

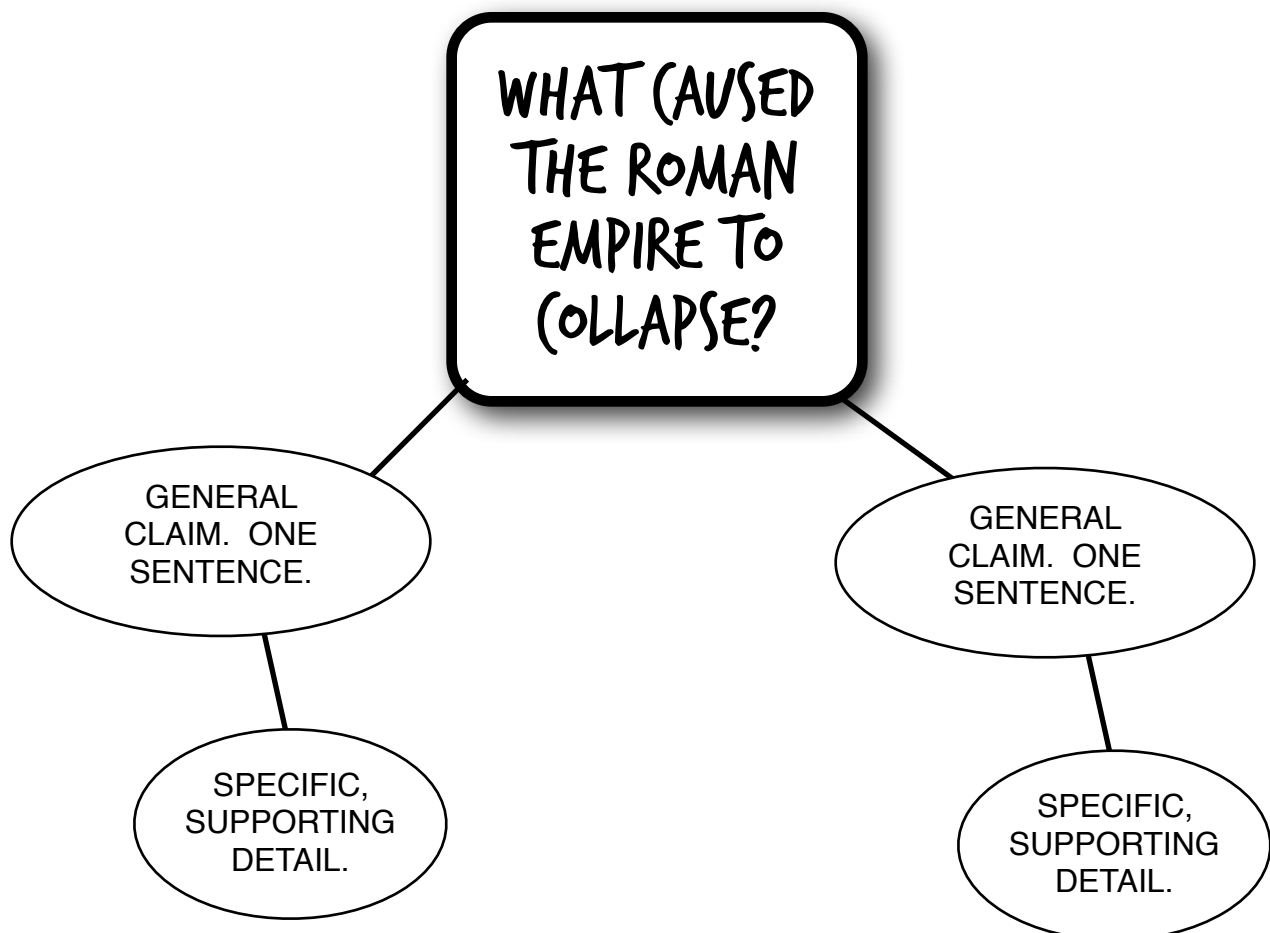
Use this fun centers-based approach to teaching the Fall of Rome!

Post the different documents around the room and have students navigate and read to learn about the Fall of Rome.

Use the “bubble map” on page 2 to organize student information. The overarching question has been placed in the center. At each document, student need TWO bubbles:

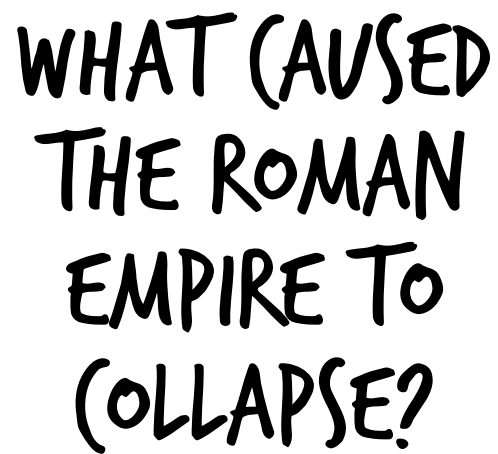
- 1 GENERAL bubble. This be in one sentence and speaks to the general idea as to what is happening. For example, “Rome is unstable leadership,” or “The empire cannot protect its borders.”
- 1 SPECIFIC bubble. Connecting to the general bubble, there should be one supporting, specific detail to elaborate. You can make this two if you want, but I’ve found one detail is plenty given the amount of short documents.

Below is an example of how it should look - you should diagram the expectations for students before you begin! The total map will have 14 bubbles: 7 general and 7 specific details.



Name _____

Directions: This is a bubble map that you should use to organize your thoughts on the Fall of Rome. There are 7 documents that you need to visit -- for each one, draw **at least one bubble with a piece of evidence**. You should also document **which document this evidence came from**.



WHAT CAUSED
THE ROMAN
EMPIRE TO
COLLAPSE?

Doc: 1

FIRST OF ALL, THERE'S STRONG EVIDENCE OF A STEADY DECLINE IN POPULATION ACROSS THE ENTIRE EMPIRE FROM THE SECOND CENTURY CE ON. FOR EXAMPLE, PEAKING AT AROUND A MILLION OR SO IN THE CLASSICAL AGE, THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF ROME GRADUALLY DROPPED OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW CENTURIES, REACHING A LOW POINT OF A MERE SIX THOUSAND BY THE 500'S. THE REASONS FOR THIS DRASTIC IF INCREMENTAL REDUCTION IN HUMAN RESOURCES ARE NOT CLEAR, THOUGH MANY ROMANS' LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLE AND THEIR CONCOMITANT DISINTEREST IN PRODUCING AND RAISING CHILDREN MUST HAVE PLAYED SOME PART. SO DID PLAGUES, NO DOUBT, AS WELL AS CONSTANT WARFARE ON THE FRONTIERS...

Excerpt from <http://www.usu.edu/>

Doc: 2

“...Rome’s fall was an inevitable effect of its grand size...borders became difficult to secure and the amount of gold needed to maintain roads and perform routine maintenance was never enough. It had grown so large it could not take care or protect itself to the level that was needed.”

Excerpt from The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 1778

Doc: 3

Roman Emperor	Years of Reign	Cause of Death
Macrinus	217-218 CE	Executed
Heliogabalus	218-222 CE	Lynched by soldiers*
Severus Alexander	222-235 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Maximinus the Thracian	235-238 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Gordian	1/1/238 - 1/20/238 CE	Suicide
Gordian II / Balbinus	238 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Gordian III	238-244 CE	Killed in action
Philippus the Arab	244-249 CE	Killed in action
Decius	249-251 CE	Killed in action
Hostilianus	251 CE	Plague
Trebonian the Gaul	251-253 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Aemilian	253 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Valerian	253-262 CE	Died in captivity
Gallienus	253-268 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Claudius II Gothicus	268-270 CE	Natural causes
Quintillus	270 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Aurelian	270-275 CE	Murdered by his secretary

*lynch = to kill someone by hanging

Compiled from <http://www.livius.org/articles/misc/list-of-roman-emperors/>

Doc: 4

In 193, Septimus Severus defeated his rivals in a civil war to claim the imperial throne and found a dynasty. His line devalued the currency in order to enlarge the army and double the legionnaires pay...Within a century, the Roman coin was completely worthless. By the late third century, the Roman economy was based on barter.

The Severan Dynasty ruled until 235. Alexander Severus' death triggered a succession struggle which lasted fifty years. Competing generals, politicians, and barbarian kings all vied to rule the empire. As the power struggle continued, the border collapsed allowing barbarians into Roman territory without governmental approval. The civil wars, raids, and accompanying social unrest destroyed trade. Merchants lost safe routes to the east. Transporting goods to market became hazardous. Rather than risk travel, large landowners grew self sufficient. They produced their own goods rather than trade or purchase them.

As trade collapsed, the various governments that attempted to rule...after the crisis created more taxes more funds for the military. However, people could not afford to pay them. As a result, the government eventually confiscated crops from the people...eventually, the poor paid the taxes for the rich.

Adapted from "Rome at War AD 293-696" by Michael Whitby

Doc: 5

Rome became reliant on hired, foreign soldiers to bolster their military, especially Germanics. Therefore, much of the military was not loyal to Rome, often switching sides in battle.

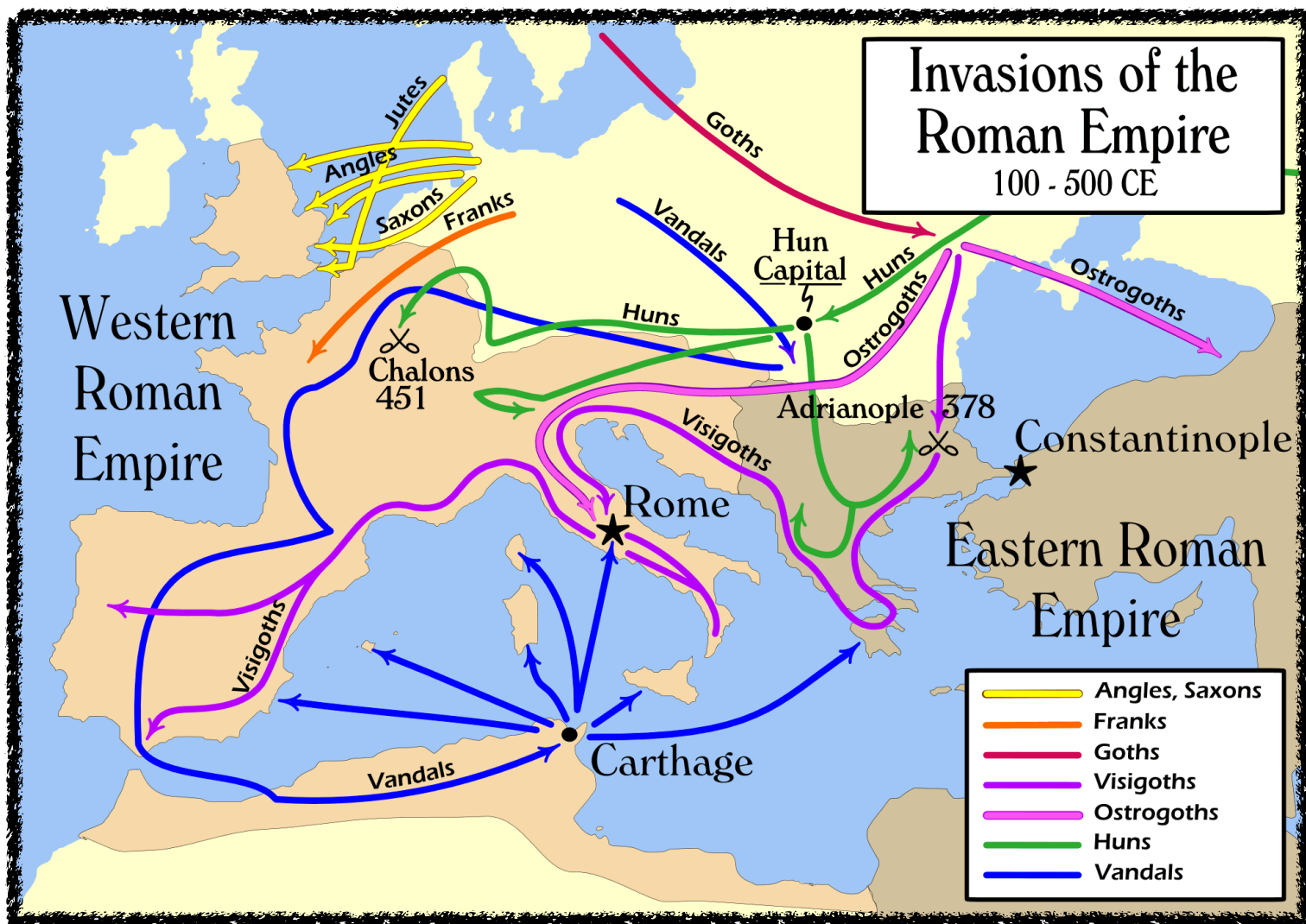
Mercenaries were more loyal to their commander than the government, leading to several civil wars & military coups which ripened Rome for collapse. At the same time, Rome's eastern and northern borders grew so large they became unable to maintain.

As the Germanics became more numerous, it was not feasible to maintain large enough legions to prevent infiltration.

Adapted from *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*, 2005.

Doc: 6

This map shows the barbaric invasions of the Roman Empire prior to 476



"Invasions of the Roman Empire" by Nihad Hamzicis licensed under CC-BY-SA-2.5

Doc: 7

"THE DECLINE OF ROME DOVETAILED WITH THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY, AND SOME HAVE ARGUED THAT THE RISE OF A NEW FAITH HELPED CONTRIBUTE TO THE EMPIRE'S FALL. THE EDICT OF MILAN LEGALIZED CHRISTIANITY IN 313, AND IT LATER BECAME THE STATE RELIGION IN 380. THESE DECREES ENDED CENTURIES OF PERSECUTION, BUT THEY MAY HAVE ALSO ERODED THE TRADITIONAL ROMAN VALUES SYSTEM. CHRISTIANITY DISPLACED THE POLYTHEISTIC ROMAN RELIGION, WHICH VIEWED THE EMPEROR AS HAVING A DIVINE STATUS, AND ALSO SHIFTED FOCUS AWAY FROM THE GLORY OF THE STATE AND ONTO A SOLE DEITY. MEANWHILE, POPES AND OTHER CHURCH LEADERS TOOK AN INCREASED ROLE IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS, FURTHER COMPLICATING GOVERNANCE. CHRISTIANITY ALSO TAUGHT PACIFISM (TO NOT FIGHT), WHICH DISCOURAGED ROMANS FROM ENLISTING IN THE ARMY AND FURTHER ENCOURAGED ROME TO RELY ON FOREIGN FIGHTERS."

Excerpt from www.history.com

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