Get Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?
In previous chapters, you learned about the civilization of ancient Greece. Greek ways did not die with the end of Greece's freedom. They were adopted and spread widely by another civilization, Rome.

Focusing on the Main Ideas
• Geography played an important role in the rise of Roman civilization. (page 263)
• The Romans created a republic and conquered Italy. By treating people fairly, they built Rome from a small city into a great power. (page 265)

Locating Places
Sicily (SIH•suh•lee)
Apennines (A•puh•NYNZ)
Latium (LAY•shee•uhm)
Tiber River (TY•buhr)
Etruria (ih•TRUR•ee•uh)

Meeting People
Romulus (RAHM•yuh•luhs)
and Remus (REE•muhs)
Aeneas (ih•NEE•uhs)
Latins (LA•tuhnz)
Etruscans (ih•TRUHS•kuhnz)
Tarquins (TAHR•kuhnnz)

Building Your Vocabulary
republic (rih•PUH•blihk)
legion (LEE•juhn)

Reading Strategy
Summarizing Information Use a diagram like the one below to show how the Etruscans affected the development of Rome.

Etruscans

When & Where?

650 B.C. 450 B.C. 250 B.C.

650 B.C. 509 B.C. 267 B.C.
Etruscans rule Rome
Rome becomes a republic
Rome controls most of Italy
The Origins of Rome

Main Idea Geography played an important role in the rise of Roman civilization.

Reading Focus If you were founding a new city, what natural features would influence your choice of a building site? As you read this section, think about the choices that the early Romans made.

Italy is in an important location in the middle of the Mediterranean region. It is a long, narrow peninsula with a distinctive shape: it looks like a high-heeled boot jutting into the sea. The heel points toward Greece and the toe toward the island of Sicily (SIH-suh-lee). Across the top of the boot are the Alps, craggy mountains that separate Italy from European lands to the north. Another mountain range, the Apennines (A-puh-NYNZ), runs all the way down the boot from north to south.

The landscape of Italy is similar to that of Greece, but the Apennines are not as rugged as Greece’s mountains. They can be crossed much more easily. As a result, the people who settled in Italy were not split up into small, isolated communities as the Greeks were. In addition, Italy had better farmland than Greece. Its mountain slopes level off to large flat plains that are ideal for growing crops. With more capacity to produce food, Italy could support more people than Greece could.

Historians know little about the first people to live in Italy. There is evidence, however, that groups from the north slipped through Italy’s mountain passes between about 1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C. Attracted by the mild climate and rich soil, a small but steady stream of newcomers settled in the hills and on the plains. Among these peoples were a Latin-speaking people who built the city of Rome on the plain of Latium (LAY-shu-uhm) in central Italy.

Where Was Rome Located? Geography played a major part in the location of Rome. The site chosen for Rome was about 15 miles (24 km) up the Tiber River (TY-beh) from the Mediterranean Sea. The Tiber River gave the Romans a source of water and a way to the rest of the Mediterranean world. At the same time, Rome was far enough from the sea to escape raids by pirates.
In addition, Rome was built on seven hills. The Romans did this on purpose. The hills were very steep, making it easy to defend the city against enemy attack. Rome was also located at a place where people could easily cross the Tiber River. As a result, Rome became a stopping place for people traveling north and south in western Italy and for merchant ships sailing in the western Mediterranean.

How Did Rome Begin? Two different legends describe how Rome began. The traditional story is that twin brothers named Romulus (RAHM•yuh•luhs) and Remus (REE•muhs) founded the city. As babies, the boys were abandoned near the Tiber River. Rescued by a wolf and raised by a shepherd, they decided to build a city in 753 B.C. The twins quarreled, however, and Remus made fun of the wall his brother was building. In a fury, Romulus lashed out at Remus and killed him. Romulus went on to become the first king of Rome, the new city he named after himself.

The seeds of Rome are traced even farther back in the Aeneid, a famous epic by the Roman poet Virgil. The Aeneid is the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas (ih•NEE•uhs). He and a band of followers are said to have sailed the Mediterranean Sea after the Greeks captured Troy. After many adventures, the Trojans landed at the mouth of the Tiber. Through warfare and then marriage to the local king’s daughter, Aeneas united the Trojans and some of the Latins (LA•tuhnz), the local people. He thus became the “father” of the Romans.

Historians are not sure how Rome began. They think that Latins lived in the area of Rome as early as 1000 B.C. They built huts on Rome’s hills, tended herds, and grew crops. Sometime between 800 B.C. and 700 B.C., they decided to band together for protection. It was this community that became known as Rome.

Early Influences After about 800 B.C., other groups joined the Romans in Italy. Two of these groups, the Greeks and the Etruscans (ih•TRUHS•kuhnz), played a major role in shaping Roman civilization.

Many Greeks came to southern Italy and Sicily between 750 B.C. and 550 B.C., when Greece was busy building overseas colonies. From the Greeks, Romans learned to grow olives and grapes. They also adopted the Greek alphabet, and they
would eventually model their architecture, sculpture, and literature after the Greeks.

Rome’s early growth was influenced most, however, by the Etruscans. The Etruscans lived north of Rome in Etruria (ih•TRUR•ee•uh). After 650 B.C., they moved south and took control of Rome and most of Latium.

The Etruscans were skilled metalworkers who became rich from mining and trade. They forced enslaved people to do the heaviest work and made their own lives comfortable. Their tomb paintings show men and women feasting, dancing, and playing music and sports. Some murals also show bloody battle scenes, revealing the Etruscans’ pride in their military.

The Etruscans changed Rome from a village of straw-roofed huts into a city of wood and brick buildings. They laid out streets, temples, and public buildings around a central square. Etruscans also taught Romans a new style of dress, featuring short cloaks and togas—loose garments draped over one shoulder. More importantly, the Etruscan army would serve as a model for the mighty army the Romans eventually assembled.

**Reading Check** Explain How did geography help the Romans prosper?

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**The Birth of a Republic**

**Main Idea** The Romans created a republic and conquered Italy. By treating people fairly, they built Rome from a small city into a great power.

**Reading Focus** Have you heard the phrase “winning hearts and minds”? It means convincing people to support you rather than just forcing them to obey. Read on to learn how the Romans not only conquered other people in Italy but also won their hearts and minds.

The Etruscans ruled Rome for more than 100 years. Under the Etruscans, Rome became wealthy and powerful. However, the ruling family, called the Tarquins (TAHR•kwihnz), grew more and more cruel.

Finally, in 509 B.C., the Romans rebelled. They overthrew the Tarquins and set up a republic (rih•PUH•blihk). A republic is a form of government in which the leader is not a king or queen but someone put in office by citizens with the right to vote. In a republic, the citizens have the power. The rise of the Roman Republic marked the beginning of a new chapter in Rome’s history.

**Reading Check** How did the Etruscans become wealthy?
At the time Rome became a republic, it was still a small city, surrounded by enemies. Over the next 200 years, the Romans fought war after war against their neighbors. In 338 B.C. they finally defeated the other Latins living nearby. Next they attacked the Etruscans and defeated them in 284 B.C. By 267 B.C., the Romans had also conquered the Greeks in southern Italy. With this victory, the Romans became the masters of almost all of Italy.

Why Was Rome So Strong? Rome was able to conquer Italy because the Romans were excellent soldiers. In the republic’s early days, every male citizen who owned land had to serve in the army. Discipline was harsh, and deserters were punished by death. The tough discipline helped mold Roman soldiers into fighters who did not give up easily. In addition, they were practical problem solvers.

For example, Roman armies at first fought like Greek armies. Row upon row of soldiers marched shoulder to shoulder, keeping their shields together and holding long spears. Roman generals soon realized that this way of fighting was slow and hard to control. They reorganized their soldiers into smaller groups called legions (lee juhnz). Each legion had about 6,000 men and was further divided into groups of 60 to 120 soldiers. These small groups could quickly cut through enemy lines.

Roman soldiers, or legionaries, were armed with a short sword called a gladius and a spear called a pilum. Each unit also carried its own standard—a tall pole topped with a symbol. In battle, standards helped keep units together because the soldiers could see them above the action.

Shrewd Rulers The Romans were not only good fighters but also smart planners. As they expanded throughout Italy, they built permanent military settlements in the areas they conquered. Then they built roads between these towns. These roads allowed troops to travel swiftly to any place in their growing territory.

To rule their new conquests, the Romans created the Roman Confederation. Under this system, Romans gave full citizenship to some peoples, especially other Latins. They could vote and serve in the government, and they were treated the
The Romans, a Latin-speaking people, settled the region of Rome on the west side of Italy. The region’s geography, as well as Etruscan and Greek ideas, helped Rome grow.

In 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew Etruscan rule and established a republic. By about 275 B.C., Roman legions had conquered most of Italy.

Allies were free to run their own local affairs, but they had to pay taxes to the republic and provide soldiers for the army. The Romans made it clear that loyal allies could improve their position and even become Roman citizens.

With these policies, the Romans proved themselves clever rulers. They knew that conquered peoples would be more loyal to the government if they were well treated. Rome’s generosity paid off. As a result, the republic grew stronger and more unified.

All the same, Rome was not afraid to use force if necessary. If conquered peoples revolted against Roman rule, their resistance was swiftly put down.

Describe How did Rome rule its new conquests?

What Did You Learn?

1. Where did the Greeks live in Italy, and how did they influence Roman civilization?
2. Describe the two legends that tell of the founding of Rome. Then describe how and when Rome was actually founded.
3. Geography Skills Draw a diagram like the one below. List examples of how geography determined Rome’s location.

Critical Thinking

4. Summarize Describe the Roman conquest of Italy.
5. Compare and Contrast How did geography affect the development of civilization in Greece and Italy?
6. Expository Writing Write a short essay discussing the reasons Rome was so successful in its conquest of Italy.
7. Taking Notes Use the blue subheads in Section 1 to create notes about Rome’s beginnings. List each subhead on the left of a T-chart and details on the right.