

Name: _____
Date: _____

Caesar Augustus

Octavian was the son of Julius Caesar's niece. The first eighteen years of Octavian's life were unremarkable, but a surprise in Julius Caesar's will eventually resulted in him becoming Caesar Augustus, the ruler who transformed Rome into the greatest empire of the ancient world.

Julius Caesar was so popular with the Roman people that the Senate named him dictator for life. For five hundred years, the Roman government relied on two consuls serving one-year terms and taking advice from the Senate. But as dictator, Julius Caesar ruled without considering Roman tradition or having to consult the Senate. Finally, in 44BCE, a group of enraged senators stabbed the dictator to death.

Caesar's will decreed that Octavian would be his heir and was to be treated as his adopted son. Caesar's decision made Octavian one of the richest men in Rome. It also provided Octavian with something even more valuable: the right to call himself Caesar.

Two months after Julius Caesar's murder, Octavian came to Rome to claim his inheritance, but Marc Antony dismissed the young man. Octavian spent the next several months gaining support with the Roman people. He also raised an army. Soldiers throughout the empire were loyal—not to Rome—but to the name Caesar. By the end of 44BCE, both Marc Antony and Octavian commanded armies, but the two men avoided civil war by making a deal.

In 43BCE, Octavian joined Antony and another general named Lepidus in a partnership historians call the Second Triumvirate. The triumvirate raised money by branding more than 300 wealthy Romans as enemies. They seized the property of the newly designated outlaws and offered rewards to anyone who would kill them. The enemies of Octavian and Marc Antony who could not escape from Rome were killed.

Octavian and Antony forced Lepidus into retirement in 36BCE. Five years later, Octavian became the sole ruler of Rome upon the death of Marc Antony.

Octavian earned the loyalty of the Roman soldiers by providing the men with land. The soldiers retired, but because Octavian was Caesar, he knew he could count on their support if the Senate challenged his authority.

Octavian lived a modest life to avoid the fate of Julius Caesar. He lived in a small house and traveled without bodyguards. Unlike Julius Caesar, Octavian was respectful to the senators. Later in his career, Octavian allowed other men to serve as consuls, but the Senate knew that Octavian controlled the military, so he was the actual ruler of the Roman Empire.

In 27BCE, Octavian arranged for the Senate to grant him the honorific title *Augustus*, which means "respected one." During his rule, the Roman people knew Octavian only as Caesar, but historians, to avoid confusion with his famous granduncle, generally refer to him as Octavian before 27BCE and Caesar Augustus after that.

Caesar Augustus ruled for 41 years, a period that saw Rome develop into a military empire, so historians consider him to be the first Roman Emperor. He restored peace and order to Rome after years of civil war, made sure the lands throughout the empire were well run and that taxes were fair. He built roads and bridges, government buildings and massive public baths. "I left Rome a city of marble," Caesar said, "though I found it a city of bricks."

The armies of Caesar Augustus conquered most of Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Romans claimed all of the land surrounding the enormous Mediterranean Sea, which they nicknamed "a Roman lake."

Rome's army was so powerful that it protected citizens from attack from the tribes who lived beyond the empire. Historian Edward Gibbon later described the two hundred-years of peace that began with the rule of Caesar Augustus as the *Pax Romana*, or the "Peace of Rome."



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Fill in the Blanks

Marc A__t__ny briefly became the sole ruler of Rome after Julius Caesar was *m__r__e__ed in 44BCE. Antony was one of C__e__a__'s closest advisors, a powerful *g__n__r__l, and he had the support of many Roman people after he gave a stirring speech after Caesar's death. Caesar's will surprised Antony and all of Rome when he named his g__a__d__e__h__w Octavian as heir. The e__g__t__en year old boy inherited not only Caesar's p__o__e__ty, but the right to call himself C_____.

Octavian formed the S__c__nd T__i__m__i__a__e with Marc Antony and Lepidus, but Octavian forced Lepidus into r__t__r__m__nt and Antony committed *s__i__i__e in Egypt after losing a civil war with Octavian. Octavian did not take the title of *d__c__a__or and was careful to treat both the S__n__te and the army with care. His political skills allowed Octavian to remain in power until his death in 14CE. In 27BCE, Octavian arranged for the Senate to grant him the honorific title of A__g__s__us. Augustus means "the r__s__e__t__d one." Historians generally refer to Octavian as C__e__ar A__g__s__us after that.

Caesar Augustus built Rome into the most powerful city in the world. The Roman army was powerful enough to protect Roman citizens from the t__i__es that lived beyond the b__r__e__s of the empire. Historian E__w__rd G__b__on later described the two hundred year period of relative tranquility that began with the rule of Caesar Augustus as the P_____ R_____, or the Peace of Rome.

Answer in complete sentences

1. How did the Second Triumvirate raise money without imposing higher taxes on the Roman people?

*2. How was Octavian's relationship with the Senate different from that of Julius Caesar? Use facts from the article to defend your answer.

*3. Do you think Caesar Augustus was popular with the Roman people? Use facts from the article to defend your answer.

*4. What do you think Caesar meant when he said, "I left Rome a city of marble, though I found it a city of bricks?"

*5. Many contemporary analysts believe we now live in an era that may be referred to as the *Pax Americana*, or Peace of America. Explain what you think *Pax Americana* might mean?

*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer.