**Biography of Augustus**

* **Occupation:** Emperor of Rome
* **Born:** September 23, 63 BC in Rome, Italy
* **Died:** August 19, AD 14 in Nola, Italy
* **Best known for:** The first Roman Emperor and establishing the Roman Empire
* **Reign:** 27 BC to 14 AD

**Childhood**
Augustus was born on September 23, 63 BC in the city of Rome. At the time, Rome was still a republic governed by elected officials. His birth name was Gaius Octavius Thurinus, but he was usually called Octavian until later in life. His father, also called Gaius Octavius, was the governor of Macedonia. His mother came from a famous family and was the niece of Julius Caesar.

Octavian grew up in the village of Velletri, not too far from Rome. His father died when he was just four years old. His mother remarried, but Octavian was sent to be raised by his grandmother Julia Caesaris, Julius Caesar's sister.

**Early Career**
Once Octavian became a man, he began to get involved in the politics of Rome. Soon he wished to join his Uncle Caesar in battle. After a few false starts, he was able to join Caesar. Caesar was impressed with the young man and, as he had no son of his own, made Octavian the heir to his fortune and name.

**Julius Caesar is Killed**
Upon defeating Pompey the Great, Caesar became dictator of Rome. Many people worried that this would be the end of the Roman Republic. On March 15, 44 BC, Julius Caesar was assassinated.

Octavian was away from Rome when Caesar was killed, but he immediately returned upon hearing the news. He found out that he had been adopted by Caesar as his heir. Octavian began to gather political support in the Roman Senate as well as military support in the form of Caesar's legions. He soon was a formidable power in the city and was elected to the position of consul.

**The Second Triumvirate**
At the same time, others were trying to fill the void of power left by Caesar's death. Marc Antony, a famous general and relative of Caesar, thought he should be dictator. He clashed with Octavian until they agreed to a truce. Together with a third powerful Roman named Lepidus, Octavian and Marc Antony formed the Second Triumvirate. This was an alliance where the three men shared supreme power in Rome.

**Battles**
Eventually, the Triumvirate began to battle each other for power. In many of these battles, Octavian's friend and general, Marcus Agrippa, led his troops into battle. First Lepidus was defeated and his troops came over to the side of Octavian. Marc Antony allied himself with Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. At the Battle of Actium, Octavian's troops defeated Antony and Cleopatra's armies. Upon their defeat, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

**Ruler of Rome**
With Marc Antony dead Octavian was the most powerful man in Rome. In 27 BC the Senate gave him the title of Augustus and he would be known by this name for the rest of his life. He became the ruler and emperor of Rome. The basic government of the republic, such as the Senate and other officials, was still in place, but the emperor had the ultimate power.

**A Good Leader**
When Augustus became emperor, Rome had experienced many years of civil war. He brought peace to the land and began to rebuild much of the city and the empire. He built many roads, buildings, bridges, and government buildings. He also strengthened the army and conquered much of the land around the Mediterranean Sea. Under Augustus' rule, Rome once again experienced peace and prosperity.

The next 200 years were years of peace for the Roman Empire. This period is often called the Pax Romana, which means "peace of Rome". Augustus is often given credit for establishing the infrastructure that led to such a long period of peace.

**Death**
Augustus ruled up until his death in 14 AD. His step-son, Tiberius, became the second emperor of Rome.

**Interesting Facts about Caesar Augustus**

* Augustus did not call himself king, but used the title Princeps Civitatis, which meant "First Citizen".
* He established a standing army for Rome where the soldiers were volunteers who served for a term of 20 years. This was different from the early temporary armies made up of Roman citizens.
* The month of August is named after Augustus. Prior to this the month was called Sextilis.
* Augustus rebuilt much of the city of Rome. He said on his deathbed that "I found a Rome of bricks; I leave to you one of marble".
* He established a permanent fire-fighting and police force for the city of Rome.

## http://www.ducksters.com/history/ancient_rome/julius_caesar2.jpgBiography of Julius Caesar

* **Occupation:** Roman general and dictator
* **Born:** July 100 BC in Rome, Italy
* **Died:** 15 March 44 BC in Rome, Italy
* **Best known for:** Being the dictator of Rome and putting an end to the Roman Republic

**Where did Caesar grow up?**
Julius Caesar was born in Subura, Rome in the year 100 BC. He was born to an aristocratic family that could trace their bloodlines back to the founding of Rome. His parents were well-off, but they weren't rich by Roman standards. His full name was Gaius Julius Caesar.

**Did Caesar go to school?**
At around the age of six, Gaius began his education. He was taught by a private tutor named Marcus Antonius Gnipho. He learned how to read and write. He also learned about Roman law and how to speak in public. These were important skills he would need as a leader of Rome.

**Becoming an Adult**
Caesar's father died when he was sixteen years old. He became the head of the family and was responsible for his mother Aurelia and his sister Julia. At the age of seventeen he married Cornelia, the daughter of a powerful politician in Rome.

**Early Career**
Young Caesar soon found himself in the middle of a power struggle between two factions in the government. The current dictator of Rome, Sulla, was enemies with both Caesar's uncle Marius and Caesar's father in-law Cinna. Caesar joined the army and left Rome in order to avoid Sulla and his allies.

When Sulla died, Caesar returned to Rome. He was now a military hero from his years in the army. He quickly rose up the ranks in the Roman government. He made allies with powerful men such as the general Pompey the Great and the wealthy Crassus. Caesar was an excellent speaker and the people of Rome loved him.

**Consul and General**
At the age of 40 Julius Caesar was elected to consul. Consul was the highest ranking position in the Roman Republic. The consul was like a president, but there were two consuls and they only served for one year. At the end of his year as consul, Caesar became governor of the province of Gaul.

As governor of Gaul, Caesar was in charge of four Roman legions. He was a very effective governor and general. He conquered all of Gaul. He gained the respect and honor from his army and soon was considered alongside Pompey as the greatest general in the Roman army.

**Civil War**
Politics in Rome became increasingly hostile while Caesar was in Gaul. Many of the leaders were jealous of Caesar and his following. Even Pompey became jealous and soon Caesar and Pompey became rivals. Caesar had the support of the people and Pompey had the support of the aristocrats.

Caesar announced that he was going to return to Rome and run for consul again. The Roman Senate replied that he must give up the command of his army first. Caesar refused and the Senate said he was a traitor. Caesar began to march his army to Rome.

Caesar took control of Rome in 49 BC and spent the next 18 months fighting Pompey. He finally defeated Pompey, chasing him all the way to Egypt. When he reached Egypt, the young Pharaoh, Ptolemy VIII, had Pompey killed and presented his head to Caesar as a gift.

**Dictator of Rome**
In 46 BC Caesar returned to Rome. He was now the most powerful man in the world. The Senate made him dictator for life and he ruled like a king. He made many changes to Rome. He put his own supporters in the Senate. He built new buildings and temples in the city of Rome. He even changed the calendar to the now famous Julian calendar with 365 days and a leap year.

**Murder**
Some people in Rome felt that Caesar was too powerful. They were worried that his rule would put an end to the Roman Republic. They plotted to kill him. The leaders of the plot were Cassius and Brutus. On March 15, 44 BC Caesar entered the Senate. A number of men ran up to him and began to attack him and killed him. He was stabbed 23 times.

**Interesting Facts about Julius Caesar**

Caesar was once kidnapped by pirates while still a young man. He joked with them that he would have them executed once he was free. They laughed, but Caesar had the last laugh when he later captured them and had them killed.

* Caesar's uncle was Gaius Marius, a famous war hero known for reorganizing the Roman army.
* The date of Caesar's death, March 15th, is also called the Ides of March.
* While in Egypt he fell in love with the queen of Egypt, Cleopatra. He helped her to become pharaoh and had a child named Caesarion with her.
* Caesar's heir was his nephew Octavian. Octavian became the first Roman emperor changing his name to Caesar Augustus.



**Biography of Constantine the Great**

* **Occupation:** Roman Emperor
* **Born:** February 27, 272 AD in Naissus, Serbia
* **Died:** May 22, 337 AD in Nicomedia, Turkey
* **Best known for:** Being the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity and establishing the city of Constantinople
* **Also known as:** Constantine the Great, Constantine I, Saint Constantine

**Where did Constantine grow up?**
Constantine was born around the year 272 AD in the city Naissus. The city was in the Roman province of Moesia which is in the present day country of Serbia. His father was Flavius Constantius who worked his way up in the Roman government until he became the second in command as Caesar under Emperor Diocletian.

Constantine grew up in the court of Emperor Diocletian. He got an excellent education learning to read and write in both Latin and Greek. He also learned about Greek philosophy, mythology, and theatre. Although he lived a privileged life, in many ways Constantine was a hostage held by Diocletian to make sure that his father remained loyal.

**Early Career**
Constantine fought in the Roman army for several years. He also witnessed Diocletian's persecution and murder of the Christians. This had a lasting impact on him.

When Diocletian became sick, he named a man called Galerius as his heir. Galerius saw Constantine's father as a rival and Constantine feared for his life. There are stories that Galerius tried to have him killed in many ways, but Constantine survived each time.

Eventually Constantine fled and joined his father in Gaul in the Western Roman Empire. He spent a year in Britain fighting alongside his father.

**Becoming Emperor**
When his father became ill, he named Constantine as Emperor, or Augustus, of the western portion of the Roman Empire. Constantine then ruled over Britain, Gaul, and Spain. He began to strengthen and build up much of the area. He built roadways and cities. He moved his rule to the city of Trier in Gaul and built up the city's defenses and public buildings.

Constantine began to conquer neighboring kings with his large army. He expanded his portion of the Roman Empire. The people began to see him as a good leader. He also stopped the persecution of the Christians in his territory.

**Civil War**
When Galerius died in 311 AD, many powerful men wanted to take over the Roman Empire and civil war broke out. A man named Maxentius declared himself Emperor. He lived in Rome and took control of Rome and Italy. Constantine and his army marched against Maxentius.

**Constantine has a Dream**
As Constantine approached Rome in 312, he had reason to worry. His army was about half the size of Maxentius' army. One night before Constantine faced Maxentius in battle he had a dream. In the dream his was told that he would win the battle if he fought under the sign of the Christian cross. The next day he had his soldiers paint crosses on their shields. They dominated the battle, defeating Maxentius and taking control of Rome.

**Becoming a Christian**
After taking Rome, Constantine forged an alliance with Licinius in the east. Constantine would be Emperor of the West and Licinius in the East. In 313, they signed the Edict of Milan which stated that Christians would no longer be persecuted in the Roman Empire. Constantine now considered himself a follower of the Christian faith.

**Emperor of All of Rome**
Seven years later, Licinius decided to renew the persecution of Christians. Constantine wouldn't stand for this and marched against Licinius. After several battles Constantine defeated Licinius and became ruler of a united Rome in 324.

**Building in Rome**
Constantine left his mark in the city of Rome by building many new structures. He built a giant basilica in the forum. He rebuilt the Circus Maximus to hold even more people. Perhaps his most famous building in Rome is the Arch of Constantine. He had a giant arch built to commemorate his victory over Maxentius.

**Constantinople**
In 330 AD Constantine established a new capital of the Roman Empire. He built it on the location of the ancient city of Byzantium. The city was named Constantinople after Emperor Constantine. Constantinople would later become capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, also called the Byzantine Empire.

**Death**
Constantine ruled the Roman Empire until his death in 337. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

**Interesting Facts about Constantine**

* His birth name was Flavius Valerius Constantinus.
* The city of Constantinople was the largest and richest city during the Middle Ages until it fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. Today it is the city of Istanbul, the capital of Turkey.
* He sent his mother Helena to the Holy Land where she found pieces of the cross that Jesus was crucified on. She was made Saint Helena as a result.
* Some accounts say that Constantine saw the Greek letters Chi and Rho in his dream and not the cross. Chi and Rho represented the spelling of Christ in Greek.
* He wasn't baptized as a Christian until shortly before his death.
* In the year 326 he had both his wife Fausta and his son Crispus put to death.

**Biography of Spartacus**

* **Occupation:** Gladiator
* **Born:** Around 109 BC
* **Died:** 71 BC on a battlefield near Petelia, Italy
* **Best known for:** Leading a slave uprising against Rome

**Early Life**
Not a lot is known about Spartacus' early life. He was a Thracian who joined the Roman army as a young man. However, things didn't work out. He tried to leave the army. When he was caught leaving, he was sold into slavery as a gladiator.

**Life as a Gladiator**
Spartacus lived the life of a gladiator. He was basically a slave who was forced to fight for the entertainment of the Romans. He was sent to a gladiator school where he constantly trained to fight. He was then put into the arena to fight animals or other gladiators. Some of the fights were to the death. He must have been both a good fighter and lucky to survive.

His life as a gladiator was difficult. He became tired of risking his life for the entertainment of others. He wanted to escape and go home.

**Escape**
In 73 BC, seventy gladiators, with Spartacus as their leader, escaped from the gladiator school. They were able to steal their weapons and armor and fight their way free. They fled to Mount Vesuvius near the city of Pompeii gathering more slaves to their small army as they went.

**Fighting Rome**
Rome sent an army of 3,000 men under the leadership of Claudius Glaber. Glaber surrounded the slaves at Mount Vesuvius and decided to wait them out. He figured they would eventually starve.

Spartacus, however, had a different idea. He and the gladiators used the vines from local trees to repel down the side of the mountain and sneak up behind the Roman forces. They killed nearly all 3,000 of the Roman soldiers.

Rome sent another army of around 6,000 soldiers. Spartacus and the slaves again defeated them.

**More Slaves Join**
As Spartacus continued to have success against the Roman army, more and more slaves began to desert their owners and join up with Spartacus. Soon Spartacus' forces had grown to over 70,000 slaves! The gladiators used their fighting experience to train the slaves how to fight. They also had lots of weapons and armor from defeating the Roman troops.

Over the winter of that year, Spartacus and his 70,000 slaves camped in northern Italy. They raided Roman towns for food and supplies and trained for the battles they knew would come.

**Final Battle**
The Romans became increasingly scared and worried about this large force of slaves and gladiators moving about the country. They gathered a large army of around 50,000 soldiers under the leadership of Crassus. At the same time Pompey the Great was returning from another war. The two generals defeated the slave revolt and killed Spartacus.

**Interesting Facts about Spartacus**

* The slave uprising led by Spartacus is called the Third Servile War by historians.
* The gladiators used kitchen utensils to fight their way to where their weapons and armor were stored.
* Spartacus body was never found, however most historians agree that he was killed on the battlefield.
* The Romans captured 6,000 slaves in the final battle. They crucified all 6,000 along a road called the Appian Way that went from Rome to Capua where the rebellion first began.
* Both Crassus and Pompey were rewarded for putting down the revolt by being elected as consuls in 70 BC.
* The character of Spartacus was played by Kirk Douglas in the 1960 film Spartacus. The movie won four Academy Awards.