

The Collapse of Empires

Essential Questions: Why do empires fall? Is America on the verge of collapse today?

“I can” Statement:

_____ “I can” describe the common forces of change that led to the collapse of empires, and the resulting consequences.

<p>The Decline and Fall of Rome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pax Romana• Weak, corrupt leaders and civil war or struggle for power caused the overthrow of emperors and military dictatorship under the leaders of the legions• Between 235 and 284, twenty emperors ruled and died violently• Tribal invasion• Too much money spent on army meant economic crisis, high taxes• New coins with copper and lead, less silver = inflation or dramatic rise in prices• Robbery and piracy, travel dangerous• Shipping halted• In 284, Diocletian took over as an absolute monarch and slowed the decline• Divided Empire into two, he ran the east and appointed a co-emperor to rule the west, both had “Caesars” to help assist• Diocletian insisted men follow profession and status of fathers, peasant became serfs or tied to the land• Diocletian increased army, and directed economy toward was production• Created a new tax system to pay for everything• Was successful• Co-emperors stepped down, Caesars stepped up and led to another civil war• Constantine, son of a Caesar, became emperor and ended civil war• Altered history by accepting and spreading Christianity, and establish new capital “Constantinople” in Byzantium• By the 400’s, old problems still existed and increased invading tribes• Tribes living in frontier attacked by Huns and they fled into Roman Empire (Vandals)• Pope Leo I convinced Attila of the Huns to leave Rome alone• Barbarians overthrew Rome in 476 AD, Byzantine continued to thrive• No central authority = creation of small kingdoms closely allied with the church• The Dark Ages began
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The Decline and Fall of the Qin and Han Dynasties

- In 221, the Qin state (located on the western coast) became the first to unify China against the warring states
- Also created the first empire under Shi Huangdi
- Confucianists believed rulers should be moral and set an example
- Legalists believed rulers should be strong and forceful, had harsh laws and punishments
- Forced leaders to move near him, took their weapons, divided territory into districts with officials, burned books and suppressed criticism
- Confucianists hated the Qin
- Improved irrigations, roads, canals, standardized laws, money, etc.
- Imposed heavy taxes
- Began building Great Wall to keep out nomadic invaders
- After leader died, forced labor and high taxes caused rebellion amongst masses, and peasant leader formed the Han dynasty
- Nobles eager to regain land, went along with it
- Han ruled from 206 BC to 220 AD, most Chinese today are descendants
- Leader ruled by “mandate of heaven”
- Softened legal system and lowered taxes, gave land to supporters, relatives, and military
- Continued with strong central government, adding more officials
- Appointed Confucian scholars to advise, not educated himself
- Liu Bang died, one of his wives ruled in order to secure place for her son-whole family later executed
- Emperor Wudi greatest for economic growth, improved transportation for trade, monopolies on salt, iron and alcohol, land away and business away from the wealthy to maintain control
- Instilled civil service or exam system based upon Confucian ideals
- Founded Confucian academy, where wealthy went to pass exam and control government
- Expanded empire through warfare to keep nomads from the north away and to conquer parts of Korea, Vietnam, Manchuria, and deep into Central Asia linking China to the Roman Empire
- Secret plots led to weak leaders
- Gap between rich and poor
- High taxes to cover running empire
- 184 AD, revolts spin empire into chaos and power shifted to local warlords
- Nomads invade, period of “Disunion” begins

<p>The Decline and Fall of the Mauryan and Gupta Empires</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 BC India a bunch of small kingdoms w/own rulers • Leaders of northeastern kingdom, Maurya, conquered neighboring kingdoms and formed India's first empire • Defeated Alexander the Great, built up massive army with chariots and elephants, and gained control of northern India, as well as Afghanistan • Maintained strong centralized government and crushed opposition • Created districts and appointed supporters and relatives to serve as officials and be the eyes and ears • Built palaces, parks, temples • Owned all land, farmers paid rent plus taxes to fund the government and military • Empire reached height under Ashoka in 270 BC • Expanded into modern day India, violence disturbed him, abandoned conquest and became a Buddhist • Adopted religious toleration and promoted "right conduct" through inscribing rocks and pillars • Created hospitals, wells, roads, shade trees, etc. • Ashoka died and his sons struggled for power, lands began to slip away and was divided into regional kingdoms <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 320 AD, the Gupta dynasty from the north took over and reunited India • Guptas divided the empire into units with officials and local rulers governing each • The rulers had to pay tribute to the Guptas and travel to the Gupta court • The empire was governed fairly, and without capital punishment • Although the Guptas tolerated all religions, Hinduism replaced Buddhism as the most influential • Because of the loose control over conquered areas, parts of the empire broke away • At the same time, Huns from Central Asia began invading • Military spending on defense furthered weakened the empire and by 550, it had collapsed returning to regional kingdom
<p>The Decline and Fall of America</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • •

