

AGE OF THE CAESARS

60 B.C TO 14 A.D.

FIRST TRIUMVIRATE TO DEATH OF AUGUSTUS

ERA SUMMARY – AGE OF THE CAESARS

The transition of Rome from a Republic to an Empire was a gradual one. The transfer of political power from the Roman senate into the hands of the Emperor and the army began during the career of [Julius Caesar](#) and was complete during the life of [Augustus Caesar](#), his heir. The period surrounding the career of the first two Caesars is exceptionally dramatic and features several of the most famous characters and most consequential battles, in Roman history.

In the years following the [Civil War of Marius and Sulla](#), several important political leaders arose. Julius Caesar, who as a young man had fled from Sulla's proscriptions, returned to Roman and gradually began to gain great influence with the *populares* party. On the side of the aristocrats, [Cicero](#) and [Cato \(the younger\)](#) arose. Cicero was an influential senator, known for putting down the [Catiline](#) conspiracy, an attempt by the *populares* to overthrow the republican government. Cicero was a prolific writer, and one of the best primary sources of this period of Roman history. Both Cicero and Cato were sincere republicans and well-versed spokesmen for the best ideals of republican government, but in spite of their sincere convictions and personal rectitude, they were unable to maintain power in an age of dictators and demagogues.

In 60 B.C. [Crassus](#), [Pompey](#), and Caesar put aside their political differences and formed the First Triumvirate, in which they divided the empire into three regions: Crassus held power in the east, Caesar in Hispania, and Pompey in Rome. Crassus soon perished on an ill-fated campaign in Parthia, leaving Pompey and Caesar in power. Caesar's enemies sought to send him far off to the western frontier to get him out of the way, but this proved a tremendous miscalculation. Caesar, who up to this time had no particular military experience, took this charge seriously and in the six years from 58 to 52 B.C., he led the [Roman Conquest of Gaul](#), which brought the entire region of Gaul (modern France), under his sway. This was the greatest addition of Roman territory in over a century, and it brought him unbounded prestige and popularity within Rome and the army.

Caesar's enemies in Rome tried to deprive him of his legions and bring him back under control, but it was



THE DEATH OF JULIUS CAESAR

too late. In 49 B.C. Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his army and marched on Rome, thereby provoking the [Caesarean Civil War](#). Yet so great was his popularity that no army rose against him, and his enemies, including Pompey, fled to the east. Unlike his predecessors, Caesar ordered no purge of his political enemies, and in many ways tried hard to win over and reconcile them. He had an all-encompassing vision for the administration of an empire that had animated his actions for many years, and as soon as he came to power, he started implementing many of his reforms.

Although Caesar controlled the west with very little opposition, Pompey and his legions still held sway in the east. Caesar eventually raised an army to meet Pompey and beat him decisively at the *Battle of Pharsalia*. He did not seek to kill Pompey but desired to reconcile with him. Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt, where Pompey was murdered by traitors. While in Egypt, Caesar became involved with [Cleopatra](#) and fought the *Battle of Alexandria* in order to secure her place on the Egyptian throne. He eventually returned to Rome, and began implementing his reforms in earnest, but in spite of all the effort he had put into reconciling with his enemies, a conspiracy formed against him. He was assassinated in the senate only five years after crossing the Rubicon, but his vision for a military based, centrally-administered empire survived him.

[Augustus Caesar](#) is usually considered the first Roman emperor because under his long reign Rome became reconciled to its new form of government. Rome had seen several dictators in the previous years, and the ideals of republican government had already given way, but it was not until the reign of Augustus that stability, peace, and prosperity returned to the government, and active opposition to the new regime ceased. Augustus, then known as Octavius, came to power in 43 B.C., shortly after the death of his uncle Julius Caesar. Although a young man, he was Caesar's heir, and by patience and persistence he was able to wrest enough power from [Antony](#) to establish himself as a joint ruler of Rome, part of the Second Triumvirate.

Octavius spent the early years of his reign consolidating power. This involved using force when necessary, as when he and Antony crushed the Republican opposition lead by [Marcus Brutus](#) and [Cassius](#) at the *Battle of Philippi*. But most of the time he followed the example of his uncle Julius Caesar, trying to reconcile his enemies. After Philippi, Octavius ruled jointly with Antony, but their relationship soured as a result of Antony's long and irresponsible dalliance with Cleopatra. Finally the two rulers, now bitter enemies, met at the *Battle of Actium* in 31 B.C. From this point until his death in 14 A.D., Octavius was sole ruler of the Roman Empire, although he was not declared Augustus for several more years.

Once Octavius' power was established, he followed through on many of Caesar's plans for the empire, including transferring administrative responsibility for most provinces to the army, tax reform, encouraging immigration, and investing in infrastructure and public works. Augustus and his advisor, [Maecenas](#), were patrons of the arts, and under his reign literature flourished. The Latin poets [Horace](#) and [Virgil](#), the historian [Livy](#), and many other artists ushered in a great era of Latin literature and scholarship.

CHARACTERS – AGE OF THE CAESARS

FIRST TRIUMVIRATE

Julius Caesar	100–44 BC	Conquered Gaul, prevailed in civil war. Mastermind of Roman empire. Killed by senators.
Pompey	106–48 BC	Very renowned general. Defeated pirates. Led opposition to Caesar in civil war.
Crassus	110–53 BC	Very wealthy general. Fought Spartacus. Formed triumvirate with Pompey and Caesar.
Cicero	106–43 BC	Orator. Leader of aristocratic party. Put down Catiline conspiracy. Well known writer.
Catiline	108–62 BC	Led conspiracy to overthrow Senate; discovered and put down by Cicero.
Cato (the younger)	95–46 BC	Highly principled republican who opposed Caesar, killed self after defeat of Pompey.
Clodius	93–52 BC	Violent enemy of Cicero. Populist rabble-rouser and demagogue.

SECOND TRIUMVIRATE

Augustus Caesar	63–14	First emperor. Reigned for over fifty years. Established the Imperial system.
Cassius	d. 42 BC	Mastermind of conspiracy to assassinate Caesar. Committed suicide at Philippi.
Marcus Brutus	84–42	Leader of conspirators to assassinate Caesar. Committed suicide at Philippi.
Antony	83–30 BC	With Octavius, led empire after Caesar's death. Liaison with Cleopatra caused downfall.
Fulvia	77–40 BC	Wealthy and scheming Roman matron. Married to Clodius, then to Mark Antony. Enemy of Cicero.
Cleopatra	70–20 BC	Queen of Egypt. Lover of both Caesar and Mark Antony.

AUGUSTAN AGE

Maecenas	70–8 BC	Advisor and ambassador of Augustus. Patron of art and literature.
Virgil	70–19 BC	Great epic poet of the Augustan age. Wrote <i>The Aeneid</i> .
Horace	65–8 BC	Great lyric poet and satirist of the Augustan age.
Agrippa	63–12 BC	Most trusted general and advisor of Augustus Caesar. Married Augustus's daughter Julia.
Livia	58–29	Wife of Augustus Caesar. Empress of Rome for over fifty years.
Livy	59–17	Roman historian. Wrote <i>History of Rome from its Founding</i> .
Julia Caesara	39–14	Profligate daughter of Augustus Caesar. Fell from grace and was banished from Rome.
Hermann	16–21	Hero of Germany. Annihilated three Roman legions at the <i>Battle of Teutoburg Forest</i> .

TIMELINE – AGE OF THE CAESARS

- 63 [Cicero](#) discovers and puts down the Catiline Conspiracy.
- 60 Pompey, [Crassus](#), and [Julius Caesar](#) form the **First Triumvirate**.
- 58-51 Julius Caesar [Conquers Gaul](#)**
- 57 Caesar annihilates the rebellious Nervii at the *Battle of Sabis River*.
- 54 Caesar invades Britain for a second time.
- 52 **Caesar wins a great victory over [Vercingetorix](#) at the *Battle of Alesia*.**
- 54 Death of Caesar's daughter, the wife of Pompey, strains the alliance between the two.
- 53 Death of [Crassus](#) at the *Battle of Carrhae* brings an end to the First Triumvirate.
- 49-44 Caesar plunges Rome into [Civil War](#) when he refuses to surrender his command.**
- 49 Caesar crosses the Rubicon with his army and marches on Rome unopposed.
- 48 **Caesar defeats Pompey at *Battle of Pharsalia*.**
- 48 Caesar puts [Cleopatra](#) on throne of Egypt at *Battle of Alexandria*.
- 46 Suicide of [Cato \(the younger\)](#) after the Republican cause is defeated at the *Thapsus*.
- 44 **Assassination of Julius Caesar**
- 43 Octavius and [Antony](#) form Second Triumvirate and agree to the murder of [Cicero](#).
- 42 **Defeat of Republican army at *Battle of Philippi*.**
- 40 Octavius marries his sister to Antony to strengthen their political alliance.
- 36 Antony renews his relationship with [Cleopatra](#) and moves to Alexandria.
- 31 **[Octavio defeats Antony](#) at the *Battle of Actium*.**
- 27 Octavius appointed imperator for life and becomes [Augustus Caesar](#).
- 27 Gates of Janus shut. Beginning of *Pax Romana*.
- 0 AD Birth of Christ.**
- 9 AD German chieftain [Hermann](#) [Annihilates 3 Roman Legions](#) at the *Battle of Teutoberg Forest*.**
- 14 AD [Tiberius](#), the eldest son of [Livia](#) becomes emperor on the death of Augustus.**

RECOMMENDED READING - AGE OF THE CAESARS

CORE READING ASSIGNMENTS *

Haaren - <i>Famous Men of Rome</i>	Julius Caesar to Augustus (3)
Guerber - Story of the Romans	Conspiracy of Catiline to Death of Augustus (11)
Macgregor - The Story of Rome	Cicero Discovers Conspiracy to Emperor Augustus (23)

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Dalkeith - Stories from Roman History	Of Julius Caesar: Soldier to Of Julius Caesar: Dead (4)
Gould - Children's Plutarch - Romans	Caesar and His Fortune to Caesar's Friend and Enemy (5)
Harding - City of the Seven Hills	Cicero, the Orator to Rome in the Time of Augustus (4)
Tappan - Story of the Roman People	Caesar and Triumvirates to The Reign of Augustus (2)
Weston - Plutarch's Lives	Julius Caesar to Brutus (2)
Lansing - Barbarian and Noble	The Story of Drusus (1)
Lansing - Patriots and Tyrants	Three Teuton Boys to Hermann the Deliverer (3)
Russell - Julius Caesar	<i>entire book</i>
Francis - Augustus Caesar	<i>entire book</i>
Church - Aeneid for Boys and Girls	<i>entire book</i>
Upton - Herman and Thusnelda	<i>entire book</i>
Morris - Historical Tales - Roman	Caesar and the Pirates to Antony and Cleopatra (4)
Church - Roman Life and Story	A Child of Fortune to The Empress-Mother (6)
Abbott - Cleopatra	<i>entire book</i>
Abbott - Julius Caesar	<i>entire book</i>
Church - In the Days of Cicero	<i>entire book</i>

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Tappan - Old World Hero Stories	Julius Caesar to Augustus and his Age (3)
Gilman - The Story of Rome	Progress of the Pompey to Serious and Gay (6)
Kaufman - Young Folks Plutarch	Cicero to Antony (5)

* Level I and II Study Questions are based on **Core Reading Assignments**.