Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads

Circle group

The Roman Empire was huge. It covered much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. To rule so much land, Rome needed to move soldiers, messengers, and goods fast. So the Romans built roads, thousands of miles of them.

Roman builders planned each road with care. A team picked a path, often an almost straight one. Workers dug a long ditch, called a trench, along the path. They filled it in layers. Big stones went at the bottom. Then came smaller stones and gravel, with sand near the top. On top, they laid flat stones that fit close together.

The road was higher in the middle than at the sides. That way, rain ran off into ditches on both sides. Water is a road's worst enemy. It makes the ground soft and cracks the top. Because the water ran off, Roman roads lasted for hundreds of years.

Soldiers and traders used the roads. Traders carried pots, wine, and grain. Messengers could take news from one part of the empire to another much faster than before. Along the roads were inns and stations. There, travelers could rest and change horses.

Towns grew up beside the roads. Ideas, languages, and ways of life spread along them. People said "all roads lead to Rome." It meant the roads linked the whole empire to its capital.

Parts of some Roman roads are still there today. Some new roads follow the old paths.

Questions

1. Why did Rome build so many roads?

_____

_____

2. How did workers build a Roman road?

_____

_____

3. Why was the road higher in the middle?

_____

_____

4. Why is water a road's "worst enemy"?

_____

5. What could travelers find along the roads?

6. How did the roads help Rome rule its empire?

7. What does "all roads lead to Rome" mean?

Words to know

empire: a large area with many peoples, ruled by one government
trench: a long, narrow ditch dug in the ground

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads

Triangle group

The Roman Empire stretched across much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. To rule such a large area, Rome needed to move soldiers, messengers, and goods quickly. The Romans solved the problem by building roads, thousands of miles of them.

Roman engineers planned a road carefully. Surveyors chose a route, often a nearly straight one, and workers dug a trench along it. Into the trench they packed layers of material: large stones at the bottom, then smaller stones and gravel, and sand near the top. The surface was paved with flat stones that fit closely together.

The road was built higher in the middle than at the edges, so rain would run off into ditches on both sides. Water is a road's worst enemy, because it softens the ground and cracks the surface. Good drainage helped Roman roads last for centuries.

Soldiers marched along the roads, and so did traders carrying pottery, wine, and grain. Messengers could carry news from one province to another much faster than before. Along the way there were inns and stations where travelers could rest and change horses.

Roads also changed the lands they crossed. Towns grew up beside them, and ideas, languages, and customs spread along them. The saying "all roads lead to Rome" captured the idea that the roads connected the empire to its capital.

Parts of some Roman roads can still be seen today, and some modern roads follow their old paths.

Questions

1. Why did Rome build so many roads?

_____

_____

2. How did workers build a Roman road?

_____

_____

3. Why was the road built higher in the middle than at the edges?

_____

_____

4. Why does the author call water a road's "worst enemy"?

_____

_____

5. What could travelers find along the roads?

_____

_____

6. How did good roads help Rome rule its empire?

_____

_____

7. What does the saying "all roads lead to Rome" mean?

_____

_____

Words to know

empire: a large area with many peoples, ruled by one government
trench: a long, narrow ditch dug in the ground
paved: covered with a hard, flat surface such as stone
drainage: a way of letting water flow away
province: one of the large regions that made up the Roman Empire

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Roman Roads

Square group

The Roman Empire extended across much of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. To govern such an enormous territory, Rome needed to transport soldiers, messengers, and merchandise efficiently, and the Romans addressed this challenge by constructing roads, ultimately thousands of miles of them.

Roman engineers planned each road meticulously. Surveyors selected a route, frequently a nearly straight one, and laborers excavated a trench along it. Into the trench they compacted successive layers of material: large stones at the foundation, then smaller stones and gravel, and finally sand near the top. The surface was paved with flat stones fitted closely together.

The roadway was deliberately constructed higher in the center than at the edges, so that rainwater would drain into ditches on either side. Water is a road's most destructive enemy, because it softens the underlying ground and fractures the surface; effective drainage therefore enabled Roman roads to endure for centuries.

Soldiers marched along these roads, as did merchants transporting pottery, wine, and grain. Messengers could convey news from one province to another considerably faster than had previously been possible, and along the routes stood inns and stations where travelers could rest and exchange their horses.

The roads also transformed the territories they crossed. Towns developed alongside them, and ideas, languages, and customs circulated along them. The familiar saying "all roads lead to Rome" captured the notion that this vast network connected the empire to its capital.

Segments of certain Roman roads remain visible today, and some modern roads follow their ancient paths.

Questions

1. What motivated Rome to construct such an extensive road network?

_____

_____

2. Outline the construction process for a Roman road.

_____

_____

3. What was the purpose of building the roadway higher in the center than at the edges?

_____

_____

4. Why does the author describe water as a road's "most destructive enemy"?

_____

_____

5. What facilities did travelers encounter along the routes?

_____

_____

6. In what ways did the roads strengthen Rome's ability to govern its empire?

_____

_____

7. What notion does the saying "all roads lead to Rome" capture?

_____

_____

Words to know

empire: a large area with many peoples, ruled by one government
trench: a long, narrow ditch dug in the ground
paved: covered with a hard, flat surface such as stone
drainage: a way of letting water flow away
province: one of the large regions that made up the Roman Empire

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Roman Roads

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Roman Roads

Easier · 239 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.1

1. To move soldiers, messengers, and goods fast across a huge empire.
2. They dug a trench and filled it with layers: big stones, then smaller stones and gravel, then sand. Flat stones went on top.
3. So rain would run off into ditches on both sides.
4. It makes the ground soft and cracks the top of the road.
5. Inns and stations where they could rest and change horses.
6. Soldiers could march where they were needed, and messengers could carry news much faster.
7. The roads linked the whole empire to its capital city.

Triangle: Roman Roads

This passage · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.4

1. To move soldiers, messengers, and goods quickly across a very large empire.
2. They dug a trench and packed it with layers of large stones, smaller stones and gravel, and sand, then paved the top with flat stones.
3. So that rain would run off into ditches on both sides.
4. Water softens the ground and cracks the surface of a road.
5. Inns and stations where they could rest and change horses.
6. Soldiers could march to where they were needed, and messengers could carry news from one province to another much faster.
7. The roads connected the whole empire to its capital city.

Square: Roman Roads

Harder · 253 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 11.6

1. To transport soldiers, messengers, and merchandise efficiently across an enormous territory.
2. Laborers excavated a trench and compacted layers of large stones, smaller stones and gravel, and sand, then paved the surface with closely fitted flat stones.
3. So rainwater would drain into ditches on either side.
4. Water softens the underlying ground and fractures the surface.
5. Inns and stations where they could rest and exchange their horses.
6. Soldiers could march wherever they were needed, and messengers could convey news between provinces far faster than before.
7. That the road network connected the whole empire to its capital.