffusion on the Italian peninsula?
 - A) The Samnites adopted Roman customs and language.
 - B) The Romans adopted Etruscan architecture, such as the vault and the arch.
 - C) The Romans adopted the Etruscan alphabet.
 - D) all of these

4. The Classical period of Greece refers to _____. (Lesson #35)
 - A) the type of music the Greeks played
 - B) the period of time when Greeks produced much art and culture that is still appreciated today
 - C) the time from 500 through 300 BCE
 - D) both B and C

5 – 6. Read each list. Then write Political Map, Physical Map, or Thematic Map.

population density time zones manufacturing regions	capital cities country boundaries state boundaries	elevation lowlands rivers and lakes

7 – 10. Identify the lettered items on the world map and list their names in the spaces below.



Continents	Oceans
A)	E)
B)	F)
C)	G)
D)	H)