Chapter Summary

The Romans

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
How do different types of political organizations emerge?
How can new ideas lead to social and political change?

The large fertile plains and low mountains of the Italian Peninsula provided an ideal place for Roman civilization to develop. The Tiber River valley provided the city of Rome with a route to the sea, a strategic advantage for warfare and trade. Rome possessed a strong military and was able to expand throughout the Mediterranean world and into other parts of Europe. It also developed a strong political system based on the ideal of the republic, in which some citizens had the right to elect representatives and leaders. However, the Roman Republic was beset by internal struggles and civil wars. Popular desire for a strong leader and political stability ultimately led to increased power of the military and the rise of powerful generals such as Sulla and Julius Caesar. Ultimately, Caesar was named dictator for life. After his assassination and a subsequent power struggle, the Senate gave Augustus Caesar the title of emperor. The period of the Roman Empire was a golden age of Roman culture.

The Rise of Rome
- The central location of Rome on a peninsula and its arable land helped its development and expansion.
- The Etruscans influenced the early development of Rome.
- The Roman Republic was highly structured into political groups.
- Rome’s system of law still influences legal systems today.
- After their conquest of Italy, the Romans faced the state of Carthage and eventually came to control the Mediterranean.

From Republic to Empire
- The attempts at reform by the Gracchus brothers brought instability to the Roman Republic.
- A new system of military recruitment, begun by Marius, gave individual generals much power, leading to the seizure of Rome by Sulla.
- Crassus, Pompey, and Julius Caesar formed the First Triumvirate.
- Julius Caesar became dictator of Rome in 45 B.C.
- Octavian and Antony fought over control of Rome, culminating in Octavian’s victory and the end of the republic.
- Caesar Augustus, Rome’s popular first emperor, began a new system for governing the provinces.

The Early Roman Empire
- During the Pax Romana emperors carried out building programs throughout the provinces and in Rome.
- The Roman Empire was at its height in the second century, with emperors and the imperial governments providing a sense of unity throughout the empire.
- Rome’s Early Empire was a period of significant trade.
Chapter Summary  Cont.

The Romans

- The Romans adopted features of the Greek style of art, excelled in architecture, and were remarkable builders.
- Latin literature reached a high point during the Age of Augustus.
- The family was at the heart of the Roman social structure.
- People from all over the empire lived in the city of Rome, and city life had positive and negative aspects.