

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# The Roman Republic

After all the kings were gone,  
Before Rome got the empire on,  
The Roman Republic was a democracy  
And changed governments for eternity.

Welcome to Rome, our big city called home.  
509 BCE — last king's been overthrown.  
A tussle is brewing between two classes of citizens:  
The plebeians and the patricians.  
What's it all about? This is the beginning of the Roman Republic,  
And the old ways of politics 'bout to be out.  
Plebeians, who are the common people—working class,  
Are tired of how the wealthy patricians rule the land.  
I'm a woman and a slave, so I don't have a say.  
I'm not a citizen, but I watch the play-by-play.  
Plebeians populate most of Rome,  
But patricians seem to control the zone.  
And now plebeians get punished under laws they don't understand  
Or, even worse, don't know existed.  
Sick and tired of not having input, plebeians recognize collective power,  
And they're straight up resisting.  
Withholding their labor, military service,  
Threatened secession, and altogether left Rome.  
Yes, all plebeians left Rome.  
Without any workers, the city lost its soul.  
494 BCE showed  
That plebeian action forced the Roman government to grow.

Now they added new political offices  
And voting assemblies for the plebeians,  
And plebeians have a say on how the politics go.  
451 BCE — the Twelve Tables  
With the Roman Law were posted up in the forum.  
Now all the people get to see.  
Crazy where a town feud can lead.  
Amazing when the people see the power in the people.  
Now that plebeians shifted Roman government, let us see  
How this continues to play out in society.

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The Roman Republic's democratic model  
Paved the way for modern democracy.  
The government has three branches like a tree:  
The Senate, consul and voting assemblies.  
Consuls are leaders in military and politics,  
Kind of like presidents, but they serve one-year terms.  
There are two of them, and each could veto another  
To make sure neither can have too much power, too much power.  
The Senate is made up of patricians.  
They advise consuls and make financial decisions.  
Consuls almost always favor the patricians.  
It seems patricians' wealth and social status sway their decisions.  
Assemblies are made up of representatives.  
Elected by patrician and plebeian groups,  
The reps cast votes on their behalf  
And majority rules.

But I've noticed how the groups are organized.  
Patricians got more pull when electing consuls.  
It's like patricians and the consuls have a clique  
And leave plebeians out, which is not cool.  
So at the end of the day, patricians still got more say  
Than the plebeians in what the government decides to do.  
Yes, plebeians got their own assemblies,  
And their power increased, like an inch or two.  
Rome is expanding, seizing land they want.  
Conquered men get to be citizens,  
But the democracy isn't fair enough.  
The patricians are still favored over plebeians,  
So the inequality cannot be hushed.  
Civil war roars, and the Republic turns to dust.  
But can you see how the Roman Republic  
Democratic model shaped your democracy?