The Fall of Rome to the Emergence of Feudalism – Chaos to Order

Audience: 10th grade     Time Frame: 3 weeks

Standards Addressed (TEKS)

- (WH1B) identify changes that resulted from important turning points in world history such as the development of farming; the Mongol invasions; the development of cities; the European age of exploration and colonization; the scientific and industrial revolutions; the political revolutions of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries; and the world wars of the 20th century.
- (WH12B) analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major events in world history such as the effects of the opening of the Suez Canal on world trade patterns.
- (WH19B) identify examples of religious influence in historic and contemporary world events.
- (WG1B*) trace the spatial diffusion of a phenomenon and describe its effects on regions of contact such as the spread of bubonic plague, the diffusion and exchange of foods between the New and Old Worlds, or the diffusion of American slang.
- (WH11B*) pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in world history shown on maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases.
- (WH12C*) analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major events in world history such as the effects of the opening of the Suez Canal on world trade patterns.
- (WH12C*) interpret historical and contemporary maps to identify and explain geographic factors such as control of the Straits of Hormuz that have influenced people and events in the past.
- (WG1A) analyze the effects of physical and human geographic patterns and processes on events in the past and describe their effects on present conditions, including significant physical features and environmental conditions that influenced migration patterns in the past and shaped the distribution of culture groups today.
- (WH3A) compare medieval Europe with previous civilizations.
- (WH3B) describe the major characteristics of the political system of feudalism, the economic system of manorialism, and the authority exerted by the Roman Catholic Church.
Desired Results

Unit Understandings:

- Christianity arose in Roman-occupied Judea and spread throughout the Roman Empire.
- Foreign invasions, along with political, social, and economic problems, led to the fall of the Roman Empire.
- The Fall of Rome triggered disruption of trade, the downfall of cities, and a decline of learning in Western Europe.
- The spread of Christianity, the power of strong kings, and the evolution of feudalism helped to end the chaos left in the wake of Rome’s fall.

Unit Questions:

- Did Rome fall or was it pushed?
- How did feudalism emerge from the ashes of the Western Roman Empire?

TEKS Questions: (*TAKS Student Expectations)

- What was the impact of the spread of Christianity on the later Roman Empire? (WH1B, 112B, 19B, WG1B*)
- What role did geography play in the fall of the Roman Empire? (WH11b*, 12B*, and 12C*, WG1A)
- How did the fall of the Western Roman Empire affect Europe? (WH1B, WH3A)
- What factors led to feudalism, manorialism, and the rise of the Roman Catholic Church?
  - (WH3B)
- What were the characteristics of the Middle Ages in Europe? (WH1 and 3B)

Knowledge and Skills:

Knowledge

- Effects of expansion on the Roman Empire
- Effects of Christianity on the Roman Empire
- Major events of the Roman Empire, including those leading to its fall
- Influence of Roman Empire on present-day Western civilization
- Characteristics of Feudalism

Skills

- Create visuals that illustrate events, causes and effects of the fall of the Roman Empire
- Read to acquire information and take graphically organized notes
- Evaluate historic figures and events using specific criteria
Evidence of Understanding

Performance task:

To analyze the fall of the Roman Empire and its consequences, students will construct a timeline graph showing major events from the height of Roman civilization to the Crusades.

**Student Instructions:**

**Goal:** Explain the causes and effects of the fall of the Roman Empire

**Role:** A textbook illustrator

**Audience:** The editors of a new World History textbook, then if acceptable, the students who will use the textbook

**Situation:** You have been asked to create a visual showing the causes and effects of the fall of the Roman Empire. Your work will be converted into a full-page illustration in an upcoming World History textbook.

**Product:** Create a poster of a timeline showing the height of Roman civilization, descending through the fall into the chaos of the Dark Ages, and ascending again into feudalism and finally up to the signing of the Magna Carta. You will place major events of these eras along the timeline, placing them as part of the fall, the chaos, or the recovery. You will also have notes above and below the timeline, explaining the event and classifying it as either a cause or an effect, or perhaps as both.

**Standards:** The poster will be evaluated on how well the timeline:

- Gives the impact of the spread of Christianity on the later Roman Empire
- Shows the role geography played in the fall of the Roman Empire
- Traces the events that led to the fall of the Roman Empire
- Details the effects of the fall of the Roman Empire, including the factors that led to feudalism, manorialism, the rise of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Middle Ages
- Characterizes the Roman Empire, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, feudalism, and the Magna Carta
- Classifies events as causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, effects of the fall, or both
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidelines</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurately traces events that led to the fall of the Roman Empire</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details the effects of the Fall of the Roman Empire</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefly characterizes major events</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifies events as causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, as effects, or as both.</td>
<td>15</td>
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Total Points Earned ________
Other Assessment Possibilities:

Have students play “Timeline Bingo”. Students are provided with a blank timeline, drawn in a “V” shape as on the poster. Spaces for event placement will be printed on the timeline, with a brief paragraph describing the event but not providing the name of the event. The teacher calls out events and students must write them accurately on the timeline from memory. Once a student has five consecutively and correctly placed items, the student will call “Bingo”. As there are far more than five events, and there is more than one possible sequence of five events, the game will continue until a student has filled in the entire timeline, a Championship Bingo. Success in the game depends upon the student’s knowledge of the events, and ability to recognize the event from a description of the event.

Rubric for Bingo Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events are correctly ordered and matched to the description provided on the timeline</th>
<th>90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeline is neatly written, easily legible</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Grade

Comments:
Learning Experiences and Instruction

Elements of an Interactive Student Notebook lesson:
- Hook – activates student prior knowledge to assist understanding
- Line – graphically organized notes make information clear to students
- Sinker – students process what they have learned in a new way

Lesson 1: Unit Hook and Presentation of Performance Task (30 minutes)

- UNIT HOOK: Create a timeline in a “V” shape on the board. Discuss the concept of “high points”, “low points,” declines and inclines. Ask students to draw the “V” on the left side of the interactive notebook and to plot a series of incidents in their own lives: a time when they were doing well or had some great achievement, a decline or drop into some less welcome event, and an incline up to a better event or time. Discuss the concept and guide students. When students are done, ask for a volunteer from each group to share an event; this should be strictly voluntary.

- INTRODUCE PERFORMANCE TASK: When student volunteers have finished, tell students that civilizations go through “ups” and “downs”, just as people do, that these periods may last hundreds or even thousands of years, and that they can be plotted on a timeline just like the one they used for their own lives. Tell students that they will be looking at the characteristics of the Roman Empire, the causes of its fall, the consequences of its fall, and how Europe recovered. Ask students to divide the right-hand page (next to their own “V” timeline) into three boxes. Label the boxes “Causes of Fall”, “Consequences” and “Recovery Factors.” Students will fill in the boxes as they find information in the activities. As students complete the activities in the unit, they will evaluate the information to answer these questions.

  Did Rome fall …or was it pushed?
  What were the consequences of its fall?
  How did certain factors contribute to Europe’s recovery after the Fall?

  As their performance task, they will then create a “V” shaped timeline, with the major events and a brief explanation of the effect of each event provided. The timeline will begin with the fall of the Roman Empire and end with the Crusades. Distribute copies of the rubric for the performance task.
Lesson 2: Mapping the Expansion of the Roman Empire  
(1 hour)

- **HOOK**: On the left page of the interactive notebook, have students write the prompt: “List at least three places that you think might have been a part of the Roman Empire. Explain your choices.” Students will write their responses to the prompt. Students may use wall maps, textbook or atlas to help them if needed. Briefly discuss results, but do not evaluate for accuracy.

- **LINE**: Students will use the information presented in the slide activity to create notes on the expansion and major events in the Roman Empire, and to circle appropriate locations on the map provided. After each slide, the teacher will model note-taking and allow students to complete and correct notes and map from the transparencies on the overhead projector. At the end of the activity, students should have a completed map and accurate set of notes. (*History Alive! Ancient Rome, 1.1*)

- **SINKER**: On the left side of the interactive notebook, write this prompt: “Of the events discussed, which do you think led most directly to the fall of the Roman Empire? Explain your answer, then draw and color a symbol of this event below your explanation.

Lesson Three: Christianity and the Roman Empire  
(1.5 hours)

- **HOOK**: (Arrange desks in pairs before students enter the room). Ask student groups to brainstorm two differences between, or two facts concerning, early Christianity and the Roman religions. Guide a brief discussion. Record answers at the top of the left page.

- **LINE**: Students will construct a flow chart in their interactive notebook like the example on page 141 in the textbook. Students will read Ch. 6. Section Four, pages 141–146 in the textbook and collect information on the establishment, growth and influence of the Christian Church on Rome. Students will record the main facts, events and influences on the flow chart. Should students need more than one page, they may glue or staple another sheet to the bottom of the page and continue the flow chart on the second sheet. Ask students to fold the second page into the interactive notebook when complete.

- **SINKER**: On the left page of the interactive notebook, students will respond to the following prompt: What impact do you think Christianity had on the Roman Empire – did it help hold the Empire together, or did it contribute to its fall? Students should then briefly explain their answer and record it on the left page of the interactive notebook. Below their answers, students will draw a silhouette of a Roman emperor with a thought bubble describing the emperor’s reactions to the growth of Christianity.
Lesson Four: Exploring the Reasons for Rome’s Fall  (1.5 hours)

• **HOOK:** Ask students to write this prompt on the left side of the interactive notebook: “What are the three most serious problems that threaten the stability of the United States today?” Direct students to respond to the prompt. Ask three or four students to share their responses. Afterwards, tell students that in this activity they will be comparing the challenges facing America today to the challenges facing the Roman Empire.

• **LINE:** *Use History Alive! Europe After the Fall of the Roman Empire, Activity 1.3.* Show students slides of political cartoons; after each cartoon, allow time for group discussion and analysis of cartoons. A presenter from each group will share their group’s responses with the class before the next slide is shown. A different student will present each cartoon. Students will use Student Handout 1.3B to take notes on each slide, relating notes to these three questions:
  - To which theory does the cartoon best relate?
  - What similarities exist between Rome and America on this issue?
  - What are the differences between Rome and America on this issue?

• **SINKER:** On the left side of the notebook, ask students to draw a line, creating a spectrum that ranges from “Most Important Reason for Rome’s Decline” to “Least Important Reason for Rome’s Decline”. Have students place the theories on the spectrum, with a brief sentence of justification. By each theory, have students place an “F” for “Fell” or a “P” for “Pushed”.

Lesson Five: The Development of Feudalism in Western Europe  (1.5 hours)

• **HOOK:** (Arrange the classroom according to the instructions in *History Alive! Europe After the Fall of the Roman Empire, Lesson 3.2* before students arrive). Ask students to draw a mind map on the left page of the interactive notebook with the words “Dark Ages” at its center. Students will brainstorm reasons that the early Middle Ages might have been called the Dark Ages, or will provide inferences about the early Middle Ages that can be drawn from the term “Dark Ages”. When mind maps are complete, ask students to share items. Afterward, explain to students that modern historians have refuted the term “Dark Ages,” now viewing the period as the beginning of present-day Western civilization.

• **LINE:** View slides on feudalism, using Student Handout 3.2A to record notes. Students may also act out various scenarios indicated in the activity. (*History Alive! Europe After the Fall of the Roman Empire, Lesson 3.2*)

• **SINKER:** On the left page of the interactive notebook, ask student to list five ways in which feudalism helped Europe recover from the fall of Rome. Students will also draw a symbol for each of the ways they believe that feudalism helped Europe. Students will refer to Student Handout 3.2 for information.
Lesson Six: the Role of Christianity in Recovery (1.5 hours)

- **HOOK:** On the left side of the interactive notebook, ask students to respond to this prompt: “With the Roman government gone and the armies divided, what was left in Europe to preserve civilization and protect people?”

- **LINE:** On the right side of the interactive notebook, students will create a T-Chart. Label the left side of the T-chart “Forces of Change” and the right side “Christianity as a Force of Recovery.” On the left side of the chart, students will record the events that changed Rome and later Europe; use pages 147-151, p. 175, and pages 182–185 in the textbook to find this information. On the right side of the chart, students will record the ways in which the Christian Church preserved civilization and aided in recovery after the decline of the Roman Empire. Use pages 183 and 184 and pages 191–196 in the textbook.

- **SINKER:** On the left side of the interactive notebook, students will draw a cartoon of what they believe to be the most important contribution of the Christian Church in the recovery of Europe from the decline of Rome. They must explain why they think it the most important.

Lesson Eight: Performance Task (1.5 hours)

- Place students in pairs and distribute poster board, one sheet per pair of students. Post a blank “v” shaped timeline on the board or on the overhead to serve as an example. Distribute a set of directions and a rubric for the performance task to each pair. Ask students to create a rough draft first, then transfer their final design to the poster board. Monitor students, guide them through the instructions and provide appropriate modification and extensions.

- Use the rubric to score the task. Allow for correction as needed.
Gifted/Talented Extensions

- Allow for open-ended individual tasks, rather than mandating the “sinker” for each activity.
- Ask student to design their own process for reaching the assigned “sinker”.
- Structure the unit for independent study.
- Add opportunities for research, requiring more detailed notes.
- Ask for proof of deeper understandings.
- Restructure rubrics to demand more detail in information and understanding, with fewer limitations on the form of the product.
- Allow students to accelerate the timeframe of the unit, provided opportunities for enrichment after the assigned unit is complete.
- Ask students to perform an alternate performance task based in their specific gifts and preferences, but still directly related to the topic. Example: a musically gifted student may wish to compose and perform a song demonstrating the required information and understandings.

Technology Tips

- Allow students to construct their timelines using a draw program, then apply the result to the poster board.
- Allow student to add graphics and illustrations to their poster.
- Give students the option of using web sites to gather more information.

Modifications

- Model activities and skills for students.
- Use concrete examples.
- Use hands-on activities when possible.
- Lessen requirements or add to time permitted.
- Allow for greater revision of individual activities and of performance task.
- Pair stronger readers with less strong readers.
- Allow students to design and complete alternative performance tasks tailored to individual strengths and preferences.
Resources

• Ellis, Esler. World History, Connections to Today. Prentice Hall

• History Alive! Ancient Rome. Teachers Curriculum Institute

• History Alive! Europe After the Fall of the Roman Empire. Teachers Curriculum Institute