The Roman Republic in Crisis

Politics in Rome had often been crooked, selfish, and violent. However, after 133 BCE, the corruption and greed spiraled out of control and threatened the survival of the Republic.

**The Roman Republic collapsed into civil war following a series of major events**

* Wealth form the Punic wars was not evenly distributed between the patricians and the plebians.
  + This caused the plebians to get poorer and the patricians to get richer, increasing the wealth gap.
  + The patricians used the money to buy land, driving farmers out of their jobs

# Attempts at Reform

* Around 133 BCE, a roman tribe tried to propose a bill to the plebian assembly that would take land from the rich and give it to the poor.
  + This was called the Gracchan Reform
* Members of the senate were furious at this bill and planned to assassinate the proposer.
  + After 10 years, the proposer’s brother tried to reform the senate, but he was also killed.
* People elected army generals as consuls, instead of political leaders.
  + This was because people relied on generosity from their generals to get by
  + People were more allegiant to their generals than the republic

# Battles for Control

* Sulla, a general marched into Rome and started a civil war. Marius fled from his consul position.
* After Sulla’s takeover of Rome, he battled in Asia, and in the meantime, Marius took back control of Rome.
* Finally, Sulla marched back into Rome and killed Marius.
* After, the dying republic elected two new consuls, who barely stopped a slave rebellion

Julius Caesar

**Caesar’s rule marked the end of the Roman Republic**

# The First Triumvirate

* The senate turned to a new political star – Julius Caesar, to become the sole dictator of the Roman Republic.
* He was also promoted by the old consuls - Pompey and Crassus – for election
  + In return, Julius gave the old consuls legislative power, forming a three-way alliance known as a Triumvirate
  + This Triumvirate granted Caesar a large army and plentiful power

# End of the Republic

* In 53 BC, Crassus died and the Triumvirate collapsed.
* Law and order broke down in Rome, and chaos prevailed.
  + The senate appointed Pompey as the sole consul
  + This election caused a power struggle between Caesar and Pompey
* Caesar led his army into Rome, sparking a civil war, and defeated Pompey
* After taking control of Rome, he didn’t restore the republic
  + Caesar instead declared himself dictator for life
  + He introduced reforms that made him popular with the people
  + The senators hated these reforms, and the senate eventually assassinated Caesar in 48 BCE
* Another civil war followed Caesar’s death, leading to the Republic’s collapse into a monarchy and eventually, and empire.

## Reasons why the republic failed

1. Spread of slavery
2. Migration of unemployed farmers to cities
3. Assassination of Julius Caesar
4. Civil Wars as Caesar gained power and after his assassination
5. Devaluation of Roman currency – inflation

## Roman Timeline

* **Regal period 753 BCE - 510 BCE**
* **Republic period 509 BCE- 29 CE**
* **Imperial period 27 CE - 476 CE**